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SUMMARY

A crescendo of religious enthusiasm over many years.

Chapter I - Historical setting of the Revival, showing the gradual increase of interest in evangelical preaching from the Rebellion until the Awakening. Three churches - Episcopal, Methodist, Presbyterian - briefly outlines, together with political and economic contributions considered.

Chapter II - The immediate preparation for Revival for approximately twenty years - open-air work, tracts, multiplication of Sabbath schools, temperance, pointed 'applied' sermons, Bible distribution, increased church attendance, new churches, prayer meetings scattered over most of Ulster.

Chapter III - The Centre of the Revival. The General Assembly, though it apparently knew of the Connor Awakening, sent to America to find out how Revival might be obtained. Tremendous acceleration upon Communion season in Ahoghill, tardiness around Ballymena.

Chapter IV - After Revival reached Ballymena it spread through County Antrim, Belfast, Down, Derry and the rest of Ulster.

Chapter V - Among personalities, ministers played a very large part, but laymen also contributed much to the advance of the work, and some of these eventually became clergymen. Visiting speakers from Great Britain and a few from America assisted.

Chapter VI - It was characteristic to have tremendous enthusiasm, vast open-air meetings, great prayer meetings, measure of absence of sectarianism, crowded churches, horror of conviction, notable singing of psalms, hymns and paraphrases. Four Revival hymnbooks, thousands of tracts and Bibles, hence desire for education. Many became Communicants; strain on ministerial leadership, great use of laymen, but not all were tactful. Stigmata. Evangelical Alliance.

Chapter VII - Consideration of the nature of the religious experience is required because in Ulster alone, generally speaking, the prostrations parallel to earlier American revivals, especially 1800-1802 in Tennessee, took place. Many visitors came from Great Britain to see these phenomena.



Summary (contd.)

Chapter VIII - Message background, strict Calvinism, and Methodist Arminianism. Persistent influence of Catechism assisted Seceders against 'New Light' Synod of Ulster. Noted change of preaching in fifty years - Henry Cooke's influence. Sovereignty of God; man's impotence; conviction of sin. Many Unitarians accept Trinitarianism. Holy Spirit's influence. In a word 'Low Church' doctrine. Assurance. Plenary inspiration of Scripture.

Chapter IX - All Protestants, except Unitarians, more or less favourable. Over five dozen new churches built, more Sunday Schools. Sabbath School Society begun 1862. Sabbath Day controversy. Christian financial obligations. Largely the poor influenced. Revival contribution to Dis-Establishment. Prominence of laymen. Social improvement. Total abstinence. Hymn singing. Change of preaching.

Chapter X - Much of the good still abides in Ulster.





THE ULSTER REVIVAL OF 1859

Submitted to the University of Dublin this 23th day of February, 1962, as an exercise for the degree of Ph.D., I, Alfred Russell Scott, M.A., B.D., declare that this thesis is entirely my own work and that it has not been submitted to any other university.

Signed:

*Alfred Russell Scott*  
Alfred Russell Scott.

I wish to express by grateful thanks to the Rev. G.C.B. Davies, M.A., D.D., Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the University of Dublin, under whose supervision the project was undertaken, for his valuable guidance and kindly patience, help, advice and criticism in the preparation of this study. Appreciation is also due, for their generous co-operation in granting facilities, to the Librarians of the University Library of Trinity College, Dublin; the Gamble Library, Assembly's College, Belfast; the Rev. John McMaster, Magee University College Library, Londonderry; the Linenhall Library, Belfast; the Bishop's Library, Armagh; the National Library of Ireland, Dublin; Mr. T.G.M. Patterson, Curator of Armagh Museum; the Presbyterian Historical Society; the Irish Mission Office; the Down, Connor and Dromore Diocesan Library; A.P.C.K. Library, Dublin. Thanks must also be accorded to the many clergymen, ministers and laymen who have all been equally kind in making available manuscripts, session minute books, Committee records, Synod minutes and Presbytery minutes, as well as books ~~for~~ their own personal libraries and personal documents; to the editors and staffs of the many newspapers who allowed me access to the files of their papers; to the late Rev. Thomas Kilpatrick, my sincere friend, who gave me many valuable books, unobtainable elsewhere. To all these I am deeply grateful for their assistance.

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## CHAPTER I

### Ireland 1800-1860

#### Historical Setting of the Revival

The roots of a tree, and the streamlets of a river, often stretch far afield, and so it was with this mighty work of Grace. To hint that it began with the visit of a Mrs. Colville and a Lieut. Aikman to Ballymena<sup>1</sup> is naive to say the least of it, whilst to say that "Spiritual life in Ulster prior to the Revival was at a low ebb"<sup>2</sup> is hard to believe. It is much more factual to read "For a century previous to 1859, Evangelical Religion had to struggle for its existence, and in this conflict, even if the full extent of Methodist influence cannot be accurately estimated, it was probably greater than was generally admitted."<sup>3</sup> But there were other influences at work; as in the Secession Church history we read that in the very days of the Rebellion of 1798 there was founded the Ulster Evangelical Society.<sup>4</sup> One founder of this Society emigrated to America within ten years to become there the founder of an evangelical church - the Disciples, which in 1945 numbered two million members.<sup>5</sup> From 1820 till 1857 some sixty-eight "revivals" are noted as having taken place over the whole of Ireland.<sup>6</sup> It has been well said by Elliott-Binns "Whatever may be one's own particular attitude towards revivals and the methods adopted by those who conduct them, it is impossible to deny their significance in the life of the Church in the Victorian Era and especially during its middle years. ... Revivals on a small scale and affecting only a limited area seem to have been comparatively frequent in the early years of the nineteenth century; they were a kind of continuation of the

1. J.T. Carson, God's River in Spate, pp. 5, 6; J.E. Orr, The Second Evangelical Awakening in Britain, p. 38.
2. I.R.K. Paisley, The Fifty Nine Revival, p. 11.
3. Robert Haire, The '59 Revival, p. 6.
4. David Stewart, The Seceders in Ireland, p. 104.
5. Garrison and DeGroot, The Disciples of Christ, p. 410.
6. Counted from 'Contents' of C.H. Crookshank's History of Methodism, Vol. III, pp. iii-xi.



Methodist Revival and were largely carried on by the followers of Wesley. But with the beginning of the second half of the century there came a series of movements on a scale which was almost world-wide. The first of these began as a consequence of a small prayer meeting held in New York in 1858... Then like a great tidal wave it spread to the West Indies, and in 1859 leapt the Atlantic, touching even the ships as it passed, and appeared in Northern Ireland. Thence in the same year it was carried to England."<sup>1</sup> Such are the headlands of the coast to be surveyed to show that the Revival of 1859 was not a sudden outburst as some think, but rather the result of a gradual crescendo of Christian effort over half a century, blessed by the Sovereign Grace of God.

Let us view the three great Protestant Churches in Ireland in perspective. An historian<sup>2</sup> of the Church of Ireland has said "... the latter part of the eighteenth century was perhaps, on the whole a season of supineness and inaction as to religion ... and the Irish clergy in general may be judged to have partaken of this character ..." Yet all was not completely black in out-look, for though "the line of theologically sound Churchmen became dangerously thin in Ireland, ... it never disappeared completely. On the whole, it is probably true to say that the Church of Ireland preserved its spiritual integrity during the Georgian era better than its sister Church in England."<sup>3</sup> "Episcopal vigilance ... and an earnestness in prompting his clergy to professional exertions, seem to have especially characterized Bishop O'Beirne: and his clergy seem to have received his admonitions and encouragements to religious zeal with corresponding feelings."<sup>4</sup> Thomas Lewis O'Beirne, on becoming Bishop of Ossory in 1795, soon took steps to carry out his wish to establish the Clerical Association of

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1. L.E. Elliott-Binns, Religion in the Victorian Era, pp. 212, 215.
  2. R. Mant, Church of Ireland, Vol. II, p. 780.
  3. Johnston, Robinson, Jackson, A History of the Church of Ireland, p. 235.
  4. Mant, *op. cit.* p. 779.



Ossory.<sup>1</sup> In these meetings, often held in Kilkenny, Bishop O'Beirne always commented on the portions of Scripture translated from the Greek in an eloquent manner.<sup>2</sup> His successor, Dr. Hugh Hamilton (1798-1806) continued the idea of clerical associations, which had stopped for about a year, perhaps due to the disturbed state of the country. The Clerical Association of the Diocese of Ossory was instituted on December 5, 1800, and the names of twenty-three earnest ministers are appended to the Minutes.<sup>3</sup> Though Bishop Kearney (1806-1813) was not favourable to these meetings, he did not prohibit them,<sup>4</sup> and the good influence begun in this way continued, so much so that Peter Roe became the leader<sup>5</sup> of the evangelical party in the Established Church.

In the 18th century the Established Episcopal Church was Diestic in outlook, yet that spirit had bequeathed little in the way of heterodox belief to the early 19th century, for the Evangelical Revival was beginning to effect a change in the life of the Church. The people welcomed the new evangelicalism, which was assisted by the coming of a greater strength to the Methodist body at that time. Before 1814, when the question of Sacraments became a matter of division and eventual schism in 1816, the Methodists often worshipped with the Church people in the forenoon and had their own services in the evening; their sacraments were observed in the parish churches. Evidence of this change in outlook and devotion is noted by one of the Methodist leaders - Lanktree - when he wrote "we sometimes heard cheering accounts of the spirit of piety in her ministers who were becoming zealous and useful in promoting her interests;

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1. S. Madden, Life of Peter Roe, p. 77. O'Beirne, born an Irish Roman Catholic, educated at St. Omer, became a clergyman of the U.S. Episcopal Church, ministered in New York in 1776, was made Bishop of Ossory, translated to Meath in 1798, and died in 1823. (See Phillips' History of the Church of Ireland, Vol. III, p. 289.)

2. See Appendix 'A' of this Chapter.

3. See Appendix 'B' of this Chapter.

4. Madden, op. cit. p. 93.

5. J. B. Leslie, Ossory - Clergy and Parishes, p. 353.



... We heard them preach with great satisfaction; they had frequently the candour and courage to hear us preach."<sup>1</sup>

The Reformed theology of the erudite Archbishop, James Ussher, was then being revived in the Established Church by men like Mathias - a pioneer in the restoration of this theology in Ireland, and who ministered in Bethesda Chapel.<sup>2</sup> Benjamin Williams Mathias,<sup>3</sup> an orphan boy reared in the home of the Rev. Dr. B. W. McDowel, Presbyterian Minister in Dublin, his guardian, was ordained in 1797 at the age of twenty-four by the Rev. Dr. Porter, Bishop of Killala, and became curate to the Rev. Thomas Tighe, the rector of Rathfriland, who was said to be the 'father' of the whole Anglican evangelical movement.<sup>4</sup> So it was that this curate of Drumgooland (Rathfriland) came to minister to a small congregation of fifty families, being invited by the trustees. It is interesting to note that Bethesda Chapel had its origin in an amicable withdrawal<sup>5</sup> from "Lady Huntingdon's Chapel" of such persons as resided at an inconvenient distance from Plunket-street, a poor part of the city. Early in 1773 this old disused Presbyterian Church had been purchased by Lady Huntingdon, and after repairs was opened with the use of the liturgy of the Church of England<sup>6</sup> as Plunket Street.

From small beginnings Bethesda Chapel, where Mathias preached for many years, grew into a powerful congregation, and under his preaching great numbers of young men became

1. Lanktree, Biographical Narrative, p. 124.
2. Foster, Countess of Huntingdon, Vol. II, p. 202. Bethesda was built in 1786 by William Smyth, nephew of the Archbishop of Dublin. Its first ministers were the Rev. Edward Smyth (brother of the builder) - an Arminian in theology - and the Rev. William Mann, a strong Calvinist. These were succeeded by the Rev. John Walker and the Rev. Henry Maturin, both Fellows of Trinity, and they in turn were followed by the Rev. B. W. Mathias and his associate the Rev. William Thorpe, A.M., M.D., in the year 1805.
3. Brief Memorials of Rev. B. W. Mathias, pp. 5, 21, Dublin 1842.
4. Johnston, Robinson and Jackson, op. cit. p. 250.
5. Huntingdon, op. cit. p. 230.
6. ibid. p. 163, and Urwick, J. D. La Touche, p. 78, footnote.

7. Phillips, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 332.



convinced Evangelicals, and no less than twenty-five of them<sup>1</sup> passed through the University, turning their thoughts to the ministry of the Church, despite the Provost's forbidding students to attend worship in Bethesda, and the fact that it was not till six years after William Magee became the Archbishop of Dublin, that a licence to preach was given Mathias in 1828,<sup>2</sup> - some twenty-three years after his settlement in Dublin. Brooks, in his Gazetteer, when enumerating the number of places of worship in Dublin, mentions "Bethesda Chapel as the Cathedral of the Methodists."<sup>3</sup> Though it was a proprietary chapel, it became a congregation which attracted a great many of the upper class of Society, such as the Earl of Clancarty, Lady Emily La Touche, Viscount Powerscourt, and many others. It is even said that "Romanists occasionally attended the chapel" and that "some priests were converted there."<sup>4</sup>

Mathias was a systematic theologian with great abilities as a preacher, and despite the fact that he received no preferment he was one of the most formative influences in the Church of his day. Many of his followers advanced the evangelical outlook far and wide. One such was Dr. J. H. Singer, onetime Regius Professor of Divinity in Trinity College, and afterwards Bishop of Meath<sup>5</sup> in the time of the Revival. Another was the Rev. Caesar Otway,<sup>6</sup> co-founder with Singer of the 'Christian Examiner' - a learned journal of definitely evangelical lines. Among the clergy then there grew up a greater interest in the theology of Archbishop Ussher's day, as a result of this work of Mathias. Ussher's Articles of Religion, which may be summed up as 'justification by faith', were revived and became the standard of belief for many.

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1. Huntingdon, op. cit. p. 230.

2. W. Urwick, Biographic Sketches of J. D. La Touche, p. 80, and Phillips, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 331

3. Huntingdon, op. cit. p. 230, footnote; also Urwick, op. cit. p.

4. Phillips, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 331.

5. 1852-1866.

6. Phillips, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 332.



These evangelicals rendered great service to their Church, and laid the foundation of serious devotion, pastoral efficiency and ministerial responsibility. The magnitude of their task is seen in a look at the conditions prevailing at the very beginning of the nineteenth century, when the population numbered, in 1804, 5,400,000,<sup>1</sup> of which the Church of Ireland members formed one-tenth.<sup>2</sup> Had the spirit of Ussher's day prevailed, and the enthusiasm of the saintly Bedell<sup>3</sup> been copied, the story of the Established Church in the eighteenth century might have been different, for the Romanists, heart-broken by a long series of disasters, had almost lost heart, while the Presbyterians, unacceptable in positions of authority, were emigrating in thousands. If the Established Church had not frittered away her income in princely salaries for a few bishops, a good income for absentee rectors from pluralities, and a poverty wage for curates, the country could have been Protestant in majority, as was Wales, Scotland and England. "One might have expected that sheer necessity would have compelled it to be a vehemently missionary church."<sup>4</sup> The supply of ministers was not sufficient for the task, as there were upwards of 2,400 parishes,<sup>5</sup> but in the early eighteenth century there were only some eight hundred ministers (incumbants and curates), a ratio of one in three; whilst at the same time there were at least from two thousand to three thousand Romish priests;<sup>6</sup> so that it is no wonder Romanism held sway, for even if the people desired a Protestant minister, many never saw his face much less heard his voice. As well, many churches were in ruins and few were interested in their renovation. At the beginning of the nineteenth century 60 per cent.

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1. Census Commissioners 1821, Reports of Commissioners 1825. vi. 7, see also T. W. Freeman, Pre-Famine Ireland, p. 15.

2. R. B. McDowell, Public Opinion and Government Policy in Ireland, 1801-1846, p. 19.

3. N. D. Emerson, William Bedell, A.P.C.K. Dublin, pp. 20, 21.

4. McDowell, op. cit. p. 19.

5. Mant, op. cit. Vol. II, p. 775.

6. Boulter's Letters, p. 169, Vol. I, quoted by Mant op. cit.

7. Life and Times of ... Vol. II, p. 476.



of the benefices lacked a glebe house and 18 per cent.<sup>1</sup> were unprovided with churches, but as time went on this tragic state of affairs was to be remedied to some extent by the evangelical movement which touched all Protestantism. About the middle of the eighteenth century John Cennick,<sup>2</sup> one-time teacher in Wesley's school at Kingswood and who later became a Moravian, came to Ireland where he founded settlements after the Moravian pattern. Wesley himself came over a score of times and preached up and down the land, whilst the Countess of Huntingdon and her daughter, Lady Moira, did much to establish and further the evangelical cause, especially among nobility, as is seen in the conversion of Edward Smyth,<sup>3</sup> nephew of the then Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Arthur Smyth.

Other outstanding evangelicals were Alderman Hutton,<sup>4</sup> Thomas Parnell, originator of the Sunday School Society for Ireland, Alexander Boyle, James Digges La Touche, Martin Keene, Thomas L. Lefroy (later Chief Justice) among the laymen, whilst among the clergy were Daly of Enniskerry (son of Lady Harriet Daly), later Bishop of Cork, John Hoare of Rathkeale near Limerick, and Francis Lyte of Wexford. One of the most outstanding was Peter Roe (son of a Dublin surgeon) of 'savage, ungodly Kilkenny'<sup>5</sup>, the 'Versailles of Ireland',<sup>6</sup> famous as the centre of the Catholic Confederacy in years gone by. His predecessor in Kilkenny, the Rev. Robert Shaw, at the beginning of his ministry there "did not know a single brother minister whom he could invite to join him in prayer."<sup>7</sup> Roe and Shaw were founders of clerical meetings for the advancement of spiritual life. These took place in the rectories round about and one Presbyterian minister at least took part in this fellowship - the Rev. James Morgan of Carlow. All these men were interested

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1. McDowell, op. cit. p. 19.

2. *ibid.* p. 25.

3. Huntingdon, op. cit. Vol. II, p. 189.

4. McDowell, op. cit. p. 27.

5. Crookshank, op. cit. Vol. II, p. 273.

6. McDowell, op. cit. p. 27.

7. Life and Times of the Rev. James Morgan, (autobiography), p. 20.



in the establishment of the Bible Society's branches throughout Ireland. Men associated with them in this work were Singer, later the Bishop of Meath, Robert Daly, afterwards Bishop of Waterford and Cashel, and the Hon. and Rev. Edward Wingfield, sometime Rector of Myshall in Co. Carlow, and the Rev. John Hare, his curate - afterwards minister of the Free Episcopal Church in Dublin.<sup>1</sup> "In Carlow and in other towns these labours resulted in the extensive revival of religion."<sup>2</sup> The extent of this work is seen in the distribution of no less than 22,000 Bibles and 33,000 Testaments, besides Prayer Books, by the Association for Discountenancing Vice and Promoting the Knowledge and Practice of the Christian Religion, in a space of seven troublous years, 1792-1799.<sup>3</sup>

About the year 1770, the Rev. Dr. Kennedy, curate of Bright parish, Co. Down, began the first Sunday School. At first he gathered "boys and girls together on Sundays to practise psalmody."<sup>4</sup> They were taught by the parish clerk. About four years later reading the psalms was taught, and the whole "Sunday School" lasted an hour and a half. News of the English Sunday Schools came in 1785, and Kennedy remodelled his Sunday School, as he now called it, on the English method. In 1786 the first Sunday School in Dublin opened in St. Catherine's.<sup>5</sup> In 1809, on the 29th November, sixteen earnest men met in the Banking House of the Rt. Hon. David La Touche & Co. in Castle Street<sup>6</sup>, Dublin, and formed the "Hibernian Sunday School Society", afterwards called "The Sunday School Society for Ireland". The adjourned meeting met again on 12th December, 1809, when Mr. James Digges La Touche consented to act as Hon. Secretary - and none was better qualified for the position.

St. Catherine's Sunday School met both morning and afternoon. The masters were paid two shillings and sixpence per

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1. Life and Times of the Rev. James Morgan, D.D., p. 20.

2. *ibid.* p. 17.

3. Phillips, *op. cit.* Vol. III, p. 260.

4. Urwick, *op. cit.* p. 387; Note it is not 'hymnody'.

5. *ibid.* p. 390.

6. *ibid.* p. 102. See Appendix 'c'.

7. *ibid.* p. 102. See Appendix 'c'.



Sunday and the mistresses two shillings each.<sup>1</sup> By the end of 1788 this Sunday School numbered 1,306 children.<sup>2</sup> They were taught "reading, writing, and instructed in the principles of the Christian religion, Gratis."<sup>3</sup> La Touche soon made arrangements for the preparation and printing of books for the Sunday School Society. Among these was Hints for Conducting Sunday Schools. As well there was provided alphabets, spelling books, and the Authorised Version of the Scriptures, at reduced prices, or by free grant, to all accredited Sunday Schools in Ireland regardless of sect.<sup>4</sup> Roe was associated with this Society, and in 1812 founded a branch in Kilkenny.

In other parts of Ireland the evangelical movement had zealous and active adherents as the Rev. Dr. Joseph Stopford, of Donegal, the Rev. Thomas Tighe in Down, and the Rev. John Quarry in Cork,<sup>5</sup> whilst the Rev. C. C. Townsend<sup>6</sup>, of Clonakilty, was also a valued supporter.

The doctrine of justification by faith, the evangelical's message, was to receive its greatest exposition in Ireland in the sermons of Dr. James Thomas O'Brien, "afterwards Bishop of Ossory, appointed in 1833 to a Divinity Lectureship, originally founded by Archbishop King, but then for the first time adequately endowed."<sup>7</sup> In 1833 he published a series of sermons entitled "Ten Sermons upon the Nature and Effects of Faith." These follow Luther and the German Divines contemporary with Luther, but contain at the same time so much new argument and illustration, especially in connection with an exposition of the moral effects of faith, that they may fairly receive the praise of originality. Faith is defined in these discourses as, not merely or properly a belief of the truth of the Scripture narrative concerning our Lord, or

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1. Urwick, op. cit. p. 391.
  2. *ibid.* p. 393.
  3. *ibid.* p. 391.
  4. *ibid.* p. 399.
  5. T. Olden, The Church of Ireland, p. 393.
  6. Mrs. Thomas Toye, Life of T. Toye, p. 5.
  7. J. T. Ball, The Reformed Church of Ireland (1537-1889) p. 273.



an assent of the understanding to certain propositions derived from that narrative, but trust in Christ or in God through Christ founded upon such a belief or assent; an entire and unreserved confidence in the efficacy of what Christ has done and suffered for us; a full reliance upon Him and upon His works. Justification is regarded as a judicial acquittal from the consequences of having violated the Divine Law, and acceptance as if it had been fulfilled. Righteousness of life is the consequence of faith, and receives from that principle the most effective motives and impulses.<sup>1</sup>

Other evangelical contributions were the founding of the "Scripture Readers' Society" and of "The Irish Society" both in 1818, with the object of teaching Irish-speaking peasantry to read the Scriptures in Irish to the people. These, with the Bible Society, spread the Scriptures throughout Ireland, and roused the resentment of the Roman Catholic clergy. Considerable numbers left the Church of Rome, despite the frantic efforts of Prince Hohenlohe-Schillingfurst (1794-1849) titular Bishop of Sardica - reputed miracle worker.<sup>2</sup> In such towns as Carrick-on-Shannon, Carlow, Cork, Waterford, Kilkenny, New Ross, and Downpatrick, great Biblical debates took place, which sometimes ended in near riots, and have been referred to as "spiritual cockfights."<sup>3</sup> This in turn developed the Roman Controversy and aroused great hopes that Ireland would at last experience reformation. Indeed, conversions to the Established Church at this time were so numerous as to be hailed as the "Second Reformation," and of this Archbishop William Magee of Dublin (a strong supporter of the controversial work) said 'In truth with respect to Ireland, the Reformation may, strictly speaking, be said only now to have begun.'<sup>4</sup> The stream of converts increased.

1. See further J. T. Ball, op. cit. p. 277.

2. Phillips, Vol. III, op. cit. p. 335.

3. McDowell, Public Opinion and Government Policy in Ireland, 1801-1846, p. 33.

4. Phillips, Vol. III, op. cit. p. 336.



"In a few months no less than 1,300 conversions were reported."<sup>1</sup> Controversial sermons were now expected, and crowds flocked to hear. By 1822 things had come on so fast that Dr. James Warren Doyle, Roman Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin - a man of Quaker extraction through his mother, Anne Warren<sup>2</sup> - got into controversy with Archbishop William Magee. This contest lasted some years, and in the midst of it Doyle seriously proposed a union between the Church of Rome in Ireland and the Established Church, saying that the time was favourable for "the Government is powerful and at peace, while the Pope is powerless and anxious to conciliate."<sup>3</sup>

A century and a half ago and indeed up to the rise of the Young Ireland Party in the forties, the priests generally and the hierarchy in particular<sup>4</sup> were strongly favourable to the British Crown. "Dr. Troy - Archbishop of Dublin 1786-1823 - was like all the Catholic bishops of the end of the Penal era, a stedfast supporter, through good report and evil, of the authorities in Dublin Castle."<sup>5</sup>

That Doyle was serious in his proposal of union is evidenced by the fact that he even outlined the points that needed discussion. "The chief points" he wrote "to be discussed are the Canons of Sacred Scriptures, faith, justification, the Mass, Sacraments, the authority of tradition, of councils, of the Pope, the celibacy of the clergy, language of the liturgy, invocation of the saints, respect for images, prayers for the dead."<sup>6</sup> The existing diversity of opinion arose, in some cases, from certain forms of words which admit of satisfactory explanation, or from the ignorance or misconceptions which ancient prejudice and ill-will produce and strengthen. "It is pride and points of honour which keep

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1. Phillips, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 338.

2. M. MacDonagh, Bishop Doyle, p. 16.

3. *ibid.* pp. 99-100.

4. *ibid.* p. 7.

5. *ibid.* p. 5.

6. *ibid.* p. 100.



us divided on many subjects" he said, not a love of Christian humility, charity and truth."<sup>1</sup>

Of the Reformation movement generally, John Jebb, Bishop of Limerick, wrote in 1827, "I have learned that in almost every part of Ireland inquiry and thirst for knowledge and in some instances a degree of religious anxiety are gaining ground amongst Roman Catholics. Numbers in neighbourhoods predominantly popish are thinking and inquiring and reading the Scriptures."<sup>2</sup> Later he wrote "the whole of this movement I cannot but view as providential."<sup>3</sup>

Further evidence of evangelical zeal is seen in the progress of the Irish Society, founded in 1818. In 1825, no less than fifty-one schools were being run in County Cavan alone.<sup>4</sup> Admittedly these were small gatherings of people in groups wishing to learn to read and write, but all told they numbered about nine hundred pupils. That this work was progressing too well for some, despite Doyle's offers of union, is seen in the persecution that always followed the wake of the reform or conversion movement. To avoid this some emigrated to America and elsewhere, whilst at home a plan of "planting" the new converts in colonies was devised. These colonies were placed so as to have the converts some considerable distance from their former homes. In 1828 such a colony was founded in Kilmeague in Kildare,<sup>5</sup> where in sixteen years about a hundred families were settled in farms. Whilst in the far south, in Kerry, at Dingle, about one hundred and seventy families turned Protestant and here a colony was also established.<sup>6</sup> Even a "Priests' Protection Society" was formed for the many leaving Rome, and by 1851 no less than thirty-nine had passed through its care.<sup>7</sup>

1. MacDonagh, op. cit. p. 100.
2. Phillips, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 337.
3. *ibid.* p. 338.
4. *ibid.* p. 342.
5. *ibid.* p. 342.
6. *ibid.* p. 342.
7. *ibid.* p. 343.

Another stronghold of the Reformation was in the West where a work begun by the Irish Society led to no less than 2,357 public recantations by 1828.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Trench, the last Archbishop of Tuam, played a great part in this movement too, for he was universally popular with all creeds. So far as he could he secured Irish speaking clergy for his diocese. When in 1819 Trench became Archbishop there were in western Connacht some thirteen congregations, with seven churches and eleven clergy. Forty years later, in 1861, there were fifty-seven congregations with twenty-seven churches and thirty-five clergy<sup>2</sup> - a fourfold increase in the forty years. The use of the Scriptures in Irish led to a curiosity as to what they were like in English, and so the Authorized Version was read.

Next came the enterprise of the Rev. Edward Nangle, with headquarters in Achill Island.<sup>3</sup> There have been many famines in Ireland, some local and some nation-wide. Achill suffered a local famine in 1831. A steamship with supplies was sent from Dublin to the Island, and with it, at the request of a friend, came Nangle, who quickly perceived that not only was there a famine of bread to eat, but a far greater famine in spiritual things. Backed by a committee of evangelical leaders (Daly, Singer, Otway, etc.) he returned in 1834 as leader of a mission and immediately opened a school. The first year, despite intimidation and threats, saw four schools begun, and four hundred and twenty children in attendance. In 1836 St. Thomas's, Dugort, was built, and very soon after a monthly paper The Achill Missionary Herald and Western Witness<sup>4</sup> commenced publication. Persecution increased its circulation to three thousand copies a month in a short time. In 1838 there was a Protestant congregation of 120, and Arch-

1. Phillips, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 343.

2. *ibid.* p. 344.

3. *ibid.* p. 344; and Life and Ministry of Rev. A.R.C. Dallas (by his Widow) pp. 405-406; James Nesbitt, London, 1871.

4. Phillips, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 345.



bishop Trench administered confirmation to thirty children, where five years before there was not a single Protestant.<sup>1</sup> By 1849 Bishop Plunket confirmed four hundred people of whom only twenty-eight were children of Protestant parents.<sup>2</sup> The average attendance at schools in 1852 numbered upwards of 1,000, when no less than twenty-seven mission schools were in operation. By the space of thirty years after the commencement of the work there were nearly seven hundred Protestants.<sup>3</sup>

This work on Achill was soon matched by an equally great work on the mainland in Connemara, west Galway and Erris, which began under striking circumstances. Dallas came as a speaker to a Conference of the Jews' Society in Dublin in 1840. In 1843 he turned his interest to the condition of the Irish Roman Catholics. At that time the General Post was something of a novelty, and Dallas resolved to use it to spread the Gospel. An unexpected and generous gift from a Christian friend, Mr. Durant<sup>4</sup>, "a gentleman of fortune with whom he had had a conversation about Ireland some time before"<sup>5</sup>, was available, and some 23,000 Roman Catholic families were written to in a letter styled "A Voice from Heaven to the People of Ireland."<sup>6</sup> Posted from different places, all were timed for delivery on the same day, 16th January, 1846.<sup>7</sup> The receipt of these letters caused great excitement, and they

1. Phillips, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 345.

2. *ibid.* p. 345.

3. Prot. Est. Church	649	Roman Catholic	5,083
Presbyterian	37	Entire Pop.	5,277 (1831)
Methodist	<u>7</u>	Entire Pop.	5,776 (1861)

Total Protestants 693

See Census of Ireland 1861, Part iv, vol. ii, p. 520.

Also W.D. Killen, Ecc. History of Ireland, Vol. II, p. 500.

4. A. E. Hughes, Lift up a Standard, p. 18.

5. Dallas, op. cit. p. 335.

6. Containing, 1. A Voice from Heaven to Ireland (in English); 2. The same in Irish; 3. A Look out of Ireland into Germany; 4. A Paper of Selected Texts. See Dallas, op. cit. p. 337.

7. Hughes, op. cit. p. 19; Dallas, op. cit. p. 338.



were followed by other letters to the Roman Catholic clergy. Dallas sent agents to enquire as to the results of the letters, and on the 29th March, 1849,<sup>1</sup> the Irish Church Missions was inaugurated, which in twenty years built twenty-one churches and eight rectories, thirty schools and four orphanages.<sup>2</sup> Dallas collected £10,000 to launch the missionary programme.<sup>3</sup> Lord Roden visited the west of Ireland in September, 1851,<sup>4</sup> and in a series of letters, published as the progress of the Reformation in Ireland, told of the great work. The Bishop of Tuam told Lord Roden that "upwards of ten thousand had left the Church of Rome in his diocese."<sup>5</sup>

All the Church's new-found zeal was not confined to Romanists, for it was seen that there were many of the older clergy of the Established Church not inspired with the same earnestness as the evangelicals. Many were careless, and some even so much so as to be still non-resident. With this in mind the Established Church Home Mission Association was founded in 1828 to proclaim the Gospel to all "who are ignorant and out of the way."<sup>6</sup> This work was supported by Singer, Daly, Mathias, Verschoyle, Roe and McGhee, and it soon began to send emissaries to parishes where the incumbent did not desire them, and sometimes even without consulting him. Some bishops, in alarm, forbade the Society to enter their dioceses - among them were Thomas Elrington, Bishop of Ferns, and Richard Mant, Bishop of Down. The latter, in a public charge to his clergy, asserted that it was not lawful for any inferior ministers to exercise their ministry in any diocese without the Bishop's licence.<sup>7</sup> A vigorous reply came from McGhee,<sup>8</sup> who stated among other things, that the Society was founded

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1. Hughes, op. cit. p. 21.

2. Phillips, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 347.

3. Dallas, op. cit. p. 351.

4. R. J. Roden, Progress of the Reformation in Ireland, pp. 3, 4.

5. *ibid.* p. 33.

6. Phillips, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 349.

7. *ibid.* p. 350.

8. R. McGhee, Episcopal and Clerical Duty Considered, in a letter to the Bishop of Down, Dublin, 1835.



under the sanction, approbation, and cordial co-operation of the late Archbishop of Dublin (Magee). In time, the Home Mission gradually became less necessary, owing to a growing sense of duty among the clergy, and after a few years little was heard of it. All this evangelism soon led to demands for the Church to set her house in order in other ways, especially was this so at the seven years' Tithe War (which ended in 1838), when the Christian Examiner demanded, in 1835, reform in the payment of the Clergy and Curates.<sup>1</sup>

Much of the rise of this evangelical outlook in the Established Church was due to what is known as the voluntary system. This was especially so in Dublin where, independently of the State, congregations were established in proprietary chapels or free churches such as Bethesda, Trinity Church, Baggotrath, Harold's Cross, and Zion Church, Rathgar. In North Antrim, the Rev. Francis Dobbs was curate of Drumtullagh, near Ballymoney, and made earnest preparation for a religious awakening. A beloved and indefatigable worker, he conducted, besides his usual parish work, monthly meetings in schoolhouses at Dervock, Tullyban, and Mosside, with occasional meetings at Stranocum and Benvardeen. In 1834 Dobbs commenced a monthly service at Croshan, which three years later with the help of the "Church Accommodation Society of Down and Connor" and the "Additional Curates' Society" grew into the congregation of Drumtullagh. Bishop Mant ordained the Rev. E. J. Heatrick curate here in 1839. Dobbs and Heatrick, both diligent men, conducted many cottage meetings and mission services in schools around the parish and the neighbourhood. Heatrick moved to Carrickfergus in 1842, and in 1846 became incumbent of the Magdalene Church, Belfast, while Dobbs became curate of Larne in 1850, and in 1860 was presented with the benefice of Connor. Meantime in Derrykeighan, Thomas Hincks, brother of Edward Hincks, rector of Killyleagh, became rector

1. Phillips, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 351.



and kept up the good work of Dobbs and Heatrick, being ably assisted by his curate, the Rev. George Davies, who came in 1851, and was of great use in the actual days of the Revival. Indeed, so hard did he labour that his health broke down and he was ordered abroad. He died at Perth, in Australia.<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of the century "the Church of Ireland shared to the full the Augustan calm which characterised eighteenth century Anglicanism",<sup>2</sup> but two generations later she had advanced along the road of evangelism, and a definite work of the Spirit was accomplished in the intervening years. Many had been awakened to Spiritual truth by the preaching in Irish, the distribution of Irish Bibles, learning to read and write, even violent controversy, - all these in the South and West enabled many to grasp Spiritual truth more gradually than the violent convulsive effort of 1859 in the North. In a word it was clear that the Church of Ireland had entered a "period of spiritual awareness and of missionary zeal not equalled at any time in its history since the days of the early Celtic Church."<sup>3</sup>

Having considered the Established Church in some detail, we must now look at the daughter church of Anglicanism - the Irish Methodist Church, - for her contribution. This Church, considered of little political significance at the time of Union in 1800, made a very vital contribution, and an ever increasing one as the years went by, in the realm of true religion. In a country of five million people - half of them Irish speaking<sup>4</sup> - it was to Methodism's great advantage that many of her preachers were able and fluent Irish speakers, and using the market place as often as the conventional pulpit, they addressed the poor, the middle class and the society people, interesting them in vital religion. Welsh, Ouseley,

1. Thomas Hincks' Manuscript in the care of the Rev. D. F. Moore, B.A., Derrykeighan Rectory.
2. R. B. McDowell, Public Opinion and Government Policy in Ireland, 1801-1846, p. 19.
3. Johnston, Robinson, Jackson, op. cit. p. 253.
4. See J.F. Kenny, Sources of Ecclesiastical History of Ireland Part I, pp. 51, 52; & T. W. Freeman, op. cit. p. 138.



Rogers, Graham and McQuigg - to name some better known preachers - were all fluent bilingualists. "The most important work of the Methodist Revival in Ireland," says an able historian, "was the indirect influence on the Protestant Episcopalians."<sup>1</sup> That this is no unsubstantiated statement is seen in the fact that among the many young men who entered the Established Church, soundly quickened in spiritual life through Methodism, were Thomas Kelly, son of Chief Baron Kelly; and Lord Clancarty's son, later rector of Ballinasloe; John Jebb, rector of Swanlinbar; Peter Roe, curate of Kilkenny; and Fielding Ould, a close friend of the Duchess of Rutland.

At the time of the Rebellion (1798) Ireland was visited with almost uncontrollable surges, on the one hand political rebellion, on the other religious opportunity. Three sections of this latter prevailed. Among Presbyterians in Dublin, Dr. Benjamin McDowel and Alderman Hutton were leaders for peace, in Sabbath Observance and Evangelism in the City. In the North, at Armagh, the Ulster Evangelical Society was founded in the Primatial city by Presbyterian Seceders, and in the Methodist Church at the beginning of 1799 came, most important of all, the first organized evangelistic mission<sup>2</sup> ever attempted with direct reference to the Roman Catholic population, by McQuigg, Graham, and Ouseley. Blessed with dauntless courage, these 'black caps'<sup>3</sup> as they were called from their habit of wearing little black skull caps, faced all manner of opposition from squealing pigs held up by the ears, barking dogs with kettles tied to their tails, mud, filth, abuse, rough handling, and even rescue occasionally by the military.<sup>4</sup> That this work of the Methodists was a success is seen in the testimony of the rector of Roscrea "There never was so useful a scheme adopted for the good of Ireland."<sup>5</sup>

Famine and fever followed the Rebellion, and though there was starvation in many places, yet we read of new church build-

1. Lecky's *History of the 18th Century*, Vol. II, p. 610.
2. Crookshank, *History of Methodism in Ireland*, Vol. II, p. 165.
3. MacDonagh, *op. cit.* p. 91.
4. Crookshank, *op. cit.* Vol. II, p. 170.
5. *ibid.* p. 204.



ings erected both north and south. Furthermore, that the little schools, where reading and writing were taught, were beginning to have vital effect is seen in the fact that in 1803 tracts<sup>1</sup> were distributed and read with the greatest eagerness by the poor in Mayo. Many have wondered at the distribution of tracts when it was said that few could read, but it must be remembered that the Belfast Newsletter began in 1737, and that from the beginning of the Reform struggle the radicals had sought to influence public opinion, and published four newspapers<sup>2</sup> - The Northern Star, The Press, The Cork Gazette, and the Harp of Erin. Pamphlets were distributed by hawkers, and hand bills were nailed on or pushed under doors, and scattered in streets - evidence enough that many were able to discover the printed message!

Even the Romish Clergy as well as their people were eager for spiritual help, and courteously received the Methodist preachers. "One of the Bishops said he was thankful to them for calling, and that while they preached such things they ought not to be impeded."<sup>3</sup> Quite a few Sunday Schools were established by the Methodist Church throughout Ireland, and in appealing to the philanthropist, Joseph Butterworth, in 1806, for financial help, they stated that out of forty circuits, figures from twenty-five totalled 204 schools with 12,180 scholars.<sup>4</sup> A brother of Lord Congelton was Sunday School superintendent in Maryborough, and this Mr. Parnell was the man who suggested a Sunday School Society for Ireland in conjunction with other Churches (Church of Ireland and Presbyterian) in 1809.<sup>5</sup>

The Methodists were displaying a remarkable missionary enterprise, as is witnessed to by Daniel O'Connell in a letter to Bishop Doyle in 1817, in which he says "... the Methodists were never in so fair a way of making converts."<sup>6</sup>

1. Crookshank, op. cit. Vol. II, p. 246.

2. McDowell, Irish Public Opinion, 1750-1800, p. 225.

3. Crookshank, op. cit. Vol. II, p. 246.

4. Urwick, Biographical Sketches of J. D. La Touche, p. 397.

5. Crookshank, op. cit. Vol. II, p. 319; see above p. 8.

6. Mac Donagh, op. cit. p. 91.



The most prominent of the Methodist preachers was Gideon Ouseley, a Sligo man, of good social position, who, after years of carelessness and indifference in religious matters, became filled late in life with a zeal for the salvation of souls. He went about Ireland on horseback with a few companions, and having a thorough knowledge of Irish, preached to the people at fairs and markets. The 'black cap' preachers' addresses were in a sense non-theological and non-sectarian. They did not conduct a controversial crusade against the doctrines of the Roman Catholic religion, but preached some of the broad principles of all Christian creeds - the evil of sin, the sacrifice of Christ, and salvation.<sup>1</sup>

A born strategist, Ouseley determined to stabilize the work of evangelism by building little chapels wherever they were needed. These were plain structures and cost about £160 each.<sup>2</sup> The Protestant clergy and gentry contributed freely, and even many Romanists, including some priests, subscribed, whilst in Galway city the Roman Catholic Warden gave liberally, and appended a strong recommendation to his clergy and people to follow his example, giving as his reason, that it would prevent Mr. Ouseley from preaching in the streets<sup>3</sup> - no mean compliment to his work.

In Ulster, Methodist progress was at first slow. In 1760 in Leinster there were over a thousand members, but only 250 in Ulster. Sixty years later, however, the situation was very different. In 1820 Methodists in the rest of Ireland numbered 11,500, while the North had twice this number, of whom about forty per cent. were of Presbyterian upbringing.<sup>4</sup> Many more converts never became Methodists, but remained in the church of their fathers, to infuse there new spiritual life and power. This progress is all the more remarkable when we realise the economic instability of the times. Writing

1. MacDonagh, op. cit. p. 91.

2. Crookshank, op. cit. Vol. II, p. 339; Ouseley got eight chapels built for £1,300.

3. *ibid.* p. 339.

4. *ibid.* p. 466.

to the brethren in Great Britain, in 1822, Irish Methodists could say "Outrages, robberies, burnings, and murders have encompassed us and our societies, in almost every direction... tens of thousands of the poor are begging and starving, trade is depressed, there is no market for agricultural produce ... whole families have emigrated to America as the only place of refuge..."<sup>1</sup>

The Methodists were evidently well received by the common people, but this reception was not universal. Opposition from Episcopal sources compelled preachers to take out licences as Dissenters, and thus avail themselves of the benefits of the Toleration Act. Ouseley had to do this at Clones, in 1800, and many others in later years had to follow his example.

The Methodist influence for evangelism awakened many in the Established and the Presbyterian Churches, but the influence was not all one-sided, as is seen in the demand made for the celebration of the sacraments by Methodist preachers. This resulted, eventually, in the 'split' of 1816, when the Wesleyans and the New Connexionists went their separate ways, the latter, influenced by Presbyterian converts, celebrated the sacraments in their own churches, while the Wesleyans continued attending the Established Church for Holy Communion.

In controversy, Ouseley was again the Methodist stalwart. In 1826, laid aside from itinerancy, he wrote in provincial newspapers, and published pamphlets, for example, "Three letters to prove that Dr. Doyle cannot believe Protestants are heretics;" "The Blessed Virgin vindicated from the defamation of the Priests;" "A reply to Rev. Clowry, P.P. Carlow, against the Bible and Bible Reading," etc.<sup>2</sup> There was no reply from any source to these letters, papers and tracts. Instead there were public recantations of Popery by both laymen and clergy of the Roman Church because they had read these letters.

1. Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, 1822, p. 585.

2. Crockshank, op. cit. Vol. III, pp. 90, 91.



Preaching in County Cavan in 1827, after many successful missions, Guseley said "The country is ripe for the Gospel."<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Fossey Tackaberry, a Methodist minister stationed in Dublin, reported that a spirit of prayer and expectation was on the increase, and there was a spiritual movement in the city, adding the strange commentary "although there was no noise."<sup>2</sup> Twelve years later (1839) he reported, in Belfast, goodly numbers of converts at the various meetings, adding "strange to say, we seldom have any noise in these meetings, and yet the people tremble as if their very hearts were shaken, and sometimes they fall. This is the best field for Methodism in Ireland."<sup>3</sup> This expectation of noise, or excitement, leads us to the thought of prostrations, which first occurred in Newry as early as 1790, when during the services "the most profligate persons who came to the chapel literally fell down and owned that God was with His people" ... "Little, if any, wildness appeared in this gracious work."<sup>4</sup> Ten years later at an open-air meeting attended by some 1,500 people at Rockcorry, County Monaghan, several cases of physical prostration took place.<sup>5</sup> At Bandon,<sup>6</sup> in the same year, many lay prostrate, crying aloud for mercy. Six years later, 1806, at Drum,<sup>7</sup> County Monaghan, near Rockcorry, large numbers literally fell prostrate on the ground at a field meeting. Religious fervour reached a high pitch when cases of faith healing were claimed.<sup>8</sup>

In 1837 the first field meeting was held at Belfast, half a mile out of the town; about 1,600 were present, and the people generally were praying for revival. Tackaberry says "I think we shall have a burst. Everywhere I turn I find our people hope for a revival."<sup>9</sup> In Derry at the same time there

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1. Crookshank, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 111.  
2. *ibid.* p. 111.  
3. *ibid.* p. 278.  
4. Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, 1850, p. 186.  
5. Crookshank, op. cit. Vol. II, p. 185.  
6. *ibid.* p. 186.  
7. *ibid.* p. 282.  
8. *ibid.* pp. 78, 79, and 201.  
9. *ibid.* Vol. III, p. 254.



was a seven months' work of Grace, where it is said "conversions in general took place through the ministry of the Word."<sup>1</sup>

The year 1832 is memorable for the introduction of a fourth section of the Methodist Church. Till then there had been three denominations of Methodists - the Wesleyan, the Primitive Wesleyan, and the New Connexion, - but now a fourth, the Primitive Methodists, entered the country, and "opened a mission in Ireland in 1832."<sup>2</sup> As far back as 1799 an American Methodist evangelist, Lorenzo Dow, had come to Ireland, and after finding that the Irish Methodists shunned his services, crossed to England about 1807. Dow was a flaming evangelist and an impassioned advocate of camp meetings, an "unattached Methodist whom no Conference or Bishop could bind, a veritable comet in the religious world, who had a record of labours and privations almost without parallel."<sup>3</sup> He claimed that camp meetings in America were occasionally attended with something of a pentecostal power, and that much good had been done. The Primitive Methodists, coming to Ireland, brought the first camp meeting plan and conducted most of their work in the North of Ireland. The idea of camp meetings was American<sup>4</sup> and was greatly used in the revival of 1800-03 in Tennessee and Kentucky, and it is worthy of note that it was at these American revivalist meetings that the first unexpected and bizarre manifestations, called "exercises" began to occur. They were considered visible manifestations of the direct action of the Holy Spirit. These consisted of people falling, jerking, barking and laughing. Some even ran and danced under its influence. The singing exercise was a most peculiar thing, for the sound came not from the mouth or nose but entirely from the breast. Few of these manifestations were seen at the camp meetings in Ireland.

1. Crookshank, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 255.

2. Harrison, Barber, Hornby and Davies, The Methodist Church, p. 100.

3. *ibid.* p. 86.

4. Garrison and DeGroot, The Disciples of Christ, pp. 98, 99.



In 1832 Ireland was visited by a dreadful Asiatic cholera epidemic and many thousands died, especially in Dublin, Drogheda, and Sligo, but all parts were affected. The outcome of the scourge was that many careless people were awakened,<sup>1</sup> generally over the whole land, and many of these emigrated partly to escape the scourge, but more especially, if they were converts from Romanism, to gain religious freedom. Some converts suffered much persecution. One poor fisherman had to give up his share in a boat, as his partners would not allow him to fish with them, and a blacksmith lost all his Roman Catholic customers,<sup>2</sup> whilst the priest told his hearers to have no communications with converts, except to give them annoyance, and this was observed to the letter.<sup>3</sup> Despite this persecution of converts to Protestantism, by 1844 Irish Methodism numbered upwards of 50,000 members.<sup>4</sup> Of the spiritual position the Wesleyan Pastoral Address of 1844 said: "Never were conversions more frequent, and never was holiness more deep or more widely diffused among our spiritual children."<sup>5</sup>

For some seasons prior to 1846 the potato crop partially failed, but that year saw widespread destruction. In its trail came disease, famine and enforced emigration due to famine conditions. Altogether about one quarter of the population was lost to Ireland. Yet evangelism went on apace, and despite the heavy drain of emigration, numbers in Methodism dropped only very slightly. It would appear that evangelism was equal to emigration in most places, especially after 1851. Despite the calamitous famine, confidence in revival was great in places. At Priesthill, near Lurgan, three Methodist brethren covenanted to meet weekly and pray revival down. They did so for several months, till at a camp meeting near the Halfpenny Gate, on 20th July, 1851, revival came and continued for months, so that by August almost every house was

1. Coleraine Presbytery Minutes, 15th May, 1851.

2. Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, 1844, p. 143.

3. *ibid.* p. 225.

4. Crookshank, *op. cit.* Vol. III, p. 352.

5. *ibid.* p. 352.

touched, some four hundred finding peace.<sup>1</sup> Other places in the North to have a similar outburst were Omagh, Antrim, Ballymena and Randalstown, besides Derry and Limavady.<sup>2</sup> That the Methodists used every means to preach the Gospel is seen in the village of Arvagh, where the Rev. W. G. Campbell spoke in an old Roman Catholic chapel to about 150 people and forty professed to find peace.<sup>3</sup>

The Rev. John White - President of the Primitive Methodist Conference in Dublin in July, 1858 - summed up the religious situation in Belfast: "For upwards of three years God has been pouring out His Holy Spirit on the Society in this town (Belfast) and making His arm bare in the conversion of sinners, so that a constant steady work has been progressing. There has been no great excitement, such as we have witnessed in other revivals, nor has there been a great number of additions to the society, but there has been an onward movement in every department of our cause."<sup>4</sup>

So in the Methodist Church there was a definite work of evangelical awakening long before 1859. Much new zeal was infused into the Established Church and the Presbyterian Church. Preaching in Irish, open-air work, and tract distribution were undertaken. Secession from the Established Church took place a few years after Wesley's death, and Methodism became an independent church, which in 1844 numbered 50,000 members, two-thirds of these in the North. In the forty years prior to 1859, the sparks of revival fires occurred on more than sixty occasions in various parts of Ireland.<sup>5</sup>

Like the Anglican Established Church when it came to Ireland first, the Presbyterian Church was full of zeal, as is seen in the Six-Mile Water Revival of 1625, and this enthusiasm remained till the first quarter of the eighteenth century,

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1. Crookshank, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 422; see Ballymena Observer, 16th July, 1859.

2. *ibid.* pp. 423-430.

3. *ibid.* p. 476.

4. *ibid.* p. 503.

5. *ibid.* 'Contents'.



when Irish students, accustomed to attend Glasgow College<sup>1</sup> were subjected to the baneful influence of Professors John Simpson,<sup>2</sup> Francis Hutcheson, an Ulsterman, and William Leechman,<sup>3</sup> from 1744 onwards. "The sad results of the reign and fruits of Moderatism are well known. Yet it was a potent and distinguished party. Its culture was attractive and commendable, and procured for it a general acceptance among the upper classes; but its influence on religious conviction, sentiment, and character, was chilling and withering."<sup>4</sup> This work of error entered into the Irish Church, and much of the theology of the Reformation was neglected, and "New Light" paralysis smote the church. Not all forgot the evangel, however, but many did, and for three generations little prominence was given to it. If the transformation in the Established Church was gradual, and effected by a sort of infiltration and permeation, the picture of progress in the Presbyterian cause was a stiff and stern conflict, for "heterodox professors might train a heterodox ministry, but the latter were unable to change the beliefs and opinions of the great majority of their hearers, who refused to be alienated from the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms. Comparatively few heard the ministers unto edification."<sup>5</sup> When these ministers "laid down 'the heads' of their sermon in the pulpit, the congregation laid down their heads in the pews."<sup>6</sup>

The Presbyterian Synod of Ulster was largely deistic in outlook in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Much of the preaching was of the moral essay type, and many of the ministers were not only liberal in theology but also liberal - even national - in politics, despite the Government subsidy of Regium

1. There was no College in Ireland that would admit them.
2. J. S. Reid, History of Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Vol. III, p. 293; see also D. Stewart, The Seceders in Ireland, p. 35, who spells the name as 'Simson'. Simpson was set aside in 1729 for his heterodox teaching.
3. Stewart, op. cit. p. 40.
4. J. A. Wylie, Disruption Worthies, Vol. I, p. xiv.
5. Stewart, op. cit. p. 41.
6. H. G. Graham, Scottish Men of Letters, p. 34.

Donum.<sup>1</sup> The famous Volunteers - a force composed mainly of Protestants, but here and there a few Roman Catholics secured admission to the ranks, and, in one instance, at least, they organised a company of their own, the Irish Brigade;<sup>2</sup> - with their meetings in Dungannon Presbyterian Church,<sup>3</sup> their resolutions to the Dublin authorities in the years around 1782, and their church attendance at both the Presbyterian and Established as well as the Roman Catholic<sup>4</sup> places of worship, show that a great spirit of toleration was abroad. Looking at the matter from another angle it appears that Deism and Non-subscription had dulled vital Christianity into vague dimness in some places, but not in all, for the symptoms of revival were occasionally discernable, both in Scotland and Ireland. In Scotland "there was another party in the Church, called by some in derision "the Wild," and known by the people as the "Evangelical," - a party whose theology was in accordance with the standards of the first and second Reformations, and whose principles were those of the Puritans and the Covenanters, and whose preaching, faithful and fervent, had the scarlet thread through it, and the blood-bought salvation in its freeness and fullness, as its constant and urgent theme."<sup>5</sup> In Ireland in 1803 some good men in the Synod of Ulster called for and succeeded in having passed that "each Presbytery be enjoined to recommend to each member under its care to be exemplary in keeping up the worship of God in his family, or where he resides."<sup>6</sup> Whilst the horrors of the Rebellion extinguished the spirit of political agitation throughout Ulster, they awakened not a few to serious reflection,

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1. See below p.35

2. R.M. Sibbett, Orangeism in Ireland and Throughout the Empire, Vol. I, p. 229.

3. W. T. Latimer, A History of the Irish Presbyterians, p. 363. (Belfast Newsletter says it was composed almost entirely of Dissenters, in 15th February, 1782. Belfast Newsletter, 22nd February, 1782.)

4. Latimer, op. cit. p. 360.

5. Wylie, op. cit. Vol. I, p. xv.

6. General Synod of Ulster Records, p. 268; also J. L. Porter, Life and Times of Dr. Cooke, pp. 35, 36.



and from this time the number of pious ministers steadily grew, slowly at first but as time passed the evangelical fervour increased.

The eighteenth century saw prodigious emigration, especially among the Presbyterian families, so that for about one hundred and fifty years before the Revival, about two million<sup>1</sup> children of emigrants were raised in America. Had it not been for this enormous drain of emigration protestantism would have numbered the larger population. A greater calamity than emigration to Presbyterian influence was the long Non-Subscription controversy. In 1705 the Synod of Ulster made subscription to the Confession of Faith obligatory, on all subsequently admitted to the Christian Ministry, but in that same year the "Belfast Society" was formed by the Rev. James Abernethy, M.A., minister of Antrim, "a man of studious habits, heretical opinions, and remarkable ability."<sup>2</sup> Abernethy preached in 1719 a sermon which set aside the subscription to the Confession required in 1705, and in 1725 the Presbytery of Antrim was formed of those desirous not to subscribe. Others, however, designated the "New Light Party," still occupied many Synod of Ulster pulpits, and as a result that Synod lost much of its prestige as an evangelical denomination. In 1726 "the Synod, apprehending further trouble, decided to exclude this new Presbytery from the judicatories of the Church, though at the same time they refrained from debarring its members from ministerial communion and fellowship."<sup>3</sup>

At the same time as this Irish Non-Subscription controversy there was in Scotland a dispute over patronage, that made an impact on the North of Ireland in due time. In 1739 the Erskines and a few others withdrew to form the Associate Presbytery at Gairney Bridge. These Seceders soon made their way to Ireland, and as the more pious portion of the Presbyterian laity had little confidence in the "New Light" ministers, these new evangelists were well received and soon gathered congregations. The

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1. W. D. Killen, History of Congregations, p. 5.

2. Stewart, op. cit. p. 34.

3. *ibid.* p. 38.

first Secession Church was at Lyle-hill in County Antrim, which was 'erected'<sup>1</sup> on 9th July, 1746. "In the forty-six years (1747-1792) they erected in the North forty-six congregations, and ordained forty-six ministers."<sup>2</sup> The next seventeen years added another forty-five congregations; thus in 1809 they totalled ninety-one.

Politically ostracised after the Restoration, and again after their heroic defence of Derry, Presbyterians were subjected to all sorts of disabilities - hence emigration in such vast numbers - till the last quarter of the eighteenth century, when their opportunity came. The Presbyterian emigrants in America raised the standard of independence to form the United States, forcing the British Government to send almost all troops in Ireland abroad; and with France's declaration of support for the United States, which some expected to take the form of an invasion of Ireland, volunteer defence forces had to be raised at home. Granted arms, they had the appearance of a well equipped army. Furthermore, as Presbyterians bulked large in these Northern Volunteers, and as they discussed political grievances at their meetings, they soon set about having these redressed. The year 1780 saw the hated Test Act repealed; and two years later Presbyterian marriages were validated, and another Act permitted Seceders to swear by lifting up the right hand instead of kissing the book. In 1784 £1,000 per annum was added to the Regium Donum of the Synod of Ulster, and in 1792 an additional £5,000 per annum was granted.<sup>3</sup>

Relief from political disability did not, however, indicate much improvement in religion. For the twenty years preceding 1789 not one single new congregation was 'erected' by the Synod of Ulster, and much the same state of things

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1. A term commonly used in the Presbyterian Church for the establishment of a new congregation.

2. W. D. Killen, History of Presbyterian Congregations in Ireland, p. 6.

3. ibid. p. 7.



continued for the following twenty years.<sup>1</sup> Little regard was paid to the sanctification of the Lord's Day, intemperance abounded, family worship was neglected, error in various forms raised its head, and infidelity made not a few proselytes - in many ways the Church was dormant. The Rebellion with its dreadful deeds awakened the sleeping church to a more evangelical outlook. However, if the Synod of Ulster did not build churches, the Seceders would and did.

It has often been wondered why the Methodist movement at first made less progress in the North of Ireland than in the South, and the reason is found in the Seceders whose influence came to the North of Ireland at a time just before the coming of John Wesley. Breaking away from the rest of the Scottish church on the question of the Oath of Abjuration, Patronage, and especially heterodox theology, they were fervent evangelists and their coming provided an opening for many new churches when the Synod of Ulster showed great hesitation in church extension (indeed, they are said to have "culpably neglected this obvious duty for years"<sup>2</sup>) due, no doubt, to the limit of £1,600 for the Regium Donum no matter how many were the ministers, and to some extent to a legal difficulty (they were accused in Drogheda and Belturbet of using the Regium Donum for church extension), and to the Non-Subscription controversy. "The warm fire of the Evangel as preached by the Seceders contrasted strongly with the precise and cold moral preaching of many members of the older Synod."<sup>3</sup> So it happened that the Evangelical party became the extenders of the church. Unauthorized, they built new meeting houses, and as in the cases of Markethill, Saintfield, and Ray they sought to be erected into new congregations. Their zeal was such that they "in less than a century, organized upwards

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1. Killen, op. cit. p. 7.

2. Stewart, op. cit. p. 228.

3. *ibid.* p. 65.



of one hundred and forty congregations."<sup>1</sup> Their motivating force "was doctrine, as many of the ministers of the Synod of Ulster failed to bear witness to the living love of a Divine Saviour."<sup>2</sup>

Like the split in the Methodists, the "Breach" in the Seceders seemed to fire them to fresh efforts as each claimed to be the true church. So the Seceders revived in the minds of the people those evangelical doctrines which were fast becoming obscured by the moderate doctrines that prevailed in the Synod of Ulster. In reviving the obligations of the Covenants and the doctrines of the Confession of Faith, the Seceders were no doubt conservative and reactionary, a movement backwards to the good old way when Christ was fully recognised as the King and Head of the Church, and the source of its life through intimate fellowship with Him. Their unyielding tenacity to the Confession of Faith saw eventually a change of sentiment take place in an increasing number of the ministers and people of the Synod of Ulster, until by and by the last few heretics were evicted from the Synod of Ulster in the days of Cooke. Of the two divisions of the Seceders it can be said that the Antiburghers were generally defective in education. "Most of them were mediocrities"<sup>3</sup> and as a result they failed to attract the better informed and more responsible classes. In time this was altered and, their zeal remaining, they achieved very considerable success. The "Breach" of 9th April, 1747, had validity in Scotland where contention raged over the burghess-oath. This was an oath sworn in certain towns requiring burghers "to profess the true religion presently professed within this realm, and authorized by the laws thereof,"<sup>4</sup> but there was no burghess-oath in Ireland, so there was no real need for the division. Nevertheless, the Scottish evangelists maintained their differences even when in Ireland. The

1. Stewart, op. cit. p. 228.

2. *ibid.* p. 64.

3. *ibid.* p. 73.

4. *ibid.* p. 51.



solitary Irish Seceder before the Breach was the Rev. Isaac Patton (Lyle-hill) who was present at the Synod in Scotland when the Breach occurred. The exacting Anti-burghers demanded to which side he adhered, and he threw in his lot with them.

For a time the Anti-burghers outdistanced the Burghers in church extension, but in Ireland these latter soon became the more popular. There was a vein of tenderness in their character, lacking in the unrelenting Anti-burghers. "Taking them as a whole they were men with hearts indulgent towards the non-essentials, but at the same time intolerant of the slightest departure from the Confession of Faith."<sup>1</sup> The reason for the pretentious but unedifying education of the Anti-burghers was that they saw most professors at the Scottish Universities as holding heretical opinions. The Burghers had less scruples and allowed their students to attend Glasgow University, where most of them graduated. Their Divinity Class was led by men of ability, e.g., John Brown of Haddington, was one such Professor.<sup>2</sup> The strength of the Burghers is seen in the fact that when the Rev. James Fisher - one of the four who formed the Secession Church at Gairney Bridge - came over to Ireland in 1746, he was given a warm welcome by the Rev. John King of Dromara, a decided evangelical like his neighbour, the Rev. James Allen, of Dromore. In a short space of time these two, Allen and King<sup>3</sup>, had already succeeded in gathering the evangelical ministers of the Presbytery of Armagh, and segregating them to form a new Presbytery of Dromore, in 1743.<sup>4</sup>

The successors of such men were in due time to become more and more mellowed in outlook and zealous in evangelism, and to found the Ulster Evangelical Society in 1798. This was a society patterned on "The General Evangelical Society"<sup>5</sup>

1. Stewart, op. cit. p. 127.

2. *ibid.* p. 129.

3. *ibid.* p. 131.

4. Minutes of the General Synod of Ulster, p. 289.

5. J. K. Foster, Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, Vol. II, p. 207.



founded in Dublin about 1792, and which was one of the first interdenominational groups for evangelism. Men of the stamp of Rowland Hill addressed meetings around Dublin, and through the Ulster Evangelical Society spoke in the North too. The connection between the two societies is seen in the fact that outside of Dublin one of the first places to have the attention of "The General Evangelical Society" was Sligo,<sup>1</sup> where a chapel was built by the aid of gentlemen in the town and Dublin friends. In 1783 the Burgher Synod was called upon to decide in the matter of competing calls from Dublin and Sligo to Mr. John Gibson - a County Down farmer's son. It favoured Sligo, and on November 12, 1783, Gibson was ordained by the Monaghan Presbytery.<sup>2</sup> This is not to say that there was no Presbyterian cause in Sligo, for the Synod of Ulster cause began in 1695, and the minister in Gibson's time was the Rev. Joseph King. Remarkably, both men left Sligo in the same year 1797,<sup>3</sup> when Booth Caldwell succeeded King, and Gibson moved to Richhill.<sup>4</sup> The latter brought with him the idea of the "General Evangelical Society" and the next year saw the foundation, in Armagh city, of the "Ulster Evangelical Society"<sup>5</sup> on 10th October, 1798, with the idea of establishing itinerant preaching through the towns and villages of the province. A parallel to this with the Anglican Church was the Established Church Home Mission founded in 1828.<sup>6</sup> Other Burgher ministers who were founder members of the Ulster Evangelical Society were the Revs. William Henry (Tassa), David Helmes (Eglis), Lewis Brown (Sixmilecross), John Lowry (Clennanees), and George Hamilton (Armagh).<sup>7</sup> Thomas Campbell, of Ahorey, who was Anti-Burgher, was the only such associated with this society in its formation.<sup>8</sup> The most

1. Foster, op. cit. p. 209.

2. Stewart, op. cit. p. 348.

3. Killen, History of Presbyterian Congregations, p. 253.

4. Stewart, op. cit. p. 343.

5. Reid, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 416.

6. See above p. 15.

7. Latimer, op. cit. p. 414.

8. Stewart, op. cit. p. 105.



prominent layman was John Jackson, of Crieve, Ballybay, one of whose daughters became the wife of Sydney Hamilton Rowan - Cooke's henchman -, and another was married to John Johnston (minister of Tullylish and later the leader of the open-air preaching). Most of these ministers had outgrown the trammels of Secession division, and were anxious for union. Campbell, though rebuked<sup>1</sup> for being a member of the Society by his Presbytery in 1799, was one of those appointed to the Burgher Synod of 1803 at Cookstown to try to effect union, a significant sign of the times, and of the progress of Christian thought.<sup>2</sup> One of these men - the Rev. John Lowry, of Clennanees - published a pamphlet entitled "Halleluia" in which he sought to justify the singing of hymns in public worship, but apparently he had not<sup>3</sup> introduced them into his own congregation. Stewart said "Mr. Lowry was a member of the Evangelical Society of Ulster, which may account for his liberality of sentiment."<sup>4</sup> Though nothing came as yet from this idea of hymns it was a straw to show the way the wind was blowing. The whole matter was threshed out at the Synod of 1802, but hymns were not yet acceptable.

That there was movement in the Synods is seen in the fact that in 1813 the Burgher Synod received a communication from the Belfast Academical Institution soliciting their patronage and support. Due enquiry having been made it was seen that the Synod's course of study for students was covered except in theology, and here the Synod was offered a lecture room and the right to appoint a Professor of their own choice. In 1815 the Burgher Synod agreed to recommend their students to attend the Institution.<sup>5</sup> Next year the subject of union with the Anti-burghers was resumed (1816) upon request signed by three ministers

1. Stewart, op. cit. p. 105.

2. *ibid.* p. 193.

3. *ibid.* pp. 190-191; *ct.* Latimer, op. cit. p. 415, note.

4. *ibid.* p. 190.

5. *ibid.* p. 199.

of each synod. Progress was rapid and the following year at Cookstown, where both Synods met, the union was effected in the Rev. John Davidson's Church (Synod of Ulster), on July 9th, 1818.<sup>1</sup> That this union was made in the Synod of Ulster place of worship was a forerunner, suggestive of a future union, some twenty-two years afterwards. The number of ministers now united in the Secession Synod was twenty-seven Antiburgher and seventy Burgher, making a total of ninety-seven.

The Synod of Ulster received the Regium Donum for years, at first as secret service money<sup>2</sup> to the amount of £600, paid by Charles II, later by William III, as the Royal Bounty issued from Hillsborough in 1690. In the second year of William's reign it reached the sum of £1,200. In Anne's reign, about 1711, trouble was experienced in receiving this money, and the Rev. Francis Iredell of Dublin was sent to try to straighten things out. The money was now paid to him for distribution, and when he died in 1739 the Synod appointed Mr. James Lang, a layman resident in Dublin "to manage both receiving and distributing"<sup>3</sup> the money. Mr. Lang was agent for nearly half a century. He died towards the end of the year 1788. His successor was the Rev. Robert Black of Derry, as agent, at the age of thirty-seven. His politics suited the Government and he was a leash that kept the Synod in bounds on some of its fancies. His theology suited the Synod of his day, as he was of Arian or at least non-subscription sympathies. As the years passed and the inclination to liberalism - political and theological - of the rebellion years passed away, his political sympathies were offensive to many in that he was too much under the sway of Lord Castlereagh and the British Government, and so his influence declined. "His political principles were

1. Stewart, op. cit. p. 201.

2. Reid, op. cit. Vol. II, p. 334.

3. Reid, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 289, footnote.



offensive to many who cherished his religious creed, and his religious creed was becoming more and more unpopular."<sup>1</sup> Several years passed away before the new leader arose in the Synod of Ulster - Cooke. Black died tragically in 1817, the result it is thought of his lost power in the Synod. In many ways he was but the gloved hand of Castlereagh, and the appointment of a Professor and the attendance of students at Belfast Academical Institution brought matters to a head. Black suggested that the Synod attachment might be embarrassing - hinting that the Regium Donum might be altered or even withdrawn. This brought a stinging rebuke to the Synod, from the Rev. James Carlile, of Dublin, for "trimming" to suit Castlereagh and Black. The Synod heeded Carlile and proceeded to appoint Mr. Hanna, minister of Rosemary Street, Belfast, its professor of theology. His election shows clearly the ascendancy of the evangelical party in the largest section of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. "Thirty years before, the Synod of Ulster could not have been induced to advance such a man to such a position."<sup>2</sup> Hanna was an evangelical and long known in the Church courts as an asserter of orthodoxy. The immediate result of the united Secession Church was what might be called home mission zeal, and also foreign mission enthusiasm. There is a sense in which the Secession Church itself was of missionary origin. This was not because of a dearth of ministers, but because of the lack of evangelical truth in the land. Now the united Secession Synod manifested a fervent feeling for the extension of the Kingdom of God, both at home and abroad. From 1820 till 1828 nine men went abroad to Canada,<sup>3</sup> whilst a Home Mission Committee was formed and money raised - albeit slowly at first. By 1824 movement was seen in the erection of congregations at Dublin, Mountmellick, Drogheda and Bray, in the South, and in

1. Reid, op. cit. Vol. III, pp. 434-5.

2. *ibid.* p. 433.

3. Stewart, op. cit. p. 206.



the North no less than thirty-four congregations<sup>1</sup> were formed from 1820 till 1840, through the work of the Home Mission of the united Secession Church.

About the same time the Synod of Ulster began a work at Carlow and 1820 saw the Rev. James Morgan ordained there. Missionary fervour seemed to be in the air, for the Unitarians sent over to Ireland the Rev. J. Smithurst from near Exeter. It may be well to state that before he came "the Synod of Ulster was silently assuming a more decidedly evangelical character, and was tolerating with increasing impatience, the deadly heresy with which its energies were paralysed or oppressed. The publication of a code of laws, which had long been in the course of preparation, furnished it with a quiet opportunity for virtually repudiating all ecclesiastical connection with the Synod of Munster and the Presbytery of Antrim."<sup>2</sup> This code, begun about 1808, was not ready until 1824 for ratification, and it was published in 1825, by Synod, "as its canon of discipline and church government."<sup>3</sup> For the previous half century subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith had fallen into disuse in the greater number of Presbyteries, and candidates had been admitted to licence without any reference to their religious principles. One of the architects of the Code was Henry Cooke, at this time minister of Killyleagh, County Down, where one of his elders was Captain Sydney Hamilton Rowan, son-in-law of John Jackson, of Crieve, Ballybay, and brother-in-law of the Rev. John Johnston, of Tullylish. In 1821 Smithurst came amongst other places to Killyleagh, where the Arian group was led by Mr. Rowan's father, Archibald, a man of good family and a graduate of Cambridge,<sup>4</sup> who had also been a noted leader of the United Irishmen and once had a price on his head.<sup>5</sup> Smithurst was

1. Stewart, op. cit. p. 208.

2. Reid, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 440.

3. Minutes of Synod of Ulster (1824), p. 24.

4. E. A. D'Alton, History of Ireland, Vol. V, p. 29.

5. F. W. Palliser, The Irish Rebellion in 1798, p. 47; and J. B. Woodburn, The Ulster Scot, p. 256.



no volunteer apostle, rather he was invited to Ireland and patronized by the Presbytery of Antrim. Cooke worsted Smithurst in violent argument that was theological and political by turns, and wherever Smithurst went Cooke followed till the Exeter man returned to his home in England.

The struggle with Arianism was now on, and Cooke had to go on with it. "The leaders of the New Light party were men of great ability. They had the business of the Synod largely in their hands. They were practised in debate, and eloquent in speech. Their appeals for freedom of thought and Christian forbearance made a deep impression on many who had no sympathy with their theological views. Their theology, besides, was not as yet demonstrative: it was negative rather than dogmatic. The chief men studiously refrained from publishing their opinions on the fundamental doctrines of Scripture. One of them was able to boast that he had preached for half-a-century, and no member of his congregation could say to what party he belonged. Their discourses were in general moral essays, with little in them to alarm, and less to instruct the sinner."<sup>1</sup> The Code helped to straighten up the wayward presbyteries, but there was the Belfast Academical Institution to consider. The Rev. Dr. Bruce had published a volume of sermons that were Arian in outlook, in the very midst of a fierce Synodical dispute over the election of his son, the Rev. W. Bruce, to the chair of Greek. It is relevant to note that the Arians numbered about thirty-five out of a total of two hundred ministers.<sup>2</sup> Matters further advanced when at Synod in Strabane, in 1827, the Rev. Robert Magill, of Antrim, moved that the Clerk, the Rev. William Porter - an avowed Arian - be no longer Clerk.<sup>3</sup> Cooke and Montgomery - leaders of each side - began a mighty debate, and on the vote being taken, 117 ministers and eighteen

1. J. L. Porter, Life and Times of Dr. Cooke, p. 36.

2. Reid, *op. cit.* Vol. III, p. 447.

3. Minutes of the General Synod of Ulster, 1827, p. 6.

elders supported Trinitarianism, whilst two ministers opposed it, and eight declined to vote. Some side must yield, and Cookstown 1828 saw the battle fought out, and the result was another victory for Cooke by eighty-two votes: 139 : 57. The Non-Subscribers then met at a public meeting in Belfast on 16th October, 1828, and adopted a Remonstrance, and in it they said that if the vote was not reversed they would separate. Bad as this whole situation was, worse was to come, for the following March Dr. Young, Professor of Moral Philosophy died. The Synod of Ulster and the Secession Synod agreed in the nomination of the Rev. James Carlile for the vacant chair - a further step towards union. "The electing body had a will of their own, and, by a majority of two, chose Mr. Ferrie," an unknown Scotsman of Arian belief.<sup>1</sup>

Synod met at Lurgan on 30th June, 1829, and a great debate ensued between Montgomery and Cooke. The place of meeting was favourable to the Arians.<sup>2</sup> They had many friends in and around Lurgan, who mustered in large numbers, and the spacious church was crowded in every part. Montgomery spoke for two and a half hours, there was an adjournment for half an hour, when Cooke replied with a speech of two hours. So great was the enthusiasm of the hearers that when their hands were sore with long clapping, they took off their shoes and beat them together.<sup>3</sup> Cooke's triumphant speech virtually settled the Arian controversy in the Synod of Ulster, and a few months later the Remonstrants seceded. The upshot of this victory was the appointment of a Committee of Synod of Ulster members "to confer with the Secession and Reformed Synods on this subject,"<sup>4</sup> - the election of the professor to the chair of Moral Philosophy in Belfast Academical Institution.

1. Porter, op. cit. p. 166.

2. *ibid.* p. 167.

3. *ibid.* p. 175.

4. *ibid.* p. 176.



Looking back over the whole struggle with Arian influence, one or two points must be kept in mind. Though the practice of subscription to the Westminster Confession had fallen into disuse in all but five of the fourteen Presbyteries (the subscriber presbyteries were Dromore, Belfast, Route, Tyrone and Dublin<sup>1</sup>) of the Synod of Ulster, yet the law requiring it had never been repealed, and the recollection of this fact operated as a restraint upon heterodox ministers. The Shorter Catechism was all the while in use and the people were accustomed to learn it, and its teaching often counteracted the Arian message.<sup>2</sup> The Synod always recognised the right of the people to elect their ministers, and the enlightened use of this privilege was always a deterrent to anti-evangelical principles. From the turn of the century any suspicion of "New Light" principles was almost sure to destroy the chances of a candidate to a vacant pulpit. Montgomery and Carley both lost congregations for New Light principles in 1809.<sup>3</sup> "About 1808, vacant congregations in connection with the Synod (of Ulster) began to manifest a decided preference for evangelical ministers."<sup>4</sup> For a quarter of a century before the matter was finally threshed out in Synod "the common people had already performed so effectively the process of purgation that only a comparatively small fraction of the body was tainted with Unitarianism."<sup>5</sup> About thirty-five of the two hundred ministers were connected with it at all, and of these less than twenty separated at the end.

The fear of the opposition of the Seceders kept many of the heterodox ministers quiet as to their real opinions, and at the same time kept the Presbyterian people confirmed in their old principles. Again, until 1813 Unitarians rendered themselves liable to penalties, such as had been suffered by Emlyn, if they openly proclaimed their principles. In that

1. Reid, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 442.
2. Porter, op. cit. Chapter I.
3. J. A. Crozier, Life of Rev. Dr. Henry Montgomery, pp. 22, 23.
4. Porter, op. cit. p. 36.
5. Reid, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 461.



year a Toleration Act was passed, which in 1817 was extended to Ireland. Soon afterwards, Arian doctrines, previously held in private, began to be openly avowed by the Non-Subscribers,<sup>1</sup> while one at least was an open Unitarian - "The Rev. J. Ker denied the doctrine of the Trinity ..."<sup>2</sup>

In the midst of the Arian struggle the Belfast Town Mission was originated by the Rev. R. J. Bryce (son of the Rev. James Bryce, formerly Anti-burgher minister of Killaig,) and a number of other lay and clerical members of the community deeply interested in the spiritual welfare of the non-church-going classes, in February, 1827.<sup>3</sup> Good work was done and many new congregations formed out of the Town Mission.<sup>4</sup> Until 1843 the Town Mission was run on interdenominational lines, but "a High Church member of less liberal ideas (than the Rev. Dr. Bryce) broke up the old Mission and organised another on Episcopalian lines under his own personal supervision."<sup>5</sup> A notice, dated November 18, 1843, and published in the Press over the signature of "Charles Thompson, chairman", informed the whole community that the Belfast Town Mission, as organised sixteen years before, had come to a termination,<sup>6</sup> and instead there were now two Missions in existence - the Church Mission and the Belfast Town Mission, the latter under Presbyterian auspices. It should be mentioned that the reason for the winding up of the old Town Mission was largely financial difficulties.<sup>7</sup>

The need for the Belfast Town Mission is seen in the rapid growth of the town's population. About 1830 it was 50,000, while in 1841 it numbered 75,000,<sup>8</sup> and the industrial conditions were very bad. "In 1850, the expectancy of life from birth, in Belfast, was nine years, due partly to the very high rate of

1. Reid, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 440.

2. Porter, op. cit. p. 36.

3. R. M. Sibbett, For Cross and Crown, p. 4.

4. *ibid.* p. 68.

5. *ibid.* p. 72.

6. *ibid.* p. 78.

7. *ibid.* p. 71.

8. T. W. Freeman, Pre-Famine Ireland, p. 271.



infant mortality; but half the population was under twenty years of age. Few grew old in those days. Industrial progress was dearly paid for."<sup>1</sup> "In one street off the New Lodge Road, 174 persons lived in nine small two-roomed houses, with no water and no privy. In one of these houses there lived nineteen persons in conditions which beggar description. Outside were open sewers."<sup>2</sup> "Life was more arduous in those distant days. The men had to get up much earlier than we do, and their women folk even earlier. Not for them the handy gas ring, for, although a Gasworks had been in operation at Ormeau since 1823, the gas produced was for lighting only and its price put it beyond the reach of most workpeople. Many used candles and the poor burnt the rush light, which consisted of rushes dipped in grease and clamped in an iron holder, which gave five and a half hours of light for a farthing. Matches, which had been invented a short time previously, were so unreliable that most people kept a tinder box in the house. Water, for the most part, had to be fetched from the public fountains, which were few and far between."<sup>3</sup> For thousands of these poor people there was no means of grace unless the Town Mission could help to raise little tabernacles, which often grew into churches. Six of the nine Belfast Town Mission halls in 1857 were supported by private individuals and manufacturing companies in the town.<sup>4</sup>

A sign of the new life in the Synod of Ulster is the Dublin Missionary Synod of 1833 which was called for at the

1. Moody and Beckett, Ulster Since 1800 (Vol. ii) p. 94, B.B.C. Talks. "The expectation of life of Northern Ireland children has increased since the beginning of the century by 25 years for girls (71.8 years compared with 46.7 in 1902) and by 20 years for boys (67.4 against 47.1). This is disclosed in a report by the Registrar General for the year 1959." (Quoted from Ulster Commentary No. 180 January, 1961, issued by the Government of Northern Ireland, printed for H.M. Stationery Office, Belfast.)
2. Moody and Beckett, op. cit. p. 95.
3. W. E. Dornan, The Story of the City of Belfast Y.M.C.A., pp.14, 15.
4. Sibbett, op. cit. p. 135.



General Synod in Cookstown, July, 1833,<sup>1</sup> to consider the "best means of carrying forward and extending the Missionary operations of this Church." "This meeting", said one of the speakers, "is the first on record of a whole Church, by her representatives, met to devise and adopt measures for disseminating the Gospel through the length and breadth of Ireland."<sup>2</sup> In a devout and impassioned address, Dr. MacLeod, a distinguished Scottish Gaelic scholar, urged upon the Synod the more systematic use of the Irish language for the spread of the Gospel in the west of Ireland.<sup>3</sup>

It seems to have fallen to the lot of the Rev. Robert Allen (Stewartstown) to use the suggestions made in Dublin of Irish-speaking schools.<sup>4</sup> The first number of the Missionary Herald (1843) stated that there were three million people using the native language. In November, 1834, Allen had applied to the Home Mission to 'establish' schools in Tyrone and Derry.<sup>5</sup> In 1835, thirty Irish schools were at work with 1,400 pupils,<sup>6</sup> and by 1842 there were two hundred teachers and 10,000 pupils,<sup>7</sup> while by 1845 it was officially reported that "during the preceding nine years above 17,000 adults had been taught to read the Holy Scriptures in the Irish tongue."<sup>8</sup>

The Union of Synods of 1840 at once lifted Irish Presbyterianism into an evangelistic position such as it had never before occupied. That Union was born in the prayer meetings of the Students' Missionary Association. A few years later the "Connaught Mission" originated in the same prayer meeting. This Association with its practical ideas sent the Rev. Michael

1. Minutes of the General Synod of Ulster, 1833, p. 41.
2. Hamilton Magee, 50 Years of the Irish Mission, p. 19.
3. Minutes of the General Synod of Ulster, 1834, p. 18; and Report of the Presbyterian Missionary Society, 1834, p. 6.
4. Magee, op. cit. p. 22.
5. Synod of Ulster Minutes 1855, p. 24; Home Mission Report, p. 9.
6. Synod of Ulster 1835 Home Mission Report, p. 10.
7. Magee, op. cit. p. 22.
8. Sketch of the Irish Schools (General Assembly) Belfast. Banner of Ulster office, 1845.



Brannigan, a licentiate of the Tyrone Presbytery, to be their missionary in the South and West of Ireland. A fluent Irish speaker and born a Roman Catholic, he was awakened in an Irish school in Tyrone, and came to hear the Gospel preached in Stewartstown Presbyterian Church by Mr. Allen. Brannigan came to the west in January, 1846, and was received with uncommon respect, it being believed that he was educated for the priesthood as well as the Presbyterian ministry and had "got the two larnins." He later wrote of the Irish schools in the west "when I came to Connaught in January, 1846, there were 112 schools scattered over Mayo and Sligo; and I must say that for numbers and efficiency they far surpassed the most flourishing of the schools which came under my cognizance in the counties of Tyrone, Derry, Antrim, Fermanagh and Donegal in Ulster."<sup>1</sup>

An interesting matter arising from the revived interest in religion is the rate<sup>2</sup> of building of new Presbyterian churches:

	Synod of Ulster	Secession
1820-30	39 )	
1830-40	83 )	34
	<u>122</u>	

Total new churches in 20 years - 156, nearly eight per annum. After the upheaval of 1820-30 (the Arian trouble) there arose "a new spirit of seriousness throughout society to an extent never known before,"<sup>3</sup> which accounts for more than double the number of churches in the second decade.

After the Union the General Assembly added<sup>2</sup>

in 1840-50	46 new congregations
1850-60	36 " "
1860-70	<u>43</u> " "
	125 in 30 years, average 4 per year.

This slowing down is accounted for by the fact that to a large extent the need for new church buildings was not so urgent,

1. Missionary Herald, June 1848, p. 557.

2. These figures were counted from the Minutes of the General Assembly, and the Minutes of the Synod of Ulster. The Secession figures are given in the Seceders in Ireland, pp. 207-208.

3. Reid, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 468.

as the population had dropped in numbers due to the famine aftermath. An idea of the magnitude of the emigration is seen in the fact that in the congregation of Knowhead (Derry Presbytery) between 1848 and 1856, out of a total of 230 families no less than forty-three families had emigrated, twenty-five to Australia and the United States of America, and eighteen to other places.<sup>1</sup>

The new zeal expressed itself in the coming insistence on Subscription to the Westminster Articles. This was first mooted in 1829 by the Rev. John Brown (Aghadoey) who believed that so long as subscription was unsettled the triumph of evangelism was incomplete. Not till 1835 was this finally settled, in that no further exception or explanation would be granted.<sup>2</sup> By returning to the practice of unqualified subscription, the Synod, in so far as ecclesiastical arrangements could avail, completed its doctrinal reformation. The General Synod was thus almost entirely assimilated with the Irish Secession Synod, and no good reason could be assigned why the two bodies should not be incorporated. Early in 1834 a large and influential meeting, composed of ministers and laymen of both Synods, was held in Belfast to confer on the subject of union. Soon a devotional meeting took place in which both Synods' ministers took part. The common ground of both parties was surveyed in a letter written by "A Seceding Minister" in the Orthodox Presbyterian, and it was seen to be very large.<sup>3</sup> However, time was needed for all the dust of conflict to settle. In 1838 the Government made a new arrangement with regard to the Regium Donum wherein both synods got the same distribution of £75 per minister. The student body now took a hand, and at their united prayer meeting had the Rev. John Coulter - a Secession minister - speak to them in April, 1839. The next year - 1840 - saw the union completed, and the united church with 433 congregations contained nearly 650,000 people.<sup>4</sup>

1. Presbytery of Derry Minutes, Visitation at Knowhead, 5th

2. Reid, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 473. August, 1856.

3. Stewart, op. cit. p. 222.

4. Latimer, op. cit. p. 466 (Synod of Ulster 292, Secession 141)



In the same year the Synod of Munster was split in two, when the orthodox members withdrew to form the Presbytery of Munster, consisting of seven congregations and eight ministers. These joined the General Assembly in 1854, on condition of still remaining a non-subscribing body. It was, however, arranged that its members at their ordination or installation would present a written document expressing adherence to the doctrines of the Westminster Confession.<sup>1</sup>

From all this it can be seen that while in the Secession Church there was a work of the Spirit in the keeping up of the Evangel, yet among the Synod of Ulster there had been need in some measure for a renewal of true devotion. This was effected by the re-introduction of Subscription to the Confession of Faith, and it was accelerated by Cooke's driving out of the Non-Subscribers. How much longer it would have taken had Cooke not acted so precipitately is a matter of conjecture. The seriousness of the Presbyterian people was increasing year by year, yet outward signs were not always seen of the growing inward desire.

The crescendo of religious expression in experience is seen in the work of the Established Church changing from impersonal deism to a personal evangelical message and a vital interest in the souls committed to their care. The Methodists show the crescendo in the gradual rise of interest among the people in the preached Word - 'the country is ripe', 'we shall have a burst', 'The Spirit is working', with prostrations and even healing by faith. The reserved, staid Presbyterians, slowest to rid themselves of Arian easy-going for evangelical enthusiasm, suddenly determined, after 1840, to work for revival. The crescendo of this effort was in a measure unseen before, and culminated in the Revival of twenty years later - 1859. As the Rev. George Cron, of Belfast, said in that year of Grace "The Revival has been in a great measure

1. Latimer, op. cit. p. 488.

confined, without specifying the smaller denominations, to the Presbyterian, Episcopalian, and Methodist Churches, particularly the Presbyterian Church."<sup>1</sup>

Such is the story of the three major Protestant churches in Ireland before 1859. But political considerations, including social and economic aspects, must be studied in view of Edwin Orr's remarks on the lack of political influence on the nineteenth century Awakening.<sup>2</sup> After the Rebellion came the proposition of Pitt - the Union of Ireland and England, which was accomplished by what would now be called unashamed jobbery at a cost of one and a quarter million pounds spent on buying parliamentary seats and with them voters.<sup>3</sup> The Union was carried with a bought majority of forty-six, despite the fact that twenty-seven out of the thirty-two counties petitioned against the Union. The voting in county Down was 17,000 against, and 415 in favour of the Union. A grand total of 707,000 were against whilst those in favour did not exceed 3,000.<sup>4</sup> The only things that got the measure through were the weak state of the country after the Rebellion, and the fact that the Volunteers were no longer there. Pitt and his henchman, Castlereagh, were up to all the tricks of bribery imaginable, but that this was the usual way of things is seen in the practice of the same methods in the 1832 Reform Bill. The Papists were offered Emancipation, and the Presbyterians were promised a University at Armagh with an endowed chair in theology; as well, a large increase in the Regium Donum was offered. Of these all that was done in fulfilment was an increase of £8000 in the Regium Donum. The promised Catholic Emancipation did not come, largely through the stupidity of George III and his advisers, who felt he would break his coronation oath if he agreed. The Roman Catholic hierarchy went

1. G. Cron, The Ulster Revival, p. 3.

2. Orr, op. cit. p. 265.

3. P. W. Joyce, A Concise History of Ireland, p. 286.

4. Gilbert, History of the City of Dublin, Vol. II, p. 151; and Irwin, op. cit. p. 85.



so far as to grant the right of vote by the Crown to the appointment of Irish Catholic bishops, a move done without the consent of the people.<sup>1</sup> This was formally offered in London by Lord Fingall and Dr. Milner, and was presented to Parliament by Grattan and some friends. When the matter was publicised, the clergy were taken by surprise, and Daniel O'Connell - "the Liberator" - opposed it even against the aristocracy, and eventually achieved Catholic emancipation without such concessions. Not much progress was made till 1823 when the Catholic Association was formed by O'Connell and Chiel, with its famous penny a week "rent" to pay expenses. Six years hard laborious work won the Emancipation, and in 1829 it was granted. But immediately the franchise was raised to £10, from the forty shillings that still continued in England. This was aimed at defranchising the Roman Catholic freehold voters in large numbers - O'Connell's main strength.

The Emancipation Act of 1829 was not a full measure of reform, for the peasants were still obliged to support the Protestant clergy by tithes, and keep the Protestant churches in repair. They continued to be harassed by the tithe-proctors and others, who if the money was not forthcoming seized the poor people's cows, bits of furniture, beds - if they had any - blankets and anything they could lay hands on. About 1830 the "Tithe War" broke out. In this the police and military were called out to support the collectors in making their seizures, and almost daily there were conflicts, often with loss of life. At Newtownbarry, in Wexford, in 1831, thirteen peasants were killed by the yeomanry and police. In 1832 eleven police were killed with several peasants in a tithe battle near Kilkenny.<sup>2</sup> Determined resistance was everywhere and bloody battles took place. Soon the expense of collection surpassed the amount received, e.g., only £12,000 was collected at a cost of £27,000,<sup>3</sup> with

1. Joyce, op. cit. p. 290.

2. ibid. pp. 296, 297.

3. Phillips, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 298.



the loss of many lives, shot, bayoneted, or hanged, on the one side, or assassinated on the other.

It was a tragic picture. In 1833 the Church Temporalities Act was passed, but it did not accomplish much, and so a Government Loan of one million pounds was made to the Church to overcome arrears of Tithe. This was little use either, and next year the tithe was replaced by a rent charge of eighty per cent. of the tithe value, and payable by the landlord. The British Government now took a hand in this Tithe business, and the "Lichfield House Compact"<sup>1</sup> was the result. O'Connell undertook not to press for a disestablishment of the Irish Church, not to urge a repeal of the Act of Union, not to demand parliamentary reform, and promised to help to maintain government authority in Ireland. In return he stipulated that Roman Catholic Emancipation should be made effective, that municipal bodies in Ireland should be reformed as in England, and that men of popular sympathies should be appointed to public office in Ireland. The readjustments and improvements brought about by the Temporalities Act and the Tithe Rent Charge Act removed the more serious causes of unrest for a generation.

One of the tantalizing questions about the Union of 1800 is the change of outlook that took place in about a quarter of a century, when it is remembered that the majority of Irish Protestants were hostile to union, and the fact that a generation later in 1829 when O'Connell began his campaign for the repeal of the Union, he got few Protestant supporters, whilst on the other hand the Romanists who were so strongly in favour of Union were now its chief opponents. Those who read the signs of the times correctly in the years after 1782-92 (the days of the Volunteers) could have foretold what was likely to transpire. After that time it seemed to be seen that, while it was quite right to lift the burden off the Roman

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1. D'Alton, History of Ireland, Vol. V, p. 154.



Catholics and give them some freedom, to enable them to enter all positions of authority was another matter altogether. Then the slaughter of the Protestants in the south in the Rebellion was another reason for change of outlook. After the Union, admittedly, there was a good deal of prosperity all over, due to the Napoleonic wars, and the necessity of industrial England to take food from Ireland. After that date (1815) things altered, and the free entry of food from Europe spoiled the Irish export trade in some ways, but mostly in the southern half of the land, for the North itself was becoming more and more industrialized.<sup>1</sup> This spelt prosperity which in turn meant support for Union. Roman Catholic Emancipation clinched the matter, for the Protestants saw that they were no longer the governing power in the land; they also saw that they might still be in with the majority if they did business in political matters in Westminster.

The hard-headed Ulstermen were good farmers, as is seen in the fact that with farms usually below the average of seven acres deemed the minimum for economic living, they contrived to live often on five acres or less and do it well, as is seen in their wages being one-third higher than the average for the rest of Ireland,<sup>2</sup> and this on the worst soil in the realm. Tenant right, the cotton and then the linen industry, domestic and later factory production, despite the highest population density in the whole land (406 per square mile of arable land), the success of flax growing, the extension of joint stock banking after 1825,<sup>3</sup> and coincidence of political and religious views between tenant and landlord, created these better social conditions. These matters, too, were conducive to the emergence of a strong middle class when such hardly existed elsewhere in Ireland. The influence of this prosperity

1. Moody and Beckett, op. cit. Vol. I, Ch. 3.

2. Freeman, op. cit. p. 269.

3. Moody and Beckett, op. cit. Vol. I, p. 32.

was felt by almost every section of society. The landlords found their rents paid with regularity, by tenants who were comparatively well fed. The farm labourer did not have to live on the monotonous potatoes and salt as elsewhere. Instead with their Scottish love of porridge, oats were grown for this diet, and bread and even occasional meat were partaken.<sup>1</sup>

Industrialisation began during the American War of Independence when the first Irish cotton mill was built at Whitehouse.<sup>2</sup> Thus a new industry appeared in Ulster which was a contrast to linen, in that raw material was imported and yarn was machine-made, thus control was in the hands of the industrialist. Begun behind protective duties of the old Irish Parliament, the cotton industry lasted only a quarter of a century after the Union, for the duties were abolished. However, it was as a model for the re-organisation of the linen industry that it is chiefly important. Lancashire competition conquered Irish cotton in the 1830's, but by 1840 there were no less than fifteen flax-spinning mills in Belfast, and they returned the compliment by conquering the linen industry of Leeds. With these mills grew up maintenance engineering industries, for engines and spinning machinery. Railways were demanded by the linen trade, and they followed the traffic of the stage coach.<sup>3</sup>

As a modern popular writer on the Revival has laboured the point of "how slow communications were in 1859"<sup>4</sup> it is important to note the means of conveyance, when thirty and more years before the Revival, there were many stage coaches in the country. The 'Self Defence' ran three days a week between Ballymena and Belfast, through Kells village and Antrim, as is seen in a county map published in 1885. The 'Lark', a competitor, performed the same journey on the very

1. Moody and Beckett, Ulster Since 1800, Vol. II, p. 20.

2. Freeman, op. cit. p. 85.

3. Moody and Beckett, op. cit. Vol. II, ch. XI.

4. J. T. Carson, op. cit. p. 22.



same days. The 'Waterloo Coach' ran between Randalstown and Belfast, through Antrim, coming into the Ulster capital every morning and returning in the evening. Each weekday 'Johnston's Day Coach' linked up Armagh, Lurgan and Belfast, while 'McComb's Coach' plied daily between Belfast and Lisburn. In other districts there were: the 'Portaferry Commercial Traveller Coach', linking up the Ards Peninsula, the 'Downpatrick Union Coach', the 'Belfast and Dublin Fly Van', the 'Dromore Gig', the 'Wellington Coach', running between Larne and Belfast; and the 'Union Coach', journeying from Magherafelt to Belfast and back. In addition there was a big array of cars for shorter distances. From the opening of the Ulster Railway between Belfast and Lisburn, on August, 12, 1839, and of the North Eastern Railway between Ballymena and Belfast about 1847, the railways were extended, and goods and passenger traffic grew to undreamt-of proportions.<sup>1</sup>

Whatever we may think of Belfast as an outpost of industrial Britain, at least the industrial revolution of the North has kept close to the city, and this most of all separated the Ulster middle class<sup>2</sup> with their new-found Unionism from the Nationalism of earlier generations. On the other hand, the Romanists turned from Union through disappointment. Promised emancipation never came till they fought for it, and tithes were only done away after a struggle. Thwarted hopes made for bitterness, and Union became distasteful.

Education was another matter which took up much interest. In 1831 there was announced a new system of education with two fundamental principles, first, combined literary and separate religious instruction for children of different religions; and

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1. Moody and Beckett, op. cit. Vol. I, p. 36; and Sibbett, op. cit. p. 66. See below Ch. III, p. III, footnote: twenty-seven coaches and cabs passed through Connor in a week.
  2. The Ulster people had "a commercial and industrial spirit uncommon elsewhere in Ireland" - Green, in Moody and Beckett, op. cit. Vol. II, p. 111.



secondly, no interference with the religious principles of any child. This was known as the National School System. Before this there were the Charter Schools founded in 1733 to educate Romanists as Protestants. Large amounts of public money were spent in this way. In 1817 £39,000 was allocated to them, and by that same year no less than half a million pounds had been so spent from their foundation in 1733.<sup>1</sup> But things were revealed that showed the whole system was corrupt. The children were 'ill-fed, ill-clad, and ill-taught ... a disgrace to all society.'<sup>2</sup>

One would have expected that the churches would have welcomed the new scheme. But no, the Established Church held a huge meeting protesting against the proposed neglect of scripture. The Primate, the Archbishop of Tuam, and fifteen Bishops supported this complaint.<sup>3</sup> Next the Synod of Ulster, in 1834, after a battle between Cooke and Carlile, declined to let its ministers have aid from the board, and even the Orange Order was strongly against the Government plan.<sup>4</sup> All who supported the Government were viewed as traitors: Carlile, of Mary's Abbey, Dublin, who was a Commissioner of Education, and Archbishop Whateley, another Commissioner; whereas on the Roman Catholic side Murray, Archbishop of Dublin, became a Commissioner with his brethren's agreement. Doyle was a strong supporter of the scheme.<sup>5</sup> O'Connell, too, was in warm approval. It even had the Pope's blessing.<sup>6</sup> Only when the Ultra-Montane Cullen succeeded Murray in 1852 was the system said to be contrary to the "spirit and practice" of the Roman Church!<sup>7</sup>

The years 1842-4 saw a real battle over the validity of marriages solemnized between Presbyterians and members of the

1. Phillips, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 308.

2. Steven, Inquiry into the Charter Schools (1819) quoted by Emerson in Phillips, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 308.

3. Phillips, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 310.

4. *ibid.* p. 310; and Killen, Ecclesiastical History, Vol. II, p. 455.

5. MacDonagh, op. cit. pp. 148, 149.

6. Killen, op. cit. Vol. II, p. 456, footnote.

7. MacDonagh, op. cit. p. 150.



Church of Ireland. There was much irritation throughout Ulster till in 1842 a Bill was passed through the Commons legalizing past marriages. In 1844 a further Act allowed Presbyterians and Church of Ireland members to be married by a minister of the Presbyterian Church.<sup>1</sup> In 1858, at a Visitation in Cullybackey, there seemed still a lurking fear of marriages in Presbyterian Meeting Houses, when we read "some marry in Registry Office."<sup>2</sup>

Then another matter that loomed large was the temperance question, "... drunkenness was the national curse of Ireland, and it was the curse of Belfast in particular."<sup>3</sup> During the ten years prior to 1829 the consumption of drink doubled, and many realised that something would have to be done to curb this state of affairs. The Temperance Reformation, like many other extensive social changes, had small beginnings. It originated in the United States, and the Rev. Joseph Penney, an Irish Presbyterian emigrant from Drumlee, County Down, who was on a visit home, introduced the idea to the Rev. Dr. Edgar, minister in Belfast Secession Church and Professor of Theology in Belfast Academical Institution. Edgar took up the matter fervently and soon had others to help him. Launching the campaign in 1829 he travelled extensively to propagate the ideals. The Rev. George Whitmore Carr, onetime Established Church minister, become Dissenter, resident in New Ross, started the first provincial Bible Society in 1804, and the first Temperance Society in the Old World, in 1829, after reading a letter in the Belfast Newsletter<sup>4</sup> on the subject. In Belfast Edgar helped by the Rev. Matthew Tobias,<sup>5</sup> a Primitive Methodist; the Rev. James Morgan, a Presbyterian; the Rev. Thomas Hincks, an Episcopalian, and the Rev. John Wilson, a Congregationalist, launched the

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1. Phillips, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 313, and Reid, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 487.
  2. Minutes of the Ballymena Presbytery, 3rd August, 1858.
  3. Sibbett, op. cit. p. 37.
  4. Belfast Newsletter, 14th August, 1829.
  5. Crookshank, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 135.



Temperance cause. Despite desperate difficulties, Edgar - refused the use of his own church, Alfred Place - held the opening meeting in Donegall Square Methodist Church, with the connivance of Mr. Tobias. Nine years later the Rev. Theobald Matthew, of the Capuchin Friars,<sup>1</sup> joined a Temperance Society started in Cork City by some Protestants, chiefly Quakers. He administered the total abstinence pledge to all denominations, and a wonderful change came over the country.

One of the important points to be considered is the vast and unparalleled increase in the population in the first half of the nineteenth century. Going back to the times of the Plantation, we find that at the end of Elizabeth's reign (1603) the population was estimated to be not more than 700,000. Before the Rebellion (1641) it had doubled in a space of forty years to about one and a half millions. At the time of the coming of William III it had dropped to one million, but a generation later, at the end of Anne's reign, it had topped the two million mark. Slow continued increase was noticed until the time of the American Civil War when the three million mark was reached. Momentum now increased rapidly, and by the time of the French Revolution it was four millions, an increase of thirty-three and a third per cent. in half a generation. In the next half generation it again increased by one-third, so that by the time of the Battle of Trafalgar it was five and a half millions. Ten years later, at the time of Waterloo, the six millions were passed easily. The beginning of the reign of George IV saw a population of six and three-quarter millions in Ireland, whilst the end of his reign, ten years later, saw it seven and three-quarter millions. At the time of the famine the population of Ireland reached an all-time record of almost eight and a half millions. The proportion of Romanists to Protestants (all churches) was three to one, which proportion remained fairly constant all the years.

1. P. W. Joyce, op. cit. p. 298. Part I, Dublin, 1847, p. 198.

See also Freeman, op. cit. p. 53.



Bearing in mind that England and Wales could be described best as an industrial nation, it is interesting to notice that the mainly agricultural Ireland carried almost as many persons to the square mile as did England and Wales - 251 : 272. In contrast Scotland, with about the same area as Ireland, had a lesser population in the ratio of 1 : 3. Of the four Irish provinces, the number of persons per square mile of arable land is, Ulster 406, Connaught 335, Munster 332, Leinster 247, showing that Ulster carried a fifth more population. In Ulster itself County Armagh had the staggering total of 511 people to the square mile of arable land, by far the highest concentration in Ireland. Comparing the Continent of Europe at the same time (1841) the most densely populated countries were France 161 per square mile, the Papal States 158, Austria 138, and Portugal 97.<sup>1</sup> Politically the reason for the increase in population was the new readiness of the landlords to allow their tenants to subdivide their little holdings, especially after 1793 when every holding of forty shillings carried with it a vote, and when the landlord could "manage" this vote to suit himself with the help of the threat of eviction. This went on largely till after 1829, when the right of franchise was raised to £10. Again, till 1815, there was a great demand for food in England, as none came from the Continent till Napoleon was defeated.

This raises an interesting question as to what might be the desirable size of farm, having regard to a fair standard of living in these circumstances. Two factors must be taken into account, the quality of the land and the ability of the occupant, as well as his industry. The Devon Commission<sup>2</sup> believed from its information that from about ten acres to about six were needed for a family of five, according to these considerations. Many (about one-third) had less than seven acres, and it would appear that usually this was too little.

1. For detailed information see Appendix D.

2. The Devon Commission Report, Part I, Dublin, 1847, p. 398.  
See also Freeman, *op. cit.* p. 58.

In Ulster with its 406 persons to the square mile of arable land on the average, with the maximum of 511 in Armagh County, the question arises, how did these people make a living? The answer seems to be not only their good, thrifty husbandry, but also their cottage industries - mostly to do with the linen trade. "A contributory factor, too, was the basic economy of the mixed farmer and weaver in the eastern half of Ulster particularly. Weaving on the handloom had helped in pre-famine years to make the Ulster small farmer more prosperous than farmers in the rest of Ireland."<sup>1</sup> As well the custom of "tenant-right" meant at least some compensation for improvement done to property. As Beckett reminds us "Ulster farmers could afford to emigrate if they became dissatisfied with conditions at home."<sup>2</sup> The major part went to America and their letters home encouraged more to follow for "emigration begets emigration"<sup>3</sup> it is said.

In Ulster "wages were so small that the working man with a family to sustain must have found it difficult to purchase the bare necessities of life. The highest paid workers at that time seem to have been the engine drivers on the Ulster Railway, which connected Belfast with Armagh, who received £2 10s. Od. per week. Firemen were paid £1 4s. Od., while porters, signalmen, and guards received only 10s. weekly. In other walks of life sawyers and curriers were comparatively well off with 28s. or 30s., but paviors and masons earned only 15s. The cheapness of clothing was not surprising when we learn that tailors were paid 10s. a week. In the linen mills there were adult women workers who received only 3s. weekly."<sup>4</sup> Labourers earned 10d. per day, less 2d. if food was provided. These were summer wages. The daily hire in

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1. Moody and Beckett, op. cit. Vol. II, p. 42.

2. *ibid.*

Vol. I, p. 12.

3. Freeman, op. cit. p. 40.

4. Dornan, op. cit. p. 15.



winter - from November till springtime - was 8d.<sup>1</sup> No wonder there was emigration, when the typical American letter told of labourers earning a dollar (or 4s.)<sup>2</sup> a day, that they were in good demand at this wage, that they could board well on 2½ dollars per week (10s.) having meat three times a day, as compared with three times a year in Ireland. No doubt it is true to say that "the America fever seemed to have permeated the entire country, and no village however small was left unaffected."<sup>3</sup>

Not all, however, could manage to travel to the 'promised' land, at least at first, for it has been estimated that in a normal season the potato crop from one acre was enough to maintain a man, his wife and six children for three-quarters of a year, albeit in squalor.<sup>4</sup> What then was he to do for his family in the "meal months" - i.e., when the old potato crop was done and the new not ready - for the lumper potato, the usual food of the cottier, was popularly supposed to go bad for Garlick Sunday, the first in August, and the new lumpers were not ready until mid-September or October? During these weeks the poor had no resource but to buy potatoes and meal, often from the local usurer on exorbitant credit terms.<sup>5</sup> Many poor men tramped the road to an Irish sea-port - Belfast, Drogheda, Dublin, etc., and crossed to England or Scotland to help to gather the harvest. The greater ease of travel given by steamboats in the twenties established the traffic of seasonal migrants, and numbers rose from 6,000 to 8,000 at this time, to at least 60,000 in 1841.<sup>6</sup> When it is remembered that the holders of five acres or less were in a miserable condition - and there were over 300,000 (45 per cent. of all holders) scarcely able

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1. Freeman, op. cit. p. 59. See further Edwards and Williams, The Great Famine, pp. 95, 96.

2. Arnold Schrier, Ireland and American Emigration, 1850-1900,

3. *ibid.* p. 19. p. 29.

4. *ibid.* p. 12.

5. Edwards and Williams, op. cit. p. 96.

6. Freeman, op. cit. p. 43.

7. Schrier, op. cit. p. 47.



to pay the rent, living almost entirely on potatoes and desperately in need of work - it is not surprising that such as these were glad to go even as far as Norfolk,<sup>1</sup> where a profitable harvest saw them home with no less than £4 clear profit.

The estimated total emigration to the United States and Canada between 1780 and 1845 was about 1,140,000, with some 600,000 to Great Britain.<sup>2</sup> The underlying cause of this was the fact that four-fifths of the Irish people lived on the soil, and only one-fifth in towns and villages; whereas in England it was equally divided. Between 1851 and 1861 a total emigration to the United States of 2,287,205 occurred, made up as follows: English, 620,401; Scottish, 173,817; Irish, 1,106,500; foreigners, 189,955; and not distinguished 196,532.<sup>3</sup> Poverty and fear drove many to cross the seas, and fares were very cheap on boats that brought timber from Canada or cotton from the United States; "emigrants could be used as ballast on the return journey!"<sup>4</sup> The steam packets were favoured by richer people and cargo vessels by the poor, especially as the fares, normally about £2 10s.0d. were sometimes as low as 15s.<sup>5</sup> Emigration is a strange picture in Ireland. Roughly speaking, till the rise of the United States in 1776 the bulk of the emigrants were Presbyterians from the north and converts from Romanism in the south. By the turn of the century the Romanist south also began to emigrate rapidly. In 1841 over eighty per cent. of all farms were under fifteen acres. Ten years later this proportion was down to less than fifty per cent.<sup>6</sup> This meant the elimination of small labourers' farms, conacre, and a great reduction in cottars. Further emigration

1. Freeman, op. cit. p. 24.

2. K. H. Connell, The Population of Ireland, p. 27;  
see also Freeman, op. cit. p. 38.

3. McComb's Presbyterian Almanac, 1865, p. 6, quoting Royal  
Insurance Company's Almanac, 1864.

4. Freeman, op. cit. p. 40.

5. M. L. Hansen, Ireland and Irish Emigration to the New  
World, pp. 180-182.

6. Schrier, op. cit. p. 67.



came as a result of this, and at the same time was also the cause of it. From 1852 till 1872 the remittances sent home by emigrants in the famous "Americkey Letter" exceeded by £1,750,000 the total spent by the Government in relief in Ireland.<sup>1</sup> In the Famine days it was coming in at the rate of over one million pounds per annum. It has been ascertained that in the fifty years 1850-1900 some two hundred and fifty million dollars came and nearly forty per cent. in the shape of sailing tickets - sufficient to finance about three-quarters of the emigration from the country.<sup>2</sup>

The Land Question was long a burning one in Ireland; whereas in England landlord and tenant both of the same race had their own rights, in Ireland the conqueror landlords were veritable masters in their dealings with the peasants. Often the landlord was an absentee, and his peasants had to deal with middlemen, called 'proctors'. In England, the land was laid out in drainage, fenced, and had outhouses on it, at an arranged fair rent. The Irish tenant had to build house, fence land, drain it, build any other houses he wanted, and if evicted - as he so often was - he got no compensation. Thus the Irish tenant farmer had no real interest in the land, was never encouraged to be thrifty, nor in any way to better his land or husbandry. Ulster alone was in a slightly better way, for the settlers here had established a Custom or Tenant Right. This generally protected them from unfair eviction, and in some cases gave them a kind of ownership over their improvements, which they could sell to their successors. At the time of the "Napoleonic War tenant-right was selling at from £5 or £6 an acre up to as much as £20 or even £30."<sup>3</sup>

Owing to the English duties imposed in the eighteenth century the peasants became completely dependent on the land for a mere existence. After the Volunteers had wrung a Relief

1. Schrier, op. cit. p. 105.

2. *ibid.* p. 151.

3. Moody and Beckett, op. cit. Vol. I, p. 42.



Bill and the 40-shilling franchise from the Government in 1793, the idea of small holdings took on a great vogue as these tenants had a vote which the landlord wanted. This enabled the population to grow enormously, and with this growth came competition for land; so rents soared. The effect of high rent was not felt till after the defeat of Napoleon, and the entry freely of cheaper Continental food. Unable to pay high rent, many tenants were evicted. The Emancipation Act of 1829 took away the vote from many, and the landlords took over these holdings to form large estates. The Union was not accepted by the great mass of Irish people, and in 1810 the Grand Jurors petitioned for the removal of the "injurious act."<sup>1</sup> After Emancipation, O'Connell continued to press for Repeal by all legal means. Despite O'Connell's success in obtaining emancipation, there were those who thought he was too timid. Some of these started a periodical, The Nation, in 1842, which expressed itself as openly advocating rebellion. In 1844 came the Young Ireland movement, a mixture of Protestants and Catholics out for repeal of the Union. The same year saw the Government Commission under the Earl of Devon enquire into the grievances of the Irish peasants. The Commission was made up entirely of landlords, and amassed valuable evidence on the whole of Ireland, but "as might be expected from its members, its report was hostile to the Ulster Custom"<sup>2</sup> - of tenant-right, valued at thirty or forty million pounds - and would have eventually destroyed it. Furthermore, a rising poor rate, owing to the famine, began to eat into the value of tenant-right, whilst Peel's free trade policy cheapened agricultural produce, making rents more difficult to pay.

In 1845 the worst calamity befell the land in the failure of the potato crop by blight. So great was this, that the

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1. C. H. Irwin, op. cit. p. 134.

2. Moody and Beckett, op. cit. Vol. I, p. 43.



population fell from over eight millions to about six millions. This was due to starvation, typhus and cholera being very prevalent, and to unprecedented emigration. True, the Government sent indian corn and there were many public works, but "one sad feature of this great national catastrophe was that in each of those two years (1846-1847) Ireland produced quite enough corn to feed the people of the whole country; but day after day it was exported in shiploads, while the peasantry were dying of hunger."<sup>1</sup>

Lord John Russell - the Prime Minister - was not altogether blind to the danger of the potato failure, but he underestimated the extent of it, even though he did chide his Chancellor of Exchequer, Charles Wood, for not realising its size, and thought that "a well-organised retail trade in foodstuffs was established in Ireland, when in fact, such a trade could hardly be said to exist outside the towns."<sup>2</sup> The Government's food policy left the people at the mercy of traders and speculators, some of whom exploited the situation, a comparatively easy thing to do when the Government-aided relief committees were directed not to undersell merchants. The tragedy is seen in a clear light when we realise that the European grain harvest in general had been poor in the very same year that the potatoes failed in Ireland, and this dearth on the Continent resulted in exceptionally heavy shipping of grain in 1846-47 from Ireland by profiteers anxious to secure the increased price, regardless of the well-being of the Irish people. At the end of August, 1846, wheat sold for 50s.4d. per quarter, in London, but by February 6, 1847, the price had risen to 76s.4d. per quarter in the same market.<sup>3</sup> This suffering of the Irish left an implacable hatred towards the British Government who were blamed for all the trouble, despite the fact that in the spring and summer of 1847 free food was distributed at Government

1. Joyce, op. cit. p. 299. See further Edwards and Williams, op. cit. p. 178; and The Nation, 28th August, 1847.

2. Edwards and Williams, op. cit. p. 149. See also D'Alton, op. cit. Vol. V, pp. 189-196.

3. Edwards and Williams, op. cit. p. 153.



expense. In October, 1846, Russell could write "It must be thoroughly understood that we cannot feed the people", but nine months later over three million persons were in receipt of free food rations daily;<sup>1</sup> and yet was it free? for indian corn, which had cost the British Government less than £13 a ton, was sold at the depots in Ireland at £19 a ton, at the end of December.<sup>2</sup>

In 1847 Dr. James McKnight,<sup>3</sup> a prominent Ulster journalist and Presbyterian, organised the Ulster farmers into a body calling itself "The Ulster Tenant-right Association" to press for the legalization of the Ulster Custom. In 1848 came the rising of Smith O'Brien, caused by the merciless landlords, who despite all the sufferings of the famine, showed no pity, for wholesale evictions had taken place.<sup>4</sup> This oppressive landlordism drove the Presbyterians and Roman Catholics together to form Tenant Right Protection Societies. The 1850 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church heard it voiced in the House by the Rev. John Rogers of Comber. In spite of Cooke, the Assembly<sup>5</sup> supported Rogers' motion. Immediately afterwards, in August 1850,<sup>6</sup> a large meeting was held in Dublin with representatives from north and south. The demands were: Fair Rent, Free Sale, and Fixity of Tenure. However, not much came for many years, till 1870 when Gladstone recognized their demands as legal.

In view of the evidence submitted above, there is little truth in the contention that "there was political stability and social progress, and the Church had every opportunity of doing her work unhindered,"<sup>7</sup> in the years before 1859. The Presbytery of Clogher could say in 1858 "... though the past few months have been marked with commercial embarrassments,

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1. Edwards and Williams, op. cit. p. 158.

2. *ibid.* p. 226.

3. Editor of the Banner of Ulster.

4. Froude, English in Ireland, Vol. II, pp, 22, 23;  
also Irwin, op. cit. p. 135.

5. Minutes of General Assembly, Vol. I, (1850), p. 835.

6. Irwin, op. cit. p. 137; also Moody and Beckett, op. cit.  
Vol. I, p. 48.

7. Carson, op. cit. p. 4.



which have extended their depressing influences throughout the community, the crisis has not interfered with the attendance on the House of God. The worshippers in the sanctuary have continued to wait on its services in as large, if not larger numbers, than heretofore, and with increased punctuality, thus affording ground for the hope that there is a steadiness in their views and convictions which under the Divine blessing may lead to important results."<sup>1</sup>

Politically the Union was forced on an unwilling people, by means of many promises, most of which were never fulfilled. Protestants, Presbyterians and Papists alike all smarted under its frustrations, and during these years the liberal Roman Catholic attitude allowed much easier proselytism than later on after Emancipation, with its aftermath of bitter tithe war. Education drove a wedge between the Roman Catholics and Protestants, but the common platform of Temperance held them together, whilst the Land Question kept the Presbyterians and Romanists united. The Marriage Question made Presbyterians suspicious of the Establishment's aims. Disgust and frustration and distress raised emigration to large dimensions, but in spite of this it can be affirmed that there was good and convincing evidence of a spiritual awakening amongst all classes of people. This religious awakening was the beginning of a crescendo that burst forth in the great Revival of 1859.

the whole church, and by 1844 in Kerry the Assembly based the State of Religion report say "... that as this revival works ... to begin with ministers and elders of the church, it is earnestly recommended that they humble themselves before God ..." showing us plainly that a revival was expected thirteen years before it came. This is an interesting remark in view of Cairns' saying "This religious quickening ... was not consciously prepared for ..." The 1844 State of Religion Report continued to urge the Assembly to give time and

1. S. Prester, Life and Labours of the Rev. William Johnson, p. 22.
2. Editorial, Missionary Herald, October 1839, p. 117.
3. S. Adams, Revival in Ashpall, p. 4. Adams ordained June 8, 1841.
4. 1. Clogher Presbytery Minutes, State of Religion Report, 1858.
5. A. Cairns, Independence in Ireland, 1833, p. 113.

## CHAPTER II

## THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE REVIVAL

"The revival of 1859 was the culmination of a clearly marked series of revivals in the Irish Presbyterian Church. Her missionary quickening in the first part of the century led to her efforts to carry the Gospel to the south and west of Ireland; then the purging of the Synod of Ulster from heresy, and the proclamation of sound doctrine from her pulpits and colleges, was followed by the auspicious union of the two Synods in 1840, and the establishment of the Foreign Mission."<sup>1</sup> "This revival is not so sudden as it seems. Ever since the expulsion of the Unitarians, and the union of the two Synods into one General Assembly, there has been a growing improvement in the pulpit and the pew. Sabbath-schools have been multiplied. The Temperance agitation has led men to think on a subject of practical piety. The wide-spread circulation of the British Messenger, open-air preaching, and latterly the Elias-like sermons of Mr. Guinness, followed by the news of a great revival in America, all these contributed to awaken a general interest in the things that are not seen and eternal. No doubt of it."<sup>2</sup> "There was great preparation for this revival. It did not come so suddenly and unexpectedly as some imagine. I have been most anxious for such a time ever since I became a minister."<sup>3</sup> Such, in a few brief words, is a summary of what transpired. The union of the two Synods in 1840 was a sign of the deepening of Spiritual life over the whole church, and by 1844 in Derry the Assembly heard the State of Religion report say "... that as this revival ought ... to begin with Ministers and elders of the church, it is earnestly recommended that they humble themselves before God ..." <sup>4</sup> showing us plainly that a revival was expected fifteen years before it came. This is an interesting remark in view of Cairns' saying "This religious quickening ... was not consciously prepared for ..." <sup>5</sup> The 1844 State of Religion Report continued to urge the Assembly to give time and

1. S. Prenter, Life and Labours of the Rev. William Johnston, p. 88.
2. Editorial, Missionary Herald, October 1859, p. 417.
3. D. Adams, Revival in Ahoghill, p. 4. Adams ordained June 8, 1841.
4. Minutes of the General Assembly, Vol. I, 1844, p. 327, my italics.
5. A. Cairns, Independency in Ireland, MSS. p. 333.



attention to such objects as more directly tend to promote the increase of vital godliness ... that elders be instructed to pay more attention to their duties, visit and catechise, and employ every means in their power to call forth into active exercise the gifts and graces of all the members of their churches, and that they hold frequent meetings 'for prayerful deliberation thereupon.' Prayer meetings are urged to be established in every congregation, and "our people generally be exhorted to wrestle with God more perseveringly in secret, for the outpouring of His Spirit on the Church and the world." The first Sabbath of October, 1844, was set aside as a special day of prayer when the subject of Revival was to be brought specially before the people.<sup>1</sup> This same Assembly urged strongly the "great object of the Gospel ministry - the conversion of souls to God."<sup>2</sup> To satisfy the General Assembly's wish the Presbytery of Ballymena is recorded as urging "the necessity and desirability of a revival in our hearts, the church and the world be brought before all our congregations; ... to promote this object sessions be requested to hold stated meetings for ... prayer; ... and establish meetings for prayer in different districts of the congregation, to be superintended by the elder in the vicinity."<sup>3</sup>

Two years later, at Belfast in 1846, the Assembly agreed "that means should be taken by ministers with the co-operation of the eldership, to make a personal appeal, on the subject of salvation to the conscience of every individual of their congregations."<sup>4</sup> This seemed a logical fulfilment of the 1845 State of Religion Report, which is officially summarised as follows: "It is suggested, as the course likely under the Divine Blessing, to advance true piety in our Church, monthly conferences of ministers respecting their own personal religion, and their preparation for the high duties of their office -

1. Minutes of the General Assembly, Vol. I, p. 328.

2. ibid. p. 304.

3. Ballymena Presbytery Minutes, February 4, 1845.

4. Minutes of the General Assembly, Vol. I, p. 485.

similar conferences amongst ruling elders - greater care in admission to Church privileges - family prayer - the careful superintendence of Sabbath and week-day schools by the Church - a more full and careful training of young men for the Christian ministry - the publication of tracts - prayer meetings - ministerial exchanges - and out-door preaching. It also recommended, as a suitable introduction of these measures, that a day of humiliation and prayer, with special reference to this subject be observed by the Church."<sup>1</sup> In 1847 it was recommended that there be delivered a course of lectures by Presbyteries on some important doctrinal or practical subject, the establishment of Presbyterial Sabbath-school Unions, and the systematic visitation of families, Roman Catholic as well as Protestant, lying beyond the pale of Christian Ordinances.<sup>2</sup> By 1848 it was the pleasure of the Assembly to hear of the efforts made for the extension of Sabbath-school instruction and the better observance of the Lord's Day;<sup>3</sup> and in 1849 a Sabbath Committee was appointed in each Presbytery.<sup>4</sup>

These resolutions show plainly that the Church was alive to the needs of its members, yet some thought that events were not moving fast enough. An outspoken article appeared in The Irish Presbyterian asking the question "Do we need a Revival?" This article in its turn summed up the religious situation thus: "To many the preached word is but a lovely song, but they feel not the quickening and transforming power of the truth of God... How many are there of those professing a nominal connection with our congregations, who never cross the threshold of the sanctuary, who are utterly ignorant of the way of Salvation, and seek not to be taught, and who are living in open disregard of the Divine Law."<sup>5</sup> This 'holier-than-thou' criticism was not repeated until six years later when a much more cautious

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1. Minutes of the General Assembly, Vol. I, p. 405.

2. *ibid.* p. 585. (their italics)

3. *ibid.* p. 672.

4. *ibid.* p. 753.

5. The Irish Presbyterian, February 1853.



and guarded article appreciative of the United States Revival asked: "Do we not need a religious awakening too?"<sup>1</sup>

The question occurs to anyone reading these two articles, what do others say? The Presbyterian State of Religion Report of 1854 having been read, it was moved and agreed inter alia ... "That the Assembly rejoice to learn that, whilst we have much reason to be humbled before God for our unfaithfulness and unworthiness, there are, nevertheless, discernible in the aspect of the Church, many cheering tokens of spiritual advancement, for which it becomes us to acknowledge with reverential gladness, the gracious hand of our heavenly Father."<sup>2</sup> The 1855 Report was similar in its conclusions, likewise asking that "a day of special prayer for the more abundant out-pouring of the Holy Spirit"<sup>3</sup> be set apart. A stronger resolution "That our ministers be instructed to give special heed to the important topics specified in the report, aiming more directly in their public and private addresses at the conversion of souls, ..." <sup>4</sup> was appended to the 1856 Report. The Western Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod could say "... Attendance upon religious services has been improving; and the indications of a renewed zeal and deepening piety, are of a favourable character;"<sup>5</sup> while the Southern Presbytery of the same Church could say, in 1857, "there seems to be pretty generally within our bounds symptoms of a revival of religion."<sup>6</sup>

A further proof of the cheering tokens of a quiet work of grace going on is witnessed to in the fact that "the Revd. John White, President of the Primitive Wesleyan Conference of 1858, gave an exceedingly cheering view of the cause in Belfast - "For upwards of three years God has been pouring out His Holy Spirit ... in this town ... in the conversion of sinners ...

1. The Missionary Herald, April 1859, p. 59.  
2. Minutes of the General Assembly, Vol. II, 1854, p. 274.)  
3. ibid. 1855, p. 357 ) my  
4. ibid. p. 447 ) italics  
5. Minutes of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod, 1857, p. 20.  
6. ibid. p. 18.  
7. Colorado Presbytery Minutes, 9th May, 1854.



there has been an onward movement in every department of our cause ..."<sup>1</sup> Charles Seaver, incumbent of St. John's, Belfast, stated the Established Church view: "As in all the great works of God, in nature and in Providence, a preparatory process had been going on. Much had been done for years in the way of public preaching, in Sunday-school teaching, in Bible distribution; and more especially since the news of the great American revival reached us, had there been an increased activity in religious matters, increased meetings for prayer, especially with reference to the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit, while pulpit teaching had been frequently directed to this subject; and among those who have since been quickened and strengthened, it appears now that a work of grace, silent, but deep and progressive, has been going on for some time, leading them gradually to the Saviour. It was not till 1856 that any great and unusual results appeared."<sup>2</sup> Theophilus Campbell, of Holy Trinity, Belfast, addressing the Evangelical Alliance meeting in Belfast in September, 1859, "stated the most gratifying fact that the great religious awakening commenced in this town, in connection with his Church, more than two years ago,"<sup>3</sup> that is, 1857.

The Rev. S. G. Morrison, of Lower Abbey Street Presbyterian Church, Dublin, in 1857, said that the Presbyterian Church in Ireland "has revived. Purged of doctrinal error, and laxity of discipline, she is renewing her youth."<sup>4</sup> That the people were attending church in larger numbers was seen in the fact that in the twenty years before the Revival no less than eighty-two new congregations<sup>5</sup> were added to the General Assembly, some churches were renovated, e.g., First Ballymena, renovated and enlarged in 1854;<sup>6</sup> First Ballyrashane rebuilt<sup>7</sup> in 1854; First

1. Crookshank, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 503.

2. Charles Seaver, The Ulster Revival, pp. 6, 7, my italics.

3. *ibid.* p. 7, footnote, his italics.

4. S. G. Morrison, Revivals and Revivalists, (1857) p. 23; similar idea, see Prenter, op. cit. p. 88.

5. See above p. 44.

6. Ballymena Presbytery Minutes, 7th August, 1855.

7. Coleraine Presbytery Minutes, 9th May, 1854.



Ahoghill, rebuilt 1858;<sup>1</sup> Berry Street, Belfast, rebuilt 1858;<sup>2</sup> Upper Clennanees, Dungannon, also rebuilt;<sup>3</sup> and a few, like Minterburn,<sup>4</sup> had galleries built in. These are not usually regarded as signs of decline in religion. Indeed, "those were earnest times. There was a growing seriousness preparing the way for the revival of 1859."<sup>5</sup> Vast numbers, too, were approached in open-air meetings; the magnitude of this work would appear to have been greatly overlooked by modern writers. The 'father' of this very extensive work of open-air preaching was the Rev. J. Johnston, Tullylish, Banbridge, son-in-law of John Jackson of Crieve, Ballybay, the strong supporter of the Ulster Evangelical Society, and brother-in-law of Captain Sydney Hamilton Rowan - henchman of the redoubtable Cooke. This latter fact would have influenced Dr. Cooke to step aside graciously<sup>6</sup> from the Moderator's chair in favour of Johnston, a man well worthy of the honour. The first report of the convener to the Assembly was presented in 1851, announcing the modest beginnings of the work: some eight ministers had conducted fifty services and an estimated 13,000 people were addressed. The work appealed so much to the ministers and was appreciated to such an extent by the people that in 1856 Johnston was able to state that some sixty ministers had conducted 280 services attended by over 65,000 people. Half a decade had seen a five-fold increase in the work.<sup>7</sup> A closer look at these reports surprised a great many people when they read, for instance, in 1853, that thirty ministers had preached to nearly 44,000 people in no less than eight counties - Down, Antrim, Derry, Donegal, Tyrone, Fermanagh, Sligo and Armagh,<sup>8</sup> counties most touched by the coming Revival. All this was

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1. Adams, op. cit. p. 6.

2. J. McConnell, Presbyterianism in Belfast, p. 95.

3. Dungannon Presbytery Minutes, 4th August, 1857.

4. ibid. 1st February, 1859.

5. T. Dunn, Maze Church, p. 14.

6. Minutes of the General Assembly, Vol. II, p. 625.

7. The Irish Presbyterian, July 1856, p. 123.

8. ibid. July 1854, p. 196.

1. The Irish Presbyterian, January, 1855, pp. 19, 20.

2. ibid. p. 21.



the result of small beginnings in 1851, and many of those who engaged in this work were afterwards greatly used in the Revival, most of them being asked to engage in the work by Johnston himself, by means of personal letters, e.g., S. J. Moore, of Ballymena, was invited to speak at Downpatrick, Wilson of Lecumpher spoke in Stewartstown, Graham of Moira spoke in Dunganon, Morrison of Antrim in Ballynahinch, Saintfield, Crossgar, Killyleagh and Downpatrick. That this was not just a spasmodic outburst is seen in the fact that it was twice repeated, first by Maxwell of Brigh and then by Dodd of Newry. Meanwhile Barkley of Carnmoney spoke in Ballycastle, Bushmills, Portstewart, Limavady, Derry and Newtownards, where he had a splendid reception from four hundred people.<sup>1</sup>

Once these men had made a beginning in other places, they often began to preach in open-air meetings in their own towns and villages. Berkeley of Lurgan (formerly of Faughanvale, where in the previous year he had conducted fourteen meetings in the bounds of his own congregation) conducted eleven open-air meetings among his new congregation, First Lurgan. This is remarkable when we remember that Lurgan district was a stronghold of Arianism a quarter of a century before. William Johnston (son of the Convener) minister of Townsend Street Presbyterian Church, Belfast, spoke often in Brown's Square, Sandy-Row, Smithfield and the New Lodge Road areas of the town "in all of which I preached to from two to five hundred people."<sup>2</sup> Henderson of Armagh preached regularly in the streets of the primatial city; Ross spoke often in his own town of Market-hill; Kerr of Dromore West preached in Killybegs and Dunkineely, along with a Methodist preacher. Simpson of Portrush preached in Stewartstown under the eyes of the priest, and Buick of Ahoghill spoke in Aghnacloy. Others who engaged in this work were Barnett of Clogher, Hall of Armagh, Todd of Finvoy, Rodgers of Kilrea, Anderson of Banbridge, and of course

1. The Irish Presbyterian, January, 1855, pp. 19, 20.

2. ibid.

p. 21.



Johnston of Tullylish, the father of the movement. The number of ministers engaged in this work rose rapidly from eight in 1851, to ten in 1852, thirty in 1853, forty in 1854.<sup>1</sup> In 1855 the fourth Report states that Johnston of Townsend Street had to desist "as his health failed him;"<sup>2</sup> but the other stalwarts carried on the good work. Next year Johnston's health had so improved that he was back in the open-air in Belfast and Bangor.<sup>3</sup> Remembering that this was a new experience even to the most accomplished of these men, it is heartening to find that S. J. Moore thought an out-door service much better and easier than an evening service in a stuffy church!<sup>4</sup>

That it was not easy work, or undertaken in a light-hearted way, is seen in the fact that the Rev. Dr. Niblock of Donegal said he started from Stranorlar at five o'clock in the morning for Letterkenny and then Rathmullen, where at seven o'clock he preached to two hundred people and gave out many tracts. Next day he spoke in Ramelton and the following day in Letterkenny, in all of which places he was heard very attentively. Only in Stranorlar was he heckled and had to desist.<sup>5</sup> By 1858 the report says that some 80,000 people had been addressed by sixty-three ministers.<sup>6</sup>

A much more serious struggle for freedom to preach in the open air arose in Belfast as the result of an announcement in the local press that the Church of Ireland would conduct open-air meetings. Two local newspapers made an attack on

1. The Irish Presbyterian, 1856, p. 123:

Progress of the Work

Years	Ministers	Services	Hearers
1851	8	50	13,000
1852	10	108	30,000
1853	30	167	43,000
1854	40	250	70,250
1855	60	368	78,155

2. The Irish Presbyterian, July 1855, p. 190.

3. *ibid.* May 1856, p. 123.

4. *ibid.* July 1855, p. 191.

5. *ibid.* July 1855, p. 191.

6. Missionary Herald, 1858, p. 76.

their work and invited the mob to silence them. The Rev. William Mollwaine preached at the Custom House, Belfast.<sup>1</sup> It was feared that a mob from the 'Pound' - a Roman Catholic party from Cullingtree Road area, described by the Belfast Newsletter as "a set of unscrupulous vagabonds who attack without mercy every passer-by whom they suspect of belonging to the Protestant Communion"<sup>2</sup> - would attack the open-air meeting, and the Mayor and four magistrates, in indecision, suggested there be no service. A mob of two hundred assembled at 4 o'clock at the Custom House in a menacing attitude. Meanwhile the Rev. George Vance, a Wesleyan, preached at Stanhope Street on the same day, and a Mr. J. M. Mateer<sup>3</sup> conducted a service on the quay at 4 o'clock, which service lasted for two hours with an immense audience. The seriousness of the threatened riot is seen in the shooting of three young people<sup>4</sup> - one, Adam Ward, aged thirteen, had a leg amputated, while Pat Murphy, sixteen, had a ball in the leg, and Betty Tynan, sixteen, had her eye shattered with a ball in the brain. Two press reporters were asked by the mob to curse the Prince of Orange on Sunday, 19th July, 1857, at Barrack Street corner; when they declined they were set upon with sticks and stones.<sup>5</sup> That feeling was running high is seen in the fact that on Tuesday, 28th July, "A stranger to the town" wrote "... Is it proper that magistrates should interfere in this manner and hinder a clergyman of the Church of England and Ireland from declaring the gospel?"<sup>6</sup> On

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1. Belfast Newsletter, 20th July, 1857.

2. *ibid.* 20th July, 1857.

3. Mateer was a one-time licentiate of the Belfast Presbytery who resigned his licence to preach (Minutes of the Belfast Presbytery, 31st May, 1858.) It would appear that he was supported by John Getty, of Beechpark, Belfast, a philanthropic business man who left his estate of £74,000 to the Irish Presbyterian Church for Missions, both Home and Foreign. Getty also maintained a Belfast Town missionary, and a missionary in Larne. (General Assembly Minutes, Vol. IV, pp. 726,

4. Belfast Newsletter, 20th July, 1857.

and 917).

5. *ibid.* 20th July, 1857.

6. *ibid.* 28th July, 1857.



Sunday, August 2nd, the Rev. Charles Seaver, St. John's, preached in Eliza Street, Belfast;<sup>1</sup> while on the following Sunday, the Rev. William McIlwaine, of St. George's, preached in front of the new Custom House steps. Seaver was again in Eliza Street, while other clergy preached in the sheds at the quay. A week later Seaver was interrupted at the Custom House steps. The following Sunday the Rev. T. W. Roe, incumbent of Ballymacarrett, preached to about a thousand people on the Custom House steps, half his audience were Roman Catholic, and the Protestants had to gather round Roe to protect him. Prisoners were taken after the Riot Act was read by Mr. C. Hunt, R.M.<sup>2</sup> That same day the mob attacked Mateer, kicked him and knocked him down behind some planks. In an editorial the Belfast Newsletter takes the bench to task, as does the Dublin Evening Packet, for being far too tender.<sup>3</sup> The following Monday, the same paper, the Belfast Newsletter, launched a two-columned editorial attack on the Northern Whig and the following Saturday, it carried the notice announcing that the open-air preaching would be suspended in deference to the Bishop's wishes.<sup>4</sup> On the last Sunday in August a mob of four thousand attacked Mateer at the Custom House steps and Chief Constable Lindsay advised him not to continue.<sup>5</sup> On the following Tuesday in Donegall Square Methodist Church the Rev. Dr. Cooke inaugurated a movement to uphold religious liberty in the town. Next day, Wednesday, September 2nd, the Belfast Newsletter stated that the Lord Lieutenant had granted the request of memorialists led by Cooke to have a Government enquiry into the 'Pound' riots. The same newspaper on the following Saturday carried a letter supporting Cooke, which said "... if it is only tolerable to preach the gospel inside

1. Belfast Newsletter, 5th August, 1857.
2. *ibid.* 24th August, 1857.
3. *ibid.* 25th August, 1857.
4. *ibid.* 29th August, 1857.
5. *ibid.* 31st August, 1857.

6. See further in N. Elliott, *The Riot and Burn, p. 129.*  
7. Belfast Newsletter, 7th September, 1857.  
8. *ibid.* 7th September, 1857.  
9. *ibid.*

our churches, and that its voice is to be extinguished outside, we have only to wait a little time until their walls would be no better safeguard than our magistrates ..."<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile the Northern Whig changed its tone of opposition to one of tolerance of open-air preaching, due to Cooke's outspoken attack.

The Rev. Hugh Hanna, a dynamic personality, minister of Berry Street Presbyterian Church, Belfast - possibly the fastest growing church in the General Assembly at that time<sup>2</sup> - preached at the Harbour Office on Sunday, September 6th. When he arrived, J. Clarke, Esq., J.P., afraid of the intentions of the crowd, suggested that he desist from preaching, whereupon Hanna told the magistrate that it was the latter's business to protect him! Prominently displayed at the place of meeting was the following placard:<sup>3</sup>

Down with  
Open-Air Preaching

Down with  
Fanatic Drew  
The ..... Devine;  
The Enemy of Tranquility and Peace

Gather to the  
Custom House on Sunday 6th inst.  
at Three o'clock

And give the Orange Bigot such a Check  
that he will not attempt Open Air  
Preaching again.

Catholics of Belfast, Down, and Antrim!

Captain Verner, the magistrate, was attacked, as was Hanna, but forty stout Protestants seized staves of wood and chased the rabble horde of five thousand. Hanna went on with his preaching and spoke for upwards of twenty minutes.<sup>4</sup> It was discovered that no less than seventy copies of this placard had been printed in the Ulsterman Office, North Street, (proprietor, Mr. John McLaughlin) and distributed.

1. Belfast Newsletter, 29th August, 1857.

2. See further R. M. Sibbett, For Christ and Crown, p. 129.

3. Belfast Newsletter, 7th September, 1857.

4. ibid. 7th September, 1857.



The London Times, usually misinformed on Irish matters, thought "this is only a religious affray" and not a serious attempt in the conversion of souls. Again the Belfast Newsletter, in a two-column leader, supported open-air preaching, and took the Times to task for stupidly asserting that the Protestants were in a minority, and for saying if it were otherwise open-air preaching would be in order! The Newsletter reminded its readers that the population of the city at the last census was 120,000 of whom not more than 30,000 were Roman Catholics.<sup>1</sup>

What is described in the Downshire Protestant as the "Battle of Belfast" took place in Sandy Row (a Protestant stronghold) which the Roman Catholics attacked. The outcome of this was the formation of the Protestant Defence Association on Friday, 11th September, in the Wellington Hall.<sup>2</sup> On Saturday, September 19th, Hanna<sup>3</sup> told the Mayor of his intention to preach at the quay at 4 o'clock on Sunday. Judge his surprise when police arrived at 3 o'clock and hustled away the gathering crowd 'in no very gentle way.' Though Hanna asked the crowd to go away the police placed a gun at his chest.<sup>4</sup> On 25th September, the Belfast Presbytery met to consider the subject of open-air preaching, and while asserting their rights to such a practice they entreated Mr. Hanna to desist for the time being.<sup>5</sup>

Meanwhile one preacher at least held his ground unmolested. The Rev. John White, Donegall Place Primitive Methodist Church, continued to preach every Sabbath as before in the open air, and without any annoyance. On Sunday, 27th

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1. Belfast Newsletter, 11th September, 1857.
  2. ibid. 12th September.
  3. Hanna's church, Berry Street, begun in 1852, fifteen years later numbered 750 families and eventually built St. Enoch's - considered the largest free church building in Europe.
  4. Belfast Newsletter, 21st September, 1857, my italics.
  5. ibid. 26th September; and Irish Presbyterian, October 1857, p. 272. See Appendix for the Minute of the Belfast Presbytery. (Appendix 'J')



September, White preached to 4,000 in Agnes Street, and the following Sunday he preached, on the very spot from which Mr. Hanna had been ejected by the police, to about 5,000 people, announcing that he would be there again on the succeeding Sunday. Ten thousand people<sup>1</sup> gathered, the gospel was preached, and a victory was won. Far more important, however, was the fact that many were introduced to the gospel who might otherwise never have heard it. It must be said that although the Belfast Presbytery adopted a cautious and hesitant view on the subject, the neighbouring Presbytery of Carrickfergus supported open-air preaching. In Larne when the Presbytery met it was moved and passed "That this Presbytery recognize the obligation under which they are placed by the Head of the Church to preach the Gospel to every creature - express their sympathy with the brethren in Belfast in the difficult position in which they were placed, by an opposition, which they believe to have been illegal, to the preaching of the Gospel; and they congratulate their brethren on their successful efforts to bear testimony to a great Christian duty."<sup>2</sup>

What seems important in all this is the earnest attention given at any hour of the day, from seven in the morning till midnight, to the preaching of the gospel by zealous ministers. In very few cases, outside the half-year's struggle in Belfast, was there disturbance of any kind. Large numbers of tracts were distributed by these preachers in the open-air to Protestants and Romanists alike; these were avidly received and read. All this open-air work undoubtedly paved the way for the Revival which was to follow.

Few would venture to preach in the open-air without prayer support, and so it came to pass that the place of prayer was more and more availed of, albeit fitfully at times. The old "General Evangelical Society"<sup>3</sup> of Dublin had revived the lost

1. Crookshank, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 493.

2. Minutes of the Presbytery of Carrickfergus, 34d November, 1857.

3. See above p. 32.



art of prayer among the people. Next prayer spread via the Secession Church members, and then into the Synod of Ulster. In January, 1837, the monthly Missionary Herald was published, and the first number stated its object "To assist conductors of Missionary Prayer Meetings in bringing forward interesting intelligence at these meetings. That elders and pious laymen of different denominations are beginning to exert themselves in holding meetings for prayer and missionary contribution, is most encouragingly true. More, we have reason to believe, are willing to engage in the labours of love, if the difficulties were not so great as at present - if they were provided with interesting intelligence for their own and the people's instruction ..."<sup>1</sup> Slowly and earnestly prayer meetings were established. Moore of Connor started them in different places throughout his congregation. Some of these flourished for a time, but afterwards faded away, save one that persisted through the years, though very small in numbers at times, as when a man and an aged woman "maintained a prayer meeting when the numbers uniting with them seemed hopelessly few."<sup>2</sup> However, Moore was not easily dissuaded, and when one effort faltered, he tried again somewhere else. He himself epitomised the words he used to some young men later on "Do something more for God." A man of prayer himself of whom it was said "None could be in his presence when at the Throne of Grace, without feeling his earnestness and sincerity,"<sup>3</sup> Moore sought to inculcate the same spirit in his followers. Sunday-schools were organised in thirteen places in the congregation, formed more as district classes than schools.

Another man of the same ilk was the Rev. David Adams, minister of First Ahoghill. He was a blazing light - wherever he went he preached on revival, at ordination and ordinary

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1. Missionary Herald, Vol. I, p. 1. The Synod of Ulster's Missionary Society was originally instituted in 1817, was reconstituted at Strabane in 1827 to consist of orthodox members, and had as secretary, the Rev. W. D. Stewart, Downpatrick. Missionary Herald, Vol. I, No. 2, p. 7.

2. J. Weir, The Ulster Awakening, p. 16.

3. Belfast Newsletter, 7th August, 1888. Moore's obituary.



services alike. He, too, was a diligent pastor, and formed prayer groups throughout his congregation. After his ordination on the 8th June, 1841,<sup>1</sup> his first sermon was a revival discourse on the text "You hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins."<sup>2</sup> On the 3rd November, 1841, he preached at the ordination of the Rev. William Denham,<sup>3</sup> of Boveedy, by the Presbytery of Ahoghill, on the text "O Lord, revive Thy work",<sup>4</sup> while on the 5th September, 1849, at the ordination of the Rev. Samuel Hamilton<sup>5</sup> in Buckna, by the Presbytery of Ballymena, Adams preached on "Wilt Thou not revive us again?"<sup>6</sup> When he came to First Ahoghill "this congregation was peeled and scattered, as sheep without a shepherd",<sup>7</sup> but just before the Revival "... so greatly increased was the congregation, that we were obliged to pull down the old place of worship and build a new one, more than twice its size."<sup>8</sup> Seating 1,200 people the new church was opened in 1858, free of all debt, and nearly as well filled with attentive worshippers as the old one.

In other parts of the country, too, preparation was made for the Revival. In Comber, County Down, for about fourteen years previous to the Revival, prayer meetings had been held seeking an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the people. The Rev. James M. Killen, ordained here on the 9th May, 1843, was the leader in all evangelical work in the town for thirty-six years.<sup>9</sup>

In Coleraine, it was noted by the Presbytery at a visitation in May, 1845, "There are eleven elders, all observe family worship twice a day, they held in prayer meetings and Sabbath-schools, - three regular prayer meetings besides the one in

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1. Minutes of the General Assembly, Vol. I, p. 45.

2. Ephesians II, 1.

3. Minutes of the General Assembly, Vol. I, p. 122.

4. Habakkuk III, 2.

5. Minutes of the General Assembly, Vol. I, p. 826.

6. Psalm 85, 6.

7. D. Adams, The Revival at Ahoghill, p. 6.

8. ibid. p. 6.

9. J. K. L. McKean, These Three Hundred Years, p. 11.



the church -".<sup>1</sup> This was during the Elijah-like ministry of the Rev. William Magill (1840-1846) a man "almost impatiently bent on his Master's business." Such a six-years' ministry resulted in "stimulus to serious thought, a quickened interest in religious questions, and a new impulse given to the spiritual life of the congregation."<sup>2</sup> By 1856, under the ministry of the Rev. Joseph McDonnell, another evangelical, it was reported at a Presbytery visitation, "There are eleven elders now ... every elder but one has charge of a prayer meeting, some more than one. There are twelve prayer meetings within the bounds of the congregation."<sup>3</sup> The Rev. Adam Magill, of Boveva, in the Roe Valley, County Derry, saw four young men begin a Sabbath School Teachers' Prayer Meeting in the summer of 1856. Magill himself preached often on the work and necessity of the Holy Spirit during the summer of 1857, and in 1858 intimated tidings of the American Revival to his congregation, and urged upon them the necessity of additional Prayer Meetings.<sup>4</sup> In the city of Armagh, in 1853, a prayer meeting was begun by Sabbath School teachers, senior scholars and several members of the congregation. This continued to meet in Third Armagh Presbyterian Church each Lord's Day at four o'clock.<sup>5</sup> In Ballynure congregation, in 1854, it was stated that there were nine elders, and that they held prayer meetings through the congregation.<sup>6</sup> In Larne, the elders of Second Larne conducted meetings for prayer,<sup>7</sup> while in Islandmagee the Rev. R. H. Shaw of the Second Church held district prayer meetings, being assisted in these by his elders.<sup>8</sup> The same is also true of Ballycarry,<sup>9</sup> and the two Presbyterian Churches in Carrickfergus;<sup>10</sup>

1. R.B. Wylie, Terrace Row Presbyterian Church, Coleraine, p. 28.
2. ibid.
3. Minutes of the Coleraine Presbytery, 14th October, 1856.
4. William Reid, Authentic Records of Revival, p. 22.
5. Third Armagh Committee Minute Book, 22nd October, 1853.
6. Carrickfergus Presbytery Minutes, 2nd May, 1854.
7. ibid. 6th May, 1856.
8. ibid. 5th May, 1857.
9. ibid. 4th August, 1857.
10. ibid. First Church, 4th May, 1858; Second, 3rd August, 1858.



Aghadowey likewise had meetings for prayer from 1853.<sup>1</sup> These meetings, and many others like them, were the result of the successive Assembly's Reports requesting prayer meetings for the deepening of spiritual life and revival, and the elders in many churches gathered their people together in homes chosen by rota, where they had not only a religious service - a cottage meeting - and afterwards the Shorter Catechism questions were generally asked of all and sundry, but also district prayer meetings led either by the minister or by elders. In County Down we read that "... long before the revival of 1859 there were monthly societies which met by rotation in the houses of the members for the study of the Scriptures and prayer. In those meetings the 'three R's': Ruin by the Fall, Redemption by Christ, and Regeneration by the Holy Spirit, were the subjects of conversation, followed by prayers of homely pathos and fervour, such as could not be easily forgotten; and it is not to be wondered that so few policemen were required in the district, and the percentage of lawless men was so trifling."<sup>2</sup> In Belfast, among the Congregationalists, a town missionary was appointed in 1832, and two years later "the plan of holding local prayer meetings among the members of the church (Donegall Street Congregational) was adopted, the town being divided into six districts, over each of which were placed brethren upon whom devolved the duty of reporting to the church every quarter as to the meetings held in the neighbourhood under their supervision."<sup>3</sup> In 1835 it was arranged to hold "a special visitation of the church with a view to a revival of religion ... and in January, 1838, it was decided to open four missionary stations in the town ... It was also agreed that a Scripture reader should be employed ..." As early as 1833 this church held a prayer meeting every Monday during the summer months at 6.30 a.m. and on Sunday mornings at 7 o'clock. The Belfast

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1. Coleraine Presbytery Minutes, 26th July, 1853.

2. Prenter, op. cit. p. 11.

3. J. E. Archibald, The Story of Donegall Street Church, p. 14.



Y.M.C.A., founded in 1850, met on Sabbath mornings at 7.30 for prayer, and "devoted a large proportion of their very limited leisure to tract distribution and cottage meetings."<sup>1</sup> Family worship was practised more and more from 1832 onwards when it was stirred up, it is claimed,<sup>2</sup> by the cholera epidemic of that year. This shows us plainly that the desire for prayer was prevalent in many places in the North of Ireland for a great many years before the Revival came.

The growth of prayer meetings led to a change of preaching. Instead of the learned essay on morality, or an abstract discourse, there came what could best be described as an "applied sermon." It is admitted gladly that there were many earnest and sincere men in the ministry of the church, but it stands to the credit of Cooke that to a large extent he brought the vital interests of the Gospel home to the ordinary man in the pew or the street by means of religious controversy. In the years before Cooke, both in the Methodist Church and in the Established Church, controversy with Romanism aroused great interest, at times bordering on riots. In the Presbyterian Church, the battles of Cooke and Smithurst brought out the minutiae of the Gospel to a clearer light, and many people otherwise uninterested came to be awakened.

This "applied" preaching drew many young men to follow the path of Christ. For some this meant the Christian ministry as their life's vocation, and at college the Union of the Synods was greatly encouraged by the meetings for prayer among students of Secession and Synod of Ulster persuasion. Fraternal working and united prayers led to a united church.

The growing power of the pulpit was increasing. The Bible was expounded and pointedly applied. "The lost and perishing condition of Christless souls under the wrath of God, and the curse of the broken law - really and righteously condemned -

1. Dornan, op. cit. p. 16.

2. Coleraine Presbytery Minutes, 15th May, 1851.

3. Kydd was originally licentiate of Armagh Presbytery and later of Down Presbytery. See further p. 216

4. J. W. Macleod, Revivals in Ireland, Part II, p. 11.



was much more solemnly, calmly and compassionately dwelt upon. The appeals to the conscience were frequent and pointed. There was more of individual dealing with sinners. The awful guilt of unbelief, and the fearful consequences of rejecting a present and proffered salvation, as tending to harden the heart, strengthen the habit of sinning, sear the conscience, and "grieve" away the striving Spirit of God, were more earnestly and frequently pressed home upon the hearers. There was a fuller exhibition of the sovereignty of God; a clearer unfolding of the person, offices, and grace of Christ; a deeper and more frequent recognition of the personality, deity, and work of the Holy Ghost. The nature of religious revival; the Scriptural warrants and encouragements to pray and labour for it, and to expect it; its tendency as shown from past history of the Church to secure all reforms in one - to purify the streams by sweetening the fountain - these and themes like these were frequently and forcibly insisted upon from the pulpits of not a few of the evangelical churches of Ulster, for a considerable period prior to the last great awakening."<sup>1</sup>

The length of this period may be guessed from the remarks of the Rev. S. J. Moore: "I think it only justice to my ministerial brethren in this district, to say that I believe the Gospel has for years been as faithfully, and fearlessly, and affectionately preached by them as ever it was in any land since the days of the Apostles."<sup>2</sup> The same opinion is expressed by the Rev. John Kydd,<sup>3</sup> preaching in Coleraine Congregational Church in May, 1858, when he said: "... the world is to be regenerated ... by the power of the truths of the Gospel, addressed to the intellect and by the power of the Holy Ghost working in the heart."<sup>4</sup>

1. William Richey, The Revival in Connor and Coleraine, pp. 97, 98. His italics.
2. S.J. Moore, History and Prominent Characteristics of the Revival in Ballymena, pp. 6, 7.
3. Kydd was one-time licentiate of Armagh Presbytery and later of Derry Presbytery. See further p. 216
4. J. W. Massie, Revivals in Ireland, Part II, p. 11.



Another great power in the preparation for revival was the Sunday School. Like the use of open-air meetings and of controversy, the Sunday School was of great usefulness to the Methodist and the Established Churches. It was also very beneficial to the Presbyterians, who developed the Sunday School idea on a somewhat different pattern, for instead of one central Sunday School, they adopted the method of district Sunday schools, having several in connection with each congregation. Indeed, so much use was made of the Sunday school that S. J. Moore could write: "... the Sabbath School system has been most vigorously worked in this, and in all other neighbouring towns and districts for some years past."<sup>1</sup> These district Sunday schools were established and conducted by earnest members of the congregations. For the more advanced there was the Bible Class, where exposition of Scripture and instruction on profession of faith in Christ were given.<sup>2</sup>

Naturally these - the open-air meetings, the 'applied' preaching, the Sunday schools, the prayer meetings, the Bible Class, etc. - all of these led to the circulation of the Scriptures. In 1850, the Committee of the Religious Tract Society sought to begin colportage work especially in Ireland where "there are seventy-four towns each with a minimum of 2,500 inhabitants, not one of which contains a bookseller."<sup>3</sup> Six counties in Ireland could not boast a library of any sort, whereas Scotland, with only one-third the population, had three times the number of booksellers. Towns as large as Carrickfergus, with almost 10,000 people; Newtownards and Lisburn, each with 7,500, had no such facility. To remedy this state of affairs, an association was formed in Derry in May, 1852, to supply the people with the Scriptures. "Many thought at the time there was no necessity for such an organisation. But

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1. Moore, op. cit. p. 6.

2. Richey, op. cit. p. 99.

3. Religious Tract Society, Colportage in Ireland, 1850, p. 9.  
(their italics.)



what is the testimony of experience? By means of this organisation, and others which have sprung out of it, in five years 60,000 Bibles and Testaments have been put into circulation."<sup>1</sup> In 1854 a Bible depot was established in Dungannon "to supply the people with copies of the Scriptures."<sup>2</sup> This branch was able to forward £5 in 1856 to advance the work in other places.<sup>3</sup> This Dungannon Auxiliary reported that Bibles cost 3/6d. each and New Testaments 4d. each, equivalent to more than half a week's wages for a Bible, and half a day's pay for a New Testament, but a certificate from a minister enabled any poor person to get a Bible or New Testament at a reduced rate.<sup>4</sup> Good as this was, more was required, for the Irish Presbyterian in October, 1857, called for not merely the Londonderry Colportage Association, the County Armagh Association, and similar work done in Coleraine (where it was stated to the Presbytery "the people are well supplied with Scriptures, in some families as many as seventeen copies, and in several cases other religious books, as Baxter's and Burton's works, are found"<sup>5</sup>), and other places, but a union of colportage in Ulster with an agent in every county in the province.<sup>6</sup> It must not be forgotten that the Belfast Ladies' Bible Association, the London Tract Society, and the Ulster Tract and Book Society, helped the Belfast Town Mission and other agencies in the dissemination of Christian literature, before the dreadful famine years.<sup>7</sup> It will be remembered that there was also the Hibernian Bible Society (1806), which in twenty-three years circulated 209,000 Bibles; the Religious Tract and Book Society (1810), which in ten years distributed nearly four and a half million tracts; the Sunday School Society, which in twenty years distributed a quarter of a million Bibles and half a million spelling books.<sup>8</sup> With all

1. Irish Presbyterian, October 1857.

2. Dungannon Presbytery Minutes, 7th November, 1854.

3. ibid. 5th February, 1856.

4. ibid. 5th February, 1856.

5. Coleraine Presbytery Minutes, 14th October, 1856, at Visitation in Terrace Row Church, Coleraine.

6. Irish Presbyterian, October, 1857.

7. Sibbett, op. cit. p. 98.

8. McDowell, op. cit. p. 30.



these at work, why was the wish expressed for yet another organisation? The reason was that the Hibernian Bible Society was limited to sell by its agents only the Bible and that without note or comment. What the Presbyterians wanted was an aggressive agency to spread Christian literature. People of that day "depend too much upon the pulpit alone, and whilst it is and always must be, the best instructor, the press should be plied more earnestly, and by an aggressive agency; the Word of God, in the form in which our people desire it, and religious books, should be brought to their hearths and put into their hands."<sup>1</sup> Religious books - those of Bunyan, Doddridge, Leigh Richmond, Angell James, Baxter, Pike, Rutherford and others, not forgetting the Presbyterian, the Rev. William Oliver of Dunluce, north Antrim, who wrote Family Piety and other works<sup>2</sup> - were sometimes sold, and at other times distributed, as a sort of circulating library, in many churches.<sup>3</sup> Tracts of a very serious nature were distributed in some localities by associations of ladies, and in others by members of the Young Men's Christian Association. The following account, taken from the Irish Young Men's Magazine of November, 1856, shows the impression made by the members upon a visitor to the town: "The Belfast Young Men's Christian Association is certainly one of the most active and faithful that it was my good fortune to meet. It was founded in January 1850... During the past year much care has been given to the distribution of tracts published by the Association, and indeed written by its members. These are among the best of the kind that I have ever read. About ten thousand of these, and those of the London Tract Society, have been distributed by the members during each month, at the railway stations, along the quays, to persons going to the races, and at those infamous dens of wickedness, the music saloons. An exceedingly important feature of the work in this Association

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1. Irish Presbyterian, October, 1857.

2. Minutes of the Coleraine Presbytery, 10th May, 1859.

3. Richey, op. cit. p. 101.



is that of the frequent visiting and holding meetings in the neglected portions of the town, usually upon the Sabbath. Over two thousands families are visited every week .... The houses were small and well packed with tenants. The streets were more cleanly than usual owing to the rigid sanitary regulations, the cholera existing in the town to an alarming degree. Commencing at the first of a long row we visited every house, some thirty or forty in all. At the prompt opening of the doors, in response to a gentle knock, the secretary would affectionately inquire after the health of the occupants, and leaving a tract for each family, with a plea for its careful perusal, earnestly invite all to attend a meeting to be held at a certain hour in one of the houses."<sup>1</sup> The usual tract on these occasions was the Monthly Visitor. In many congregations, for upwards of a dozen years before the Revival began, these visitors not only distributed their tracts, but when they called on their regular visits, it was expected that all the household able to read had thoughtfully perused the tract which was then returned and another one given in its place. At these visits inquiries were made as to the attendance of adults at worship and children at Sabbath School. Not only so, but if possible the "Way of Life" was explained at every opportunity in very plain language.<sup>2</sup>

It must not be thought, however, that this was a sudden burst of enthusiasm before the Revival itself, for in the year 1844 a "Cheap Publication Committee" was formed as a branch of the Presbyterian Library Committee.<sup>3</sup> The aim was to "inculcate our peculiar principles upon our people, and especially upon the rising generation." The first report was presented at Dublin, in 1845, when it was stated among other things "... it is impossible to estimate too highly the labours which have reclaimed a province from a state of natural and spiritual waste, and made

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1. Dornan, op. cit. p. 17.

2. Richey, op. cit. p. 100.

3. Minutes of the General Assembly, 1844, p. 330.



it conspicuous for intelligence and piety."<sup>1</sup> The plan was to print two volumes a year entitled "The Irish Presbyterian Library," the articles to be written by living members of the Presbyterian Church. There was also to be printed a third volume per year of selections from the writings of Irish Presbyterian authors of past generations. A series of monthly tracts was arranged for, too, of which twelve titles<sup>2</sup> were specified, one of which had to do with revivals. Alas, this well-intentioned piece of work is not heard of after the report of 1847. Perhaps it was the increasing use of Scottish and other literature that made its work superfluous.

Persistence seems to be the keynote of the preparations for the Revival. As in the prayer meetings, when one failed for one cause or another, a fresh effort was soon made in another direction, so with the publications, what failed once was tried again with modifications, and colportage, Bibles, tracts, visitation and prayers combined to prepare the way. "Then the old system of ministerial starvation, which compelled ministers, in the words of Dr. Cooke, 'to become only the most intelligent farmers or laborious schoolmasters in their parishes,' had been superseded by a more generous system of ministerial support. Commodious manses were built, and ministers, set free from worldly care, were able to give themselves wholly to their proper vocation."<sup>3</sup> The Rev. Dr. Morgan presented the

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1. Minutes of the General Assembly, 1845, p. 418.

2. Titles: 1. Ancient history of the Church in Ireland.

2. Irish Presbyterian Church since the plantation of Ulster.

3. Present position and prospects of Irish Presbyterian Church.

4. Constitution of the Presbyterian Church.

5. Eldership.

6. Religious revivals connected with Irish Presbyterian Church.

7. Polity and condition of Continental Protestant Churches.

8. Nature and obligations of baptism.

9. The Lord's Supper.

10. Missionary enterprises and obligations of Irish Presbyterian

11. Sabbath Schools.

Church.

12. Duty and means of pecuniary contributions.

3. Prenter, op. cit. p. 88.



the Report on Ministerial Support at the Assembly in 1857, in the course of which he stated "It must be acknowledged to the praise of Divine Grace that a blessed revival has been granted to our Church. Many have asked for the old paths, found them, and walked in them."<sup>1</sup> It will be noted that this took place before the Connor fellowship started, or even before McQuilkin was converted. As time went on enthusiasts wrote searching and even provocative articles in the publications of the day, e.g., The Irish Presbyterian carried an article on "Vital Godliness" in which came the piercing question 'To what purpose did the Lord Jesus offer Himself?' and in answer it asserted that a high state of godliness was desirable and attainable.<sup>2</sup> The following August the Rev. John Coulter, D.D., wrote on 'Is Salvation Easy?'<sup>3</sup> and The Covenanter - the organ of the Reformed Presbyterian Church - carried an eight-page article entitled 'Am I a Believer?', the theme of which is found in the opening sentence: "Religion, to be genuine, must be experimental."<sup>4</sup> The Missionary Herald stated in 1858<sup>5</sup> "if ... some general movement towards Christ ... (took place) it would probably take the church ... by surprise ..." Yet thirteen months later the same publication carried the remarks of the Rev. Richard Smyth - minister of First Derry - stating "It is a fact that many were not taken by surprise. Hearts had been longing for such a season of refreshing, and some were not without hopes ... to see revivals ... before their eyes. Hence we had fervent prayers ... the services of the pulpit became more and more pointed; appeals to the conscience did not give offence, but produced solemnity and awe; and it was evident that God's people felt themselves moving towards a new and more exciting era."<sup>6</sup>

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1. Minutes of the General Assembly, 1857, p. 541.

2. Irish Presbyterian, 1856, p. 260.

3. ibid. 1857, p. 202.

4. The Covenanter, Vol. I, No. 6, June 1857, pp. 146-154.

5. Missionary Herald, November, 1858, p. 201.

6. ibid. December, 1859, p. 456.



The church had come a long way in a generation in the path of progress. In 1830 the Synod of Ulster raised £140 for its Home Mission effort, whilst 1857 saw the General Assembly raise £3,000 for the same object - a twenty-fold increase in seventeen years. Now the church was interested in the Home Mission, the foreign field, Israel, Colonial Missions, churches on the Continent, aid for weak congregations, not to speak of the Church and Manse Fund and increased ministerial support.<sup>1</sup>

The State of Religion Report of 1858 said: "Through the increased vigilance of our ministers, and fidelity of their teaching, the diffusion of religious publications, and the various beneficent agencies which have been established, there is reason to believe that a higher tone of moral and religious sentiment prevails throughout the Church."<sup>2</sup> Furthermore it stated: "The spirit of Christian activity and enterprise is growing in all directions of the Church, ... and especially, is there a deepening sense of our need of the out-pouring of the Spirit of God, and an earnest longing for the bestowment of that great blessing." In North Antrim there was evidence that "religion was advancing considerably in the congregation even before the Revival took place,"<sup>3</sup> and "the Church, indeed, has not been dead; but, on the contrary, pressing forward works of charity and faith to an extent which in the last century would have been incredible."<sup>4</sup>

In view of the above remarks it is surprising that two popular modern works say "Spiritual life in Ulster prior to the Revival was at a low ebb,"<sup>5</sup> and "there was no burning and blazing passion to set the church's concerns going triumphantly ahead."<sup>6</sup> Even a serious student can say "this religious quickening, which affected many parts of Ulster, seems to

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1. Missionary Herald, editorial, January, 1858, pp. 1-3.

2. ibid. September, 1858, p. 169 ff.

3. Kirk Session Report on State of Religion in Second Garvagh, Coleraine Presbytery Minutes, 8th May, 1860. p. 12.

4. William Arthur, A Great Revival? p. 13. p. 12.

5. Paisley, op. cit. p. 11. op. Gibson, op. cit. p. 177.

6. Carson, op. cit. p. 4. op. Gibson, op. cit. pp. 8, 9.



have come unheralded, and was not consciously prepared for except that an unusual seriousness of mind had become apparent, even among those who had not been deeply interested in religious matters."<sup>1</sup> These writers seem to have read only the gloomy, jaundiced report of the Rev. Dr. John Edgar, who said that "much deadness prevailed; and though there were some faithful among the faithless, prayerful and hopeful, yet indifference had benumbed the hearts of many, and ministers were sad."<sup>2</sup> Edgar proceeded to practical illustration by taking merely three congregations (out of a total of more than five hundred<sup>3</sup>) which he did not name. Paisley specifically mentions Edgar's citing the testimony of "three eminent ministers"<sup>4</sup> but does not reveal if he knows who they were. Edgar's actual reference is to "... three rural congregations - two ... in County Down, the other in County Antrim ..." <sup>5</sup> These were Second Saintfield, Boardmills (County Down), and Connor (County Antrim). Of Connor, Edgar quoted the minister (J. H. Moore) as saying: "Hitherto our condition was deplorable. The congregation seemed dead to God, formal, cold, prayerless, worldly, and stingy in religious things. Twice I tried a prayer-meeting of my elders, but failed; for after the fifth or sixth night I was left alone."<sup>6</sup> While the Rev. J. Mecredy, of Second Saintfield, said: "There seemed great coldness and deadness ... I had preached the gospel faithfully, earnestly, and plainly for eleven years yet it was not known to me that a single individual was converted."<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the Rev. G. H. Shanks, Boardmills, said: "This congregation was in a most unsatisfactory state, in fact altogether Laodicean."<sup>8</sup> However, not everyone took Dr. Edgar at his own value of himself. Killen, his biographer, said: "The monotony of

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1. Cairns, op. cit. p. 333.

2. Reid, Records of Revival, p. 216.

3. See above, pp. 44, 45.

4. Paisley, op. cit. p. 12.

5. Reid, op. cit. p. 216; also Paisley, op. cit. p. 12.

6. *ibid.* p. 216; also *ibid.* p. 12.

7. *ibid.* p. 217; cp. Gibson, op. cit. p. 195.

8. *ibid.* p. 217; cp. Gibson, op. cit. pp. 8, 9.



protracted study was not in accordance with his active habits; and he was not very extensively acquainted with the literature of theology."<sup>1</sup> He is described by American journalists in the following words: "Take him all in all, he is a wonderful oddity ..."<sup>2</sup> "... he exposes himself, even on solemn occasions, to the charge of levity ... he reminds one ... in some degree of Luther."<sup>3</sup> This judgment of a newspaper correspondent revealed the man. He chose to size up the spiritual affairs of a province on what evidence three scattered country congregations might produce, yet his friend, and fellow professor, the Rev. William Gibson, writing about the same time and looking at the same symptoms in the same congregations, quoted Moore as saying "the idea of a great revival ... took hold of many in the congregation, and many prayers were offered in public and private that it might be realised in its vitality and power."<sup>4</sup> "Depend upon it," said one of the most intelligent and prayerful men in all the district to his minister some years ago, (i.e., about the spring of 1855) "you will yet see good days in Connor."<sup>5</sup> Of the Rev. George H. Shanks, Boardmills, Dr. Gibson wrote: "... he had been labouring under great depression of mind, induced by a painful apprehension that the showers of blessing ... falling elsewhere, were not to descend on the field in which he laboured."<sup>6</sup> The case of the Rev. John Mecredy, of Second Saintfield, where apparently revival tarried, bears interesting comparison with the neighbouring church of First Saintfield (the Rev. Samuel Hamilton) in which, said Gibson "there has been an extensive awakening."<sup>7</sup> That religion has been stated to have been low is not borne out by the facts outlined, yet it was common talk

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1. W. D. Killen, Memoir of John Edgar, p. 321.

2. *ibid.* p. 285.

3. *ibid.* p. 283.

4. Gibson, *op. cit.* p. 20.

5. *ibid.* p. 20.

6. *ibid.* p. 188.

7. *ibid.* p. 195.

in the days before the Revival that religion was in a low state. What did this mean? In Clough, County Antrim, religion was said to be in a low state, there being only five hundred communicants out of seven hundred families.<sup>1</sup> At Aghadowey, in 1853, "there are cases of Sabbath desecration, against which the minister and elders have testified, and the subject is preached upon once a year ... the most prevalent forms of desecration by Presbyterians in the district is (sic) by visiting friends, forming festive parties, and in the season by the sale of fruit ..."<sup>2</sup> The same Presbytery noted Sabbath desecration by the opening on Sunday of the Crystal Palace, and also the delivery of letters on the Lord's Day.<sup>3</sup> It was remarked also that there was an influx of railway labourers to the district, and with them the consequence - Sabbath breaking.<sup>4</sup> The Down and Comber Presbyteries united in a protest memorial to the Belfast and County Down Railway for its running of Sunday trains.<sup>5</sup> Similar protest to Sunday trains run by the Ballymena-Coleraine Railway, and the Derry-Coleraine Railway, as well as horse-racing at Downhill, was made in 1856.<sup>6</sup> A realisation that these things, and others like them, constituted the short-comings of the pre-Revival days is an indication of the high standard demanded by the leaders of the Christian churches.

This chapter began with quotations affirming that the Revival was the result of extensive preparation. Some measure of this has been shown, and now a letter by the Rev. S. M. Dill, minister of First Ballymena, published in July, 1859, reiterated the same sentiment: "It is right that it should be known that this movement has not come upon us quite so suddenly as people

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1. Ballymena Presbytery Minutes, 5th August, 1856.

2. Coleraine Presbytery Minutes, 26th July, 1853.

3. ibid. 25th January, 1853.

4. ibid. 10th May, 1853.

5. Down Presbytery Minutes, 3rd August, 1858.

6. Coleraine Presbytery Minutes, 1st April, 1856.



at a distance might be led to suppose. I am able to testify that there has been a gradual, but perceptible, improvement in the state of religion throughout this district for some years. Ministers were led to speak to people with greater earnestness about 'the things which belong to their peace.' Attendance on the public ordinances of religion had considerably increased. Open-air preaching was extensively practised. Sabbath-schools were greatly multiplied. Prayer-meetings were growing up in many districts. Sacred music, which had been much neglected, was cultivated with ardour and success. And altogether the people were in a state of preparation - a state which passed into one of earnest expectancy when the glad news of the American Revivals reached our shores."<sup>1</sup>

... has heretofore numbered about five hundred ... of ... last ... was the stated prayer-meeting evening, and about seventy persons were present... (The Palmer<sup>2</sup>) suggested that if the people would pledge themselves, that to bring all the Lord's things into his storehouse at once, and go to work as the merry to invite their unconverted friends and neighbours to Christ, a good result might be seen on the ensuing evening. ... A special meeting was appointed for the next evening. ... the lecture-room was found wholly insufficient to contain the people, ... and still the numbers doubled and tripled till hundreds are now in daily attendance."<sup>3</sup> Dr. Orr has written "The appearance of the account of the Hamilton revival in the Christian Advocate was followed by a steadily increasing number of paragraphs describing local revivals, few in number in November, increasing in December, and a veritable flood in the late winter and spring of 1858."<sup>4</sup>

1. Missionary Herald, 1858, p. 37.  
2. Dr. Walter G. Palmer, and his wife Phoebe, were American missionaries to the Sandwich Islands.  
3. Missionary Herald, July, 1859, p. 339.  
4. J.E. Orr, The Second Evangelical Awakening, p. 15.

CHAPTER III

THE CENTRE OF THE REVIVAL

"Trade reports from America look dull, but different far are the tidings brought us from the Churches of that land. The ordinary journals of the day, from all parts of the country, as well as the religious papers, give very full details of a remarkable revival of religion going on in the United States."<sup>1</sup> For the first beginnings of the revival in religion that swept the whole of North America, we must look to the Canadian town of Hamilton, in Ontario, where in October, 1857, the Methodists reported many coming to the Lord for salvation. "The membership in Hamilton, comprising the three Wesleyan Churches, has heretofore numbered about five hundred ... on Tuesday last ... was the stated prayer-meeting evening, and about seventy persons were present... (The Palmers<sup>2</sup>) suggested that if the people would pledge themselves, thus to bring all the Lord's tithes into his storehouse at once, and go to work on the morrow to invite their unconverted friends and neighbours to Christ, a good result might be seen on the ensuing evening. ... A special meeting was appointed for the next evening. .. the lecture-room was found wholly insufficient to contain the people, ... and still the numbers doubled and trebled till hundreds are now in daily attendance."<sup>3</sup> Dr. Orr has written "The appearance of the account of the Hamilton Revival in the Christian Advocate was followed by a steadily increasing number of paragraphs describing local Revivals, few in number in November, increasing in December, and a veritable flood in the late winter and spring of 1858."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Missionary Herald, 1858, p. 57.

2. Dr. Walter C. Palmer, and his wife Phoebe, were American evangelists of Methodist persuasion.

3. New York Christian Advocate, November 5, 1857, quoted in The Revival, October 8, 1859, p. 85.

4. J.E. Orr, The Second Evangelical Awakening, p. 15.



As to the trade reports, it is known that in August, 1857, a financial panic was caused by the failure of the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company due to over-speculation and investment in railroads and mines. This panic was primarily due to financial dislocation and affected the banks in many large cities, causing great distress. "This financial panic had much to do with starting one of the most unusual revivals in the history of religious awakenings in America."<sup>1</sup> In Britain the Methodist writer, the Rev. William Arthur, asked "... Have we not as a nation been humbled, afflicted, and proved by the Crimean and Indian wars, and by the commercial panic? ... Have we not several times seen daily papers containing such matter that one enquiring "What must I do to be saved?" might have found an answer in them? All these things are indications that God is preparing the public mind for a new and a great advance of true religion."<sup>2</sup> News of all the doings and movement of the Spirit in America soon travelled to Ireland by means of the now numerous letters and the cheap postal facilities, making it possible to send news papers. Many letters from America to friends in Ulster spoke of the great Western Revival and these were eagerly read.<sup>3</sup> It was soon noticed that laymen had a large field of service in this transatlantic movement, and as the Rev. J. H. Moore from time to time brought the news (he read the New York Observer)<sup>4</sup> to the notice of the prayer groups, intense interest grew, as tidings of the American Revival reached this country. "Our church courts directed ministers to consider the subject, and to preach on it. This was generally done throughout our Presbytery, and I presume throughout the congregations of our Synod."<sup>5</sup> The Rev. David Adams, of First Ahoghill Presbyterian Church, wrote: "Having

1. W. W. Sweet, The Story of Religion in America, p. 310.

2. William Arthur, op. cit. pp. 13, 14.

3. Belfast Newsletter, 7th June, 1859; 19th September, 1859.

4. S. J. Moore, History and Prominent Characteristics of the Revival in Ballymena, p. 6.

5. *ibid.* p. 6.

accidentally and providentially received early and ample intelligence in the New York Tribune, of the American revival, I repeatedly urged this matter upon my congregation, occasionally reading to them authentic accounts of the good work of God."<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Charles Seaver, afterwards Dean of Connor, and at that time rector of St. John's Parish, Belfast, said that there had been greater interest "since the news of the American revival reached us."<sup>2</sup> The New York Tribune at that time published several extra editions, filled with accounts of the progress of the revival in different parts of the United States.<sup>3</sup> This paper had a circulation, it is said, of 175,000 copies. It was not what might be called a religious paper, but it was one of the most influential journals in America, devoting a page of the weekly and a column of the daily issue to soberly written accounts of the great awakening. Nor was this sufficient, for extra editions had to be published, and that on the 3rd April contained forty-six columns in small type, filled with interesting details, under the following sub-headings: religious awakening; origin and progress of the work; daily united prayer meetings; work in city churches; intelligence from all parts of the country; facts and incidents, and views of the religious press.<sup>4</sup>

The synodical reports to the General Assembly of 1858 make interesting remarks on the religious outlook of the day. Belfast Synod reports "... they are thankful to Almighty God for the manifest tokens of the Lord's presence and power amongst them, in the increasing zeal of their pastors for the conversion of souls - the deepening interest that is taken by them in their families and in their Church, and in

1. D. Adams, Revival in Ahoghill, p. 4.

2. C. Seaver, The Ulster Revival, p. 7.

3. Finney's Memoirs, p. 444.

4. Religious Movement in the United States - a paper prepared at the request of a Meeting of Ministers and Members of all Evangelical Churches, held in Edinburgh on 27th April, 1858, pp. 5 and 6.



the efforts made to promote the progress of Christ's kingdom in the earth."<sup>1</sup> The Synod of Derry and Omagh recommended "the Presbyteries to prosecute the work of 'Open-air Preaching' within their respective bounds ..."<sup>2</sup> That this was done is seen in the next year's Report of the Synod by the Rev. Richard Smyth, Convener of the State of Religion Report, who stated, "on open-air preaching, some twenty-five members engaged; held 184 services, and had hearers to the number of 34,000."<sup>3</sup> Further proof of the same zeal came from the Synod of Armagh and Monaghan, where eight ministers preached in twelve centres.<sup>4</sup>

The General Assembly met in Derry in 1858, and heard the report on the State of Religion, making mention of the American Revival. They were told that this awakening had taken place in no fewer than two thousand cities and towns in the United States and was the cause of a remarkable quickening influence. "The prominent and perhaps most hopeful characteristic of this revival in America is prayer. It is not the excitement of popular eloquence that has drawn thousands of people together - it is a conviction of the efficacy of prayer. That men ... devoted to business ... should find time and inclination ... for prayer ... for months in succession ... is surely a decisive proof that a higher power than that of man is at work."<sup>5</sup> And the question was asked: How are we to realise a similar state of things in our Irish Presbyterian Church? Among other suggestions was one - that the Rev. William McClure, and the Rev. Professor Gibson, be appointed a deputation to "our ministers, Churches, and Mission-stations in the colonies of the empire."<sup>6</sup> Such grandiose language meant simply a visit to America to

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1. Minutes of the General Assembly, Vol. II, p. 626.

2. ibid. p. 629.

3. Londonderry Standard, 26th May, 1859.

4. ibid. 26th May, 1859.

5. Missionary Herald, 1858, p. 170.

6. Minutes of the General Assembly, Vol. II, p. 678. Gibson published his impressions in a widely circulated booklet entitled Pentecost, (Londonderry Standard, 21st April, 1859)



report on the revival, as the Methodist Church in Ireland<sup>1</sup> also did in the same year (1858), for great hopes were entertained that the same visitation might come to Ireland. The Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, meeting in Derry in 1858, recommended "to the various Presbyteries and Sessions to hold, during the present year, special meetings of a devotional character, with a view to promote the revival of religion in the Church."<sup>2</sup> Little did these bodies know that God had already laid hands on some of his servants for the great work of Grace. Among the ministers a great number were well prepared, and had already proved themselves faithful evangelists. Many laymen also were hard at work, and one, Jeremiah Meneely, claims our attention. As far back as 1853, his soul was awakened, as is seen in a couplet he often uttered:-

"Wakened up from wrath to flee

In the year eighteen hundred and fifty-three,"<sup>3</sup>

but he did not seem to have any real assurance of salvation - a not unusual experience. He was a good member of Connor Presbyterian Church in full communion, and for some years it would seem that this state of 'lack of assurance' persisted. Connor Parish is about three and a half miles south of Ballymena, and is generally known as 'Kells and Connor' - twin villages in the Parish of Connor. In Kells is a little schoolhouse - whole upkeep devolved upon the local people, and a little gathering of those interested in its material welfare was held to make arrangements to do some much needed repairs. On the way home Meneely accompanied the schoolmaster, David Adair, and another friend named Robert Carlisle. The conversation among these serious-minded men turned soon to religion, whereupon Carlisle reported the startling news that James McQuilkin - a neighbour - had been converted. This news stirred Meneely, especially when he learned that

1. Minutes of Irish Methodist Conference, 1858, p. 51.

2. Reformed Presbyterian Synod Minutes, 1858, p. 15.

3. I. R. K. Paisley, op. cit. p. 16.



his friend McQuilkin had great assurance of salvation - a state of mind so different from his own experience. Now McQuilkin's wife kept a shop in Kells village, with her two children,<sup>1</sup> while her husband worked in Ballymena in the linen trade, residing there during the week. Each Saturday he returned to his home and spent Sunday there - hitherto as a 'cocker', as those who followed the business of fighting cocks were called. Carlisle was able to inform the other two men that McQuilkin had claimed to be cleansed from all his sins, and as proof had put away all the fighting cocks, renouncing all worldly pleasures. This claim of assurance and being cleansed from all sins was later on to be one of the battlegrounds<sup>2</sup> of the revival story, and it is interesting to note that the layman pioneer claimed such a state of mind and soul.

How had McQuilkin come to such a state of mind? The story behind that goes back to a visit to Ballymena in the spring, summer, and autumn of 1856,<sup>3</sup> of a Mrs. Colville - an English lady from Gateshead-on-Tyne, believed to be a Baptist.<sup>4</sup> Later on she was joined by Lieut. W. R. Aikman, who gave his whole time and substance to preaching the Gospel. "He was favourably received by Presbyterian clergymen, but especially by Mr. Moore, of Ballymena, who invited him to his pulpit, and assisted him in getting up meetings elsewhere."<sup>5</sup> Mrs. Colville and Lieut. Aikman were engaged in house-to-house visitation to point souls to Christ, and on November 3rd she called at the house of a certain Miss Brown who lived in Mill Street.<sup>6</sup> Here she met two women interested in religious controversy, discussing<sup>7</sup> with James McQuilkin 'predestination' and 'freewill'. Mrs. Colville

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1. Massie, op. cit. p. 3.

2. See below p. 326 and pp 327-334

3. Massie, op. cit. p. 3.

4. J. Weir, The Ulster Awakening, p. 20.

5. Massie, op. cit. p. 3, (good detail).

6. Carson, op. cit. p. 5. McQuilkin lodged here. Fuller details in D. McMeekin, Memories of '59.

7. W. H. Harding, Life of George Muller, p. 285, for apocryphal details.



was able to turn this conversation from a mere argument<sup>1</sup> to a personal interest in Christ. One of the women present began to show real signs of religious earnestness, and upon describing her spiritual condition to Mrs. Colville she was told that, judging from her state, she had not yet met the Saviour. As her state was similar to McQuilkin's, and he realised it, spiritual distress now followed in the life of James McQuilkin, for he had overheard the conversation. This spiritual distress was not to be satisfied for many months. He felt, to use his own language, "like one who had but a short time to live, and who was sinking into hell!"<sup>2</sup> - an experience paralleled in the conversion experience of some converts in the Revival.

In the meantime, during the autumn of 1857, the Rev. William Graham Campbell, who, along with the Rev. Robert Hewitt, was appointed a general missionary<sup>3</sup> of the Methodists in 1855, was eager to do what many of his predecessors had done with tremendous success - preach in Irish to the common people. His knowledge of the Irish language was not as good as he felt it might be, and he sought the help of a competent tutor. One such proved to be the Rev. John Feely,<sup>4</sup> now Methodist minister resident in Antrim, formerly a zealous Roman Catholic and at one time a student for the Roman priesthood. Feely was a fluent Irish speaker and readily agreed to coach Campbell, on the condition that Campbell, while with him, would conduct a series of evangelistic services. These meetings were held, and being largely attended, proved the means of a great good. "Amongst the many converted to God was a young man named James McQuilkin, a Presbyterian from the Parish of Connor ..."<sup>5</sup> This was nearly a year after the first signs of interest were manifest in his life.

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1. For slightly different aspect of details, see Appendix (B) of

2. William Richey, op. cit. p. 109.

Revival in Ireland

3. Crookshank, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 461.

Francis King.

4. Robert Haire, The '59 Revival, p. 12, and  
Crookshank, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 505.

5. Haire, op. cit. p. 12; and Crookshank, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 505.



McQuilkin began to pray for a companion in prayer. For a time his wife set her face against the entreaties and remonstrances of her husband, though afterwards she did believe.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile Meneely sought McQuilkin out to see if all he had heard as to his conversion was true. Convinced that McQuilkin had something he had not got, Meneely pondered and thought over the Scriptures more earnestly than ever, and very soon afterwards in his own kitchen he experienced the same peace as McQuilkin, through reading John VI, 37.<sup>2</sup> About this time two other young men were brought to Christ through McQuilkin, now a keen Christian - they were Robert Carlisle and John Wallace. This latter visited Scotland in the summer of 1859, and among those who met him was Alexander Whyte (afterwards the famous minister of Free St. George's, Edinburgh) who said of him "He is a poor uneducated, working Irishman - a few years ago a wild, drunken, cock-fighting Irishman. Now he is an eminently spiritual man of God - has, I think, the strongest hold on God's promises and faithfulness of any man I ever met." Continuing, Whyte sized up the man better than many others, for he says of him "he is far from the clerical type, but he is a jewel of the first water though in rough setting ... We are honoured in having him under the same roof."<sup>3</sup> In September, 1857, these four young men - McQuilkin, Meneely, Carlisle, and Wallace<sup>4</sup> - began to meet every Friday night at the Old School House near Kells for fellowship and Bible reading, and it is said that Robert Vance, a Wesleyan<sup>5</sup> from Connor<sup>6</sup>, met with them.

1. William Richey, Connor and Coleraine, p. 110.
2. D. McMeekin, Memories of '59, p. 8.
3. G. F. Barbour, Life of Alexander Whyte, pp. 92, 93.
4. Another name - Johnston - is given by the Rev. Jonathan Simpson, Annals of My Life, p. 435.
5. Crookshank, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 505.
6. ibid. p. 511.



It is profitable to notice the parallels in the American scene. Across the Atlantic in the self-same month of September, 1857, a prayer meeting began in the upper room at twelve o'clock on Wednesday, 23rd day of the month in the "Old North Dutch Church" in Fulton Street, New York. A solitary man was kneeling upon the floor engaged in earnest, importunate prayer. Peculiarly his name, too, was Jeremiah - Jeremiah Calvin Lamphier, born in Coxsackie, New York<sup>1</sup>. He was not far from forty years of age, tall, well built, with a pleasant, kindly face, and an affectionate manner. Possessed of great energy and perseverance, and with musical gifts, he was of modest demeanour, fervent in spirit, and blessed with good common sense. He was gifted in prayer and exhortation to a remarkable degree and had "those traits of character that make him a welcome guest in any house."<sup>2</sup> About twenty years before he had come to the great city, and was engaged in mercantile pursuits. In 1842 he united with the Tabernacle Church upon profession of faith. For some eight years he was connected with the Rev. Dr. James W. Alexander's Church. On the 1st July, 1857, he joined the North Dutch Church, as church missionary. Surveying his task he knew he could distribute tracts and preach the Gospel from door to door. This he had done, but the question still persisted in his mind - "Could not something more effectual be done?"<sup>3</sup> - a phrase heard often in Connor, too. The idea occurred to him to hold a prayer meeting for business men between 12 and 1 o'clock. This lunch-hour meeting "was to have singing, prayer, exhortation, relation of religious experience, as the case might be; that none should be required to stay the whole hour; that all should come and go as their engagements should allow or require, or their inclinations dictate."<sup>4</sup> And so the 23rd September found him

1. S. I. Prime, The Power of Prayer (Fulton Street Prayer Meeting), p. 22.

2. *ibid.* p. 22.

3. *ibid.* p. 21.

4. *ibid.* p. 24.



kneeling alone, and at half-past twelve the first prayer partner came; before the hour was over six made up the whole company, in prayer for revival. Three weeks later this weekly prayer meeting had grown to thirty, and it was arranged to have it a daily meeting. Interest in prayer in New York grew apace and fresh opportunity was made by a morning prayer meeting in Broome Street Church. "Other churches followed, both in Brooklyn and New York, without any preconcert or any knowledge of each other's movements."<sup>1</sup> Lamphier's journal on October 14 says: "Attended the noon-day prayer-meeting. Over one hundred present, many of them not professors of religion, but under conviction of sin, and seeking an interest in Christ; enquiring what they shall do to be saved ..."<sup>2</sup> These daily prayer meetings increased to one hundred in New York alone with more than 12,000 business men attending, and a proportionate number of meetings in all the great cities of the West and North.<sup>3</sup>

During the winter of 1857-1858 a great revival swept throughout all the Northern States of America. Up till the end of January a great religious interest arose "but early in February what may be termed a revival commenced simultaneously over a great part of the land. Boston, New York, and Philadelphia were the great centres of the awakening; but equally gladdening accounts were received from Cincinnati, Detroit and the great cities of the West. In all the towns on the Atlantic seaboard, in the villages of the Northern and Central States, and far away on the Western prairies, men are anxiously inquiring after salvation."<sup>4</sup> At its peak it was estimated that there were no less than 50,000 conversions a week.<sup>5</sup> Certain important features are worthy of notice in this American revival. There was no revival

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1. Prime, op. cit. p. 28.

2. *ibid.* p. 27.

3. Religious Movement in the U.S. op. cit. pp. 2 and 3.

4. *ibid.* p. 2.

5. Finney, Memoirs, p. 442.

machinery such as was common in those days. What is called in American language "the anxious seat"<sup>1</sup> was absent. Much that was objectionable in earlier revivals of 1830 and 1832 was missing, for there was no unrestrained excitement, nor any exuberant or intemperate zeal. Prime says "there was no offence to good taste."<sup>2</sup> That there was a well regulated and joyful enthusiasm is admitted gladly. Positively there was the central place of prayer. These prayer meetings were truly catholic in attitude. Denominationalism was forgotten as men of all sects met at the throne of grace. Another feature of this work was the place of laymen. "It began with them. It continues with them. Clergymen share in the conduct but no more than laymen, and as much as if they were laymen. They are often seen in these assemblies, but they assume no control ..."<sup>3</sup>

There had been a daily prayer meeting in Boston for several years, before the Fulton Street meeting commenced. "Daily prayer meetings were established throughout the length and breadth of the Northern States."<sup>4</sup> A gentleman, journeying from Omaha, Nebraska, to Boston, where they had prayer meetings in the Old South Church since 1850, said: "On my journey east I have found a continuous prayer meeting all the way."<sup>5</sup> Prayer meetings were conducted on the West coast of America at San Francisco and Oregon.<sup>6</sup> The revival was carried on very much through prayer meetings, personal visitation and conversation, the distribution of tracts, and by the energetic efforts of the laity, both men and women. Prayer meetings seemed to be preferable in the eyes of many to meetings for preaching - "We have had instruction until we are hardened; it is time for us to pray."<sup>7</sup>

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1. "The anxious seat" is the same as the "penitance form."  
(See Finney, on Revival, ed. Shelhamer, pp. 63, 64.)

2. Prime, op. cit. p. 57.

3. *ibid.* pp. 60, 61. (My italics).

4. Charles G. Finney, op. cit. p. 442.

5. *ibid.* p. 443.

6. Revival, pp. 107-108.

Finney, op. cit. p. 444.



Some have wondered what the effect of the American financial collapse of 1858 had upon men's hearts. Did it drive them to religion as a solace for lost power in the financial world? In answer it is pointed out by one who lived through the American Revival as a clergyman, that the revival "had actually commenced before the financial revulsion took place."<sup>1</sup> No doubt the financial distress made men feel their need of God when earthly support failed, but it should be pointed out that the prayer meetings were not planned to create revival, but rather "to meet the demand of religious interest already existing, not to create that demand."<sup>2</sup> That God poured out His Spirit of grace and supplication on mankind, seems to be the first cause. As nearly as possible was this awakened interest simultaneous over the western world that even people on ships at sea - who knew nothing of what was transpiring on land - experienced unusual religious anxiety, and even conversion.<sup>3</sup>

Among signs of preparation of heart for an awakening was the calling of a three-day "Convention on Revivals" at Pittsburg on 1st December, 1857, under Presbyterian auspices, and attended by two hundred ministers from the synods of Pittsburg, Allegheny, Wheeling and Ohio. Themes discussed were: (a) Obstacles in the way of Revival, (b) Means of promoting revival, (c) Encouragement to seek revival, (d) Spiritual condition of the churches, and (e) Systematic visitation.<sup>4</sup> Not long afterwards a similar convention took place at Cincinnati. Many topics about revival were discussed, but the subject and practice of prayer were uppermost.<sup>5</sup>

Back in Ireland, the works of God, in Wales under Daniel Rowlands, in America under Jonathan Edwards and the Tennents,

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1. Prime, op. cit. p. 63.

2. *ibid.* p. 64. Also New York Tribune quoted in Religious Movement in the U.S., op. cit. p. 6.

3. Prime, op. cit. p. 64.

4. Religious Movement in the U.S., op. cit. p. 7.

See further Jonathan Simpson, op. cit. p. 675.

5. Prime, op. cit. pp. 65-67.



and in Scotland the story of the Kirk o' Shotts Revival, 21st June, 1630, when five hundred men and women were converted at one service on the Monday after the Sabbath Communion;<sup>1</sup> and many others, were all talked about for some years in sermons throughout the country, so that the idea of revival took hold. In the spring of 1855 the Rev. J. H. Moore one Sabbath evening addressed a young man, an earnest Christian, "Do something more for God," he said. "Could you not gather at least six of your careless neighbours, either parents or children, to your own house, or to some other convenient place, on the Sabbath and spend an hour with them, reading and searching the Word of God?" From this, Tannybrake Sabbath School began, in 1855.<sup>2</sup> Seeing the good effects produced upon the children, the teachers thought of a meeting for parents, and two years later, about July, 1857, the Sabbath School Teachers' Prayer Meeting was begun. This met on Sunday evening, when prayer, praise and reading in the Bible were engaged in.

Upon McQuilkin's conversion, his minister, the Rev. J. H. Moore, always a great believer in setting his members to definite work, encouraged him to attend the Tannybrake Sabbath School and Prayer Meeting. McQuilkin purchased Muller's "Narrative" - details of wonderful works of prayer and faith by the German in Bristol, where Muller built his orphanages for needy children - and was much impressed by it. He, and the young men associated with him, feeling the need of a central place for Christian fellowship - for their homes were some miles apart - chose an old schoolhouse in the neighbourhood, where about two months after the commencement of the Sabbath School Prayer Meeting at Tannybrake, they started the Believers' Fellowship Meeting<sup>3</sup> in September, 1857, this meeting

1. Alexander Smellie, Men of the Covenant, p. 121.

2. Gibson, The Year of Grace, p. 20.

3. Title of prayer meeting obviously got from reading Muller's Narrative, Muller's Autobiography, p. 448.



being held each Friday night. "The special object of their society was prayer that God would bless and preaching of the Gospel in the Connor congregation, and their own labours, and those of others, in connexion with the prayer-meetings and Sabbath-schools throughout the district. The society soon ceased to be a secret one; and slowly one kindred spirit after another was introduced, on the recommendation of some of the original members."<sup>1</sup> A visitor to Connor described the prayer meetings, "They are conducted in this way - one prays, then another gives out a psalm and prays, then a third reads a portion of Scripture, then the various objects for special prayer are mentioned - fathers, mothers, children, brothers, or sisters - then all kneel down in silence and pour out their hearts before God, and after this the meeting is closed with singing and prayer aloud ... There is no excitement, all is solemn and impressive."<sup>2</sup>

Several large drops of heaven's grace had already fallen in Ulster, for besides the two prayer meetings already noted, there were, in Ahoghill district, three similar prayer meetings started between 1855 and 1857. One such was the Ballymontna and Prockless Religious Society (May 1857) in whose "very neighbourhood the revival was first decidedly manifested."<sup>3</sup> It was begun to encourage Bible reading and family worship among its members. Another prayer meeting begun in 1845 by the minister - the Rev. David Adams - commenced in the Session room, but soon developed into an evening service. To this many of the poorest came. Adams said "this man and that man were born there," and there is evidence that the aged attended too, for an aged grandfather was asked: "Have you found peace of soul?" ... and the reply was "Yes, I and my son, too, first saw a sight of our sins at your prayer meeting."<sup>4</sup>

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1. S. J. Moore, *op. cit.* p. 1.

2. Richey, *op. cit.* p. 108.

3. Adams, *op. cit.* p. 5.

4. *ibid.* p. 5.



As to the question "where did the Revival begin?" Connor has claimed this honour, but it is commonly referred to as the '59 Revival, therefore it was considered as having begun in 1859, whereas the Connor awakening began in 1858, the year when the American Revival began. Dr. Kirkpatrick seemed to play for safety in the State of Religion Report to the General Assembly in Dublin, 1859, when he said "... This remarkable movement commencing in Connor, Ahoghill, and Ballymena, has spread over a large portion of the county of Antrim."<sup>1</sup> However, the Presbyterian Magazine, of March, 1860, introduced, in an article on the "Revival Movement", some information presented by "The Rev. F. Buick, one of the ministers of Ahoghill, where the revival first began two years ago,"<sup>2</sup> showing us clearly that quiet revival work was afoot as early there as at Connor. Adams in his Revival at Ahoghill, claimed "The ... revival phenomena ... appeared first at Ahoghill, in January last, were manifested at Connor and Ballymena in May last, but not till then."<sup>3</sup> Even S. J. Moore noted the violent conversions in Ahoghill and Ballymena where he said "the process of conviction has been altogether of a different type from that known in the adjoining parish of Connor up till that time."<sup>4</sup>

Recapitulating, apparently what had happened was that in 1855 Tannybrake Sabbath School was begun. In 1856 Mrs. Colville visited Ulster, and McQuilkin came under conviction of sin. In July, 1857, Tannybrake Sabbath School Teachers' Prayer Meeting on Sunday evenings was begun. About August of the same year a Mission was conducted in Antrim by the Rev. W. G. Campbell (Methodist) at which two Connor men were converted, one of whom was McQuilkin. In September following, the Believers' Fellowship Meeting was started in Kells School-house on Friday evenings.

1. Missionary Herald, September, 1859, p. 401. (Italics mine).

2. Presbyterian Magazine, March, 1860. do.

3. Adams, op. cit. p. 3. do.

4. S. J. Moore, op. cit. p. 3.



At this latter prayer meeting three long months passed before progress was reported, save that two more men - Marshall and Wasson<sup>1</sup> - joined the ranks.<sup>2</sup> Wasson was a member of Kellswater Reformed Presbyterian Church, between Kells village and Ballymena. In another part of the parish a prayer meeting existed for more than a quarter of a century. Once its members dwindled so that only two - a man and an aged woman<sup>3</sup> - met for prayer. This latter meeting was quickened, and other prayer meetings were soon established. For some winters previously the minister of Connor conducted evening services on the Sabbath and stressed religious revival, often quoting from the narratives of the work of God in Wales under Rowlands, and in America under Edwards and the Tennents.<sup>4</sup> Great interest was shown in these services, and the church began to be crowded. "Sacramental seasons became unusually solemn."<sup>5</sup> For about eighteen months all was outwardly calm and free from everything bordering upon extravagance. This was about the same time as the American Revival, yet it was not until the spring of 1858 that the movement at Connor began to attract public attention. The Kells Schoolhouse Prayer Meeting, begun in September, 1857, gradually increased in numbers, and it is notable that in January, 1858, a child in one of the classes of their little Sabbath School was so overpowered that he was prostrated. "This astonished them, as it was the first they had ever seen or heard of."<sup>6</sup> This same prayer meeting, in May 1858, could number sixteen or seventeen who had "experienced the blessed change."<sup>7</sup>

Many reasons have been put forward for the lack of public attention to the Connor awakening. Richey, who wrote in 1862,

1. Prof. Adam Loughridge's MSS. on the Revival from the Reformed Presbyterian viewpoint, p. 8.
2. McMeekin, op. cit. p. 8.
3. Weir, op. cit. p. 16.
4. Richey, op. cit. p. 105.
5. *ibid.* p. 105.
6. Massie, op. cit. p. 3.
7. *ibid.* p. 3.



while on a health tour in Australia, and Carson, of the present day, make much of many possible excuses that might be offered. Richey wrote: "No local newspaper was published, and no line of railway passed sufficiently near to glean up and bear away the news of the district. There was nothing like denominational or even congregational rivalry to bring into comparison, and to give publicity to the proceedings of opposing sects, or of rival churches. The pastor and his helpers had no craving after notoriety, and were content to leave the movement to manifest its presence and its character by its fruits."<sup>1</sup> Carson says "It is difficult for us to realise how slow communications were in 1859. Tarmacadam roads were unheard of, and travel was somewhat limited. Motor cars were still fifty years in the future and bicycles also unknown. The telephone was not yet invented and news did not travel fast ..."<sup>2</sup> Both these writers seem to forget that the main road from Antrim to Ballymena (both market towns) ran through Kells, and also that there were no less than twenty-six coaches a week passing through the village.<sup>3</sup> Besides this it must not be forgotten that James McQuilkin, and doubtless others, worked daily in Ballymena and showed an interest in the town's prayer meetings. As Kells and Connor are but an hour's walk from Ballymena, it would be strange if news of the work in Connor was not known. The simplest explanation seems to be that the time was not yet ripe for a great extension of interest in the district of Ballymena, and Adams substantiated this when he wrote in the public press saying that the Revival's "origin is to be traced alone to the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit."<sup>4</sup> But conditions changed when two young Scotsmen, McFarlane and Grant, from the midst of the American Revival, on a visit to relatives near Connor in the spring of 1858,

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1. Richey, op. cit. p. 106.

2. Carson, op. cit. p. 22.

3. See Appendix 'I' See also Ch. I, p. 52 above.

4. Ballymena Observer, 28th May, 1859.



came into contact with the awakening. Invited to speak at local meetings, they gave thrilling accounts of the work in America, and of the dying testimony of the Rev. Dudley Tyng.<sup>1</sup> These two travellers passed on to Coleraine and other districts and by their inspiring story, not only of the American work but also of what they had seen at Connor, aroused the interest of many to visit Connor and so spread the news of the work.<sup>2</sup>

This work at Connor seems to have gone on in a very unpretentious way for about a year, till on the 9th December, 1858, a young Ahoghill man<sup>3</sup>, by the name of Samuel Campbell, a worker in the linen business of Mr. James Ross, of Kells, who had been induced to attend the Connor Fellowship Meeting, was converted in the following manner: A meeting had been announced for Tullanamullen, which was addressed by McQuilkin and Meneely, their subject being John I, 36. Campbell was present at this meeting,<sup>4</sup> where his interest in spiritual things was quickened. Next morning, reading God's Word, he was arrested by Romans X, 9: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." This portion was the means of leading him into the Kingdom of God, a few days later. At his conversion the Connor Fellowship Meeting was, for the first time, penetrated with a cry for mercy from one who had experienced a dreadful sense of sin.<sup>5</sup> No sooner had he tasted the joy of pardon and peace than he began to think of his relations in Ahoghill, where lived his mother, brother, and sister, all indifferent to religious matters; the brother is said<sup>6</sup> to have been notor-

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1. See below p. 236

2. Richey, op. cit. pp. 107, 108.

3. *ibid.* p. 108.

4. McMeekin, op. cit. p. 11.

5. Gibson, op. cit. p. 30.

6. James McClery Abernethy, minister of Brookside, Ahoghill, writing on 7th April, 1859, in Presbyterian Magazine, p. 97.

iously addicted to vice. Samuel visited them frequently. For a time all seemed in vain. One evening, however, he had spoken with more than usual earnestness; his brother accompanied him part of his way home, and before parting, he besought him to pray fervently for the Spirit's presence in his heart. From that evening John dates his conversion. God heard his prayer, "I saw heaven on the one side and hell on the other; the conviction flashed upon me with overwhelming power, that I deserved hell as my eternal portion, and such horror did the thought produce, that every joint in my body quaked."<sup>1</sup> A power which he asserts he could neither comprehend nor resist, forced him to cry aloud for mercy, and he continued thus in agonizing prayer till he obtained peace and joy in believing. He now sought the salvation of his mother and sister. Samuel's visits had prepared their minds for the reception of the truth, his sister was at once converted, and his mother shortly afterwards. Brookside Church, Ahoghill, where the Rev. J. M. Abernethy was ordained on 25th March, 1858, was originally a Burgher congregation, and the village is notable in that it was the only place, outside Belfast, with two Secession Churches - one Burgher and the other Anti-burgher - in addition to the Synod of Ulster Church. Abernethy's is the first recorded account of the awakening in Ahoghill. The Rev. Frederick Buick, minister of Second Ahoghill - now called 'Trinity' - records the account of the Campbell family's conversion in the next issue of the Presbyterian Magazine in a manner similar to Abernethy's, the only difference is that John's conversion is said by Buick to have taken place, not on the night of Samuel's visit, but some time afterwards, when working at his loom. "He had to leave his work, and descend from his loom to his knees, to give vent to his bursting heart before the throne. Thereafter

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1. Abernethy, op. cit. p. 97.



the glory of the Lord filled his soul in a manner and with a fulness that is unspeakable."<sup>1</sup>

The next report from Ahoghill is that of the Rev. David Adams, minister of First Ahoghill, whose account was written towards the end of 1859. He said: "... a young man, then residing in the parish of Connor, deeply concerned for his own soul, in December last, was blessed in making a deep, spiritual impression, first upon his mother, then his sister, and afterwards his brother."<sup>2</sup>

A further account of this is given under the editorship of the Rev. William Reid, who published in July, 1860, Authentic Records of Revival, in which one of the contributors is the Rev. F. Buick. In many ways this second account of Buick's is similar to the one written earlier for the Presbyterian Magazine, but there are important differences. It would now appear that the first visit of Samuel to his home at Ahoghill was on Christmas Day, 1858, when "that very night, the mother, and daughter, and son John, were brought under solemn convictions of sin. Mrs. Campbell awoke from broken slumbers with a loud cry for mercy. All her family were aroused; ... Mrs. Campbell and her daughter found the Lord. John, having accompanied his brother Samuel on his return ... now alone on the public road ... trembled from head to foot ... made to his home. He spent three weeks in an agony of prayer ... at the end of that he obtained a calm and joyful peace in believing."<sup>3</sup>

Two other accounts of this incident are those of Massie<sup>4</sup> who wrote in July, 1859, and followed Abernethy and the first account of Buick; and Gibson,<sup>5</sup> who followed Adams and Buick's second account to some extent.

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1. F. Buick, writing in Presbyterian Magazine, June 1859, p. 141.
  2. Adamd, op. cit. p. 7.
  3. Buick, in Reid, Authentic Records of Revival, p. 162.
  4. Massie, op. cit. p. 4.
  5. Gibson, op. cit. pp. 30, 31.

The story continues, according to Buick's second account: on the evening after Christmas, Anthony Huston visited Mrs. Campbell, his mother-in-law, bringing his wife with him. Six weeks later he, too, obtained peace in believing. The Abernethy account of this tells us that the family consisted of a father, mother and one son, who were visited by the Campbells, their relations. "At last the son was awakened, and shortly after all the other members of the family."<sup>1</sup>

Buick thinks well of this series of episodes, setting it down as in some ways the forerunner of the two further meetings soon to be held in the Second Presbyterian Church. It would appear that John Campbell organised a meeting in Second Ahoghill, when many came to hear what the young convert would say. This was the first meeting of the kind held in Ahoghill. Though it did not create much interest, Buick encouraged John to go on with the work. Accordingly John<sup>2</sup> arranged to hold a meeting in Ballymontna Schoolhouse, a short distance from Ahoghill. The lay brethren from Connor were invited. The prayer meetings formed some short time before became so large that no dwelling-house or schoolhouse could contain the eager multitude. So many folk came to this meeting to hear James McQuilkin, and his friends Meneely, Wallace and Carlisle, at Ballymontna Schoolhouse that the building was unable to accommodate them, and they had to remove to Second Ahoghill, the first meeting house on their way into town.<sup>3</sup> This happened on the 2nd February, 1859,<sup>4</sup> and a further meeting was held a fortnight later, when again numbers forced them to the same church for accommodation.

The Rev. D. Adams, on the other hand, says of the same Campbell episodes, "... as their change was of a milder type, it did not excite much attention then."<sup>5</sup> This latter minister

1. Presbyterian Magazine, April, 1859, p. 97.

2. Buick, Presbyterian Magazine, June, 1859, p. 141.

3. McMeekin, op. cit. p. 13.

4. Muller, op. cit. p. 449.

5. Adams, op. cit. p. 7.



was pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, where in almost twenty years a work of gradual grace had been manifest. Writing to the press, he said: "In First Ahoghill there has been going on among some of the members of that Church a gradual, silent, but very happy and healthful revival."<sup>1</sup> That this is so is shown in the fact that some sixty-five new communicants came to the Lord's Table for the first time in 1856.<sup>2</sup> Adams considered that "early in February the first decided revival case, accompanied by bodily and mental appearances, which afterwards became so common elsewhere, and which then produced a remarkable sensation, was that of a married man, who has since remained steady in his Christian profession, and whose father, shortly after renewed, became eminently instrumental in awakening or reviving both saints and sinners. About a year before this, one of our young men was affected in a precisely similar way, but as his case was not at the time rightly understood or known, it produced no appreciable result."<sup>3</sup>

Gibson has this to say on the matter, "... the bodily prostrations above referred to have been generally regarded as originating in connexion with the awakening in Ahoghill ..."<sup>4</sup> That it was not confined to Ahoghill is seen in the instance quoted by Gibson as taking place in Crossgar, County Down, in January, 1859, of a strong, healthy young man, smitten down after attending an afternoon service on a Sabbath. Bodily weakness was so great that the man thought himself to be dying. Sickness of soul was the cause of the later sickness of body. Though he received peace, it was not till two months had passed that he was able to work again.<sup>5</sup>

Returning to the main source of these physical manifestations, Gibson remarks "The work in Ahoghill, from the outset, was largely characterised by those physical effects which hence-

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1. The Rev. D. Adams' letter in Ballymena Observer, April 4, 1859.

2. Adams, op. cit. p. 5.

3. *ibid.* p. 7.

4. Gibson, op. cit. p. 33.

5. *ibid.* p. 33.



forward to a greater or less extent marked its onward progress. It is not to be wondered at that the sudden, singular, and violent conversions which were now so frequent, produced a strange and startling effect on the community. Such instantaneous seizures, so different in their character from the slow methods to which the Church has been accustomed, were naturally regarded with some suspicion and alarm, as introducing a new process in regeneration, and it was not without an internal struggle that many could be brought to admit their genuineness. It was impossible to deny, however, that the most blessed results were to be found associated with these affections, and that society in all its aspects was undergoing a wondrous transformation."<sup>1</sup>

What, then, is the answer to the question "where did the Revival begin?" In view of the evidence above detailed, it would appear to be necessary to ask "what is a revival?" The term revival of religion is applied to a special interest in religious concern, accompanied with a marked manifestation of divine power and grace in the quickening of believers, the reclaiming of backsliders, and the awakening, conviction and conversion of the unregenerate, in the community as a whole. Put otherwise, a revival is a vast ingathering of souls, and with it a large increase in church membership. Finney seems too simple when he describes revival as "nothing else than a new beginning of obedience to God,"<sup>2</sup> for that would describe a solitary conversion; but a solitary conversion - even it were Saul of Tarsus - does not constitute a revival. If religion consists in a conformity of hearts and lives to the will of God, then a revival of religion consists of a revival of scripture knowledge; of vital piety; of practical obedience throughout the community. In other words, wherever religion rises up from a state of comparative depression to a tone of increased vigour and strength, professing Christians

1. Gibson, op. cit. p. 34.

2. Finney on Revival, p. 9.



become faithful to their obligations, and the strength of the church increased by fresh accessions of piety from the world, there is revival.<sup>1</sup> "Revival is an awakening in the minds of the people to a concern for their salvation, resulting in a moral change of heart and life."<sup>2</sup> From this consideration of revival it is seen to be a time of extraordinary religious awakening in a community, or as Seaver wrote "... By religious revival ... I mean an awakening of the mind of the community to a due sense of the importance of revealed truth, evidencing itself in an increased love for the means of grace, and especially for Him to Whom these lead."<sup>3</sup>

Now at the prayer meeting at Kells there were some cases of conversion. "In May, 1858, they could number sixteen or seventeen who had experienced the blessed change."<sup>4</sup> This was in the midst of an extensive parish, consisting of some thousand families, approximately five thousand people, and a church that seated 1,250.<sup>5</sup> Jeremiah Meneely, speaking to J. C. Lawson in 1903, said, "On New Year's Day, 1858, the first conversion took place as a result of the prayer meeting, but after that there were conversions every night. At the end of the year 1858 about fifty young men were taking part in the prayer meeting."<sup>6</sup>

If this were the start of the Revival, Todd, Methodist New Connexion minister in Ballyclare, did not think so, for he went to Ahoghill, thirty-two miles as the crow flies, saying "that if a blessing could be received there, he could not return without it,"<sup>7</sup> and he would likely pass through Connor (seventeen miles) on the way. The General Assembly Report on the State

1. W. B. Sprague, Lectures on Revivals of Religion, p. 8.
2. Physical Phenomena of the Revival in the North of Ireland, p. 5, by an Observer residing in the midst of the Revival, published by George Herbert, Grafton Street, Dublin, 1859.
3. Seaver, *op. cit.* p. 4.
4. Massie, *op. cit.* pt. II, p. 3.
5. General Assembly Minutes, Vol. III, statistics, 1865.
6. Paisley, *op. cit.* p. 17, quoting Christian Herald of 1903, reprinted February, 1959. (14/2/1959)
7. Belfast Newsletter, 7th June, 1859.



of Religion, given in Derry in July, 1858, and published in September without comment or alteration, did not think so either, for it states after reviewing news of the American revival "How are we to seek to realize a similar state of things in our Irish Presbyterian Church?" Four hints are detailed, based on the American plan:<sup>1</sup> Ministers' conferences, more visitation of the people by ministers and elders, each member of the church taking charge of an irreligious family and seeking its spiritual good, and above all a greater interest in the place of prayer.<sup>2</sup> When it is remembered that this Report is made up of "reports transmitted from every district of the Church,"<sup>3</sup> and that there is no mention whatever of Connor, surely this indicates that the Assembly did not think the Connor prayer meeting had yet accomplished revival. Neither did the Presbyteries, for we read that the Coleraine Presbytery<sup>4</sup> had one of their elders, Dr. Cavin, speak on revival at a Presbytery Meeting specially convened. Much of the discussion centred on the American Revival, and Cavin urged the propriety of removing hindrances to such a revival in our own Church, but he made no mention of Connor. The Belfast Presbytery<sup>5</sup> heard the Rev. Thomas Toye refer to the American Revival, and it appointed a special commission of Morgan, Toye, Hamilton, Meneely, Barkley, and Shaw to consider the matter. Still no mention of Connor. The Derry Presbytery<sup>6</sup> heard a report of the religious Revival in the United States, and consulted together on the necessity of a revival in the church in this land - each member to preach on the subject and to direct people's attention to it. The Down Presbytery<sup>7</sup> required each minister to bring the matter of

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1. See above p. 106.

2. Missionary Herald, September, 1858, p. 170.

3. ibid. September, 1858, p. 169.

4. Coleraine Presbytery Minutes, 6th April, 1858.

5. Belfast Presbytery Minutes, 6th April, 1858.

6. Derry Presbytery Minutes, 15th June, 1858.

7. Down Presbytery Minutes, 1st February, 1859.



revival before his congregation, and to report at the next meeting if anything practical has been done. The Western Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church held a public meeting on the 8th February, 1859, in Londonderry, when ministers spoke on 'History, Necessity, Marks, Means, and Results of a True Scriptural Revival'.<sup>1</sup> In none of these would it appear that Connor was known as a place of revival, despite the fact that Gibson said that "at the meeting of the General Assembly in July, 1858, Mr. Moore (Connor) was publicly requested by the Moderator to furnish some account of the awakening ..." <sup>2</sup> but no account of this request or speech was noted in the Minutes of Assembly of that year, and Gibson later admitted that "it was not till near the close of 1858 that any striking results appeared," <sup>3</sup> - a reference to the account of Campbell's conversion.<sup>4</sup>

Dr. Edwin Orr, in his chapter entitled "The Awakening in Ulster," seems to be aware of this difficulty of location, but not to have any very decided views as to the answer, and in an equivocal sentence he wrote "The actual out-break of revival came in direct connection with the Kells prayer-meeting," <sup>5</sup> going on immediately to tell of the conversion of the Campbell family, and the two visits of James McQuilkin and his friends Meneely, Wallace and Carlisle from the Kells prayer-meeting to Ballymontna Schoolhouse, a short distance from the village of Ahoghill, where so many people attended that they had to remove to the nearest Meeting House on the way into the town, that of Second Ahoghill Presbyterian Church. This happened on the 2nd February, 1859, and a further meeting was held a fortnight later, when again numbers forced them to the same Church for accommodation.<sup>6</sup> The whole countryside seemed to be interested

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1. Western Presbytery Report, Reformed Presbyterian Synod  
Minutes, 1859, p. 21.

2. Gibson, op. cit. p. 24.

3. *ibid.* p. 30.

4. See above p. 112.

5. Orr, op. cit. pp. 39, 40.

6. *ibid.* p. 40.



now, and many abandoned work altogether, giving themselves to prayer, praise and the scriptures.

To all outward appearances it would seem that the Communion season held on Sunday, 13th March, in First Ahoghill Presbyterian Church, was a quiet, serious, solemn affair, when the comparatively small number of eighteen new communicants for the first time was forthcoming.<sup>1</sup> However, as the custom has been for generations to have a thanksgiving service on the Monday, it was announced that Mr. Adams would preside in the First Church, and that the subject was to be "Revivals."<sup>2</sup> An idea got abroad that the converts (among whom were J. Meneely, James Bankhead, Master Brekenridge, J. Story, S. Campbell) would have an opportunity of publicly giving expression of their experience. Adams wrote: I "had intended to do all I had promised to do with regard to that meeting,"<sup>3</sup> at which an enormous congregation presented themselves. This was by far the most important meeting yet held, and it made a lasting impression on the whole neighbourhood. The Church, recently rebuilt at a cost of £1,600<sup>4</sup> and seating about 1,200 people was far too small. Upon the commencement of the service by the Rev. D. Adams, the congregation grew impatient to hear the converts, and James Bankhead<sup>5</sup>, who was a comfortable farmer<sup>6</sup> and a member of the congregation, could not be restrained from praying aloud in a very excited manner. Buick wrote of the occasion in First Ahoghill: "the painful outburst of his feelings originated in disappointment. All the brethren from Connor who were present, and who were expected to address the meeting, were not permitted to do so."<sup>7</sup> Adams maintained Bankhead was under a fever,<sup>8</sup> and did not wish him to speak.

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1. Adams, op. cit. p. 16.

2. Ballymena Observer, 26th March, 1859.

3. *ibid.* 2nd April, 1859.

4. *ibid.* 9th April, 1859.

5. McMeekin, op. cit. p. 16; also Carson, op. cit. p. 20.

6. William Arthur, Revival in Ulster, p. 5.

7. Ballymena Observer, 2nd April, 1859.

8. *ibid.* 2nd April, 1859.



This created a commotion, the crowd rushed the galleries, and the minister, afraid of a collapse of these structures, "peremptorily ordered the galleries to be cleared."<sup>1</sup> All went outside and amid the chilling rain and muddy streets the same laymen addressed the audience, which "numbered about 3,000,"<sup>2</sup> from the steps of one of the houses of Ahoghill square. Many fresh 'converts', moved by the fervour and apostolic language of the speaker, fell upon their knees in prayer. Many dated their conversion from that night. From that time, "for the first time in the progress of the movement scores of people began to be 'prostrated' under intense conviction of sin."<sup>3</sup> "The spiritually impressed now multiplied daily, eight or nine of my hearers being changed in a day,"<sup>4</sup> said Adams; while Buick wrote "Not only have hundreds been stricken, and forced to cry aloud for mercy, but hundreds more have been drawn to Jesus privately."<sup>5</sup>

From this it would appear that while the fire of a quiet work of grace smouldered in Connor and Kells district, as it was also doing in Belfast,<sup>6</sup> Comber, Antrim, Killyleagh,<sup>7</sup> Boveva<sup>8</sup> (with its four young men), Banbridge,<sup>9</sup> Lurgan,<sup>10</sup> and Ahoghill, the flames burst forth in Ahoghill on the evening of the 14th March, 1859, and from then onwards, things moved in an extraordinary manner. This sentiment was supported by a letter, which, though unsigned, was authenticated by the Editor of the Ballymena Observer, in the course of which it was said that the "movement began in Connor, extended to ... Drumaul, and then became developed in a most rapid and peculiar manner about Ahoghill."<sup>11</sup> Seaver

1. Ballymena Observer, 26th March, 1859.
2. *ibid.* 26th March, 1859.
3. Orr, *op. cit.* p. 40.
4. Adams, *op. cit.* p. 8.
5. Reid, *op. cit.* p. 164.
6. Seaver, *op. cit.* p. 7.
7. Hincks, E., God's Work and Satan's Counter-works, p. 4.
8. Reid, *op. cit.* p. 22; and T. J. Simpson, The 1859 Revival in the Roe Valley, p. 6. In England, at Stourbridge, revival commenced in April, 1857. See Revival, pp. 88, 135.
9. Gibson, *op. cit.* pp. 207, 208; Weir, *op. cit.* p. 96.
10. Gibson, *op. cit.* p. 252.
11. Ballymena Observer, 23rd April, 1859.



further substantiated this by saying that "the meetings ... in the parish of Connor were well attended, but without any great results until the early part of the present year (1859) when deep anxiety on the subject manifested itself throughout the parish."<sup>1</sup> The progress of the Awakening at Ahoghill was phenomenal. It commenced on the 14th March, and by the 26th March, the converted around Ahoghill numbered thirty-five;<sup>2</sup> by the 7th April the number was two hundred;<sup>3</sup> by the 14th April it was four hundred; and by the 23rd April (six weeks after the Revival started) the number had risen to over four thousand.<sup>4</sup> Comparing this with the three to four hundred converts<sup>5</sup> reckoned at Connor at the beginning of May, it is easy to see where the strength of the Revival lay. Indeed, Connor revival up till the month of May was no larger than the little awakening at Priesthill in 1851 when "God seemed to touch the hearts of the people in almost every house ... In a few weeks about four hundred professed to find peace."<sup>6</sup>

The Ahoghill Presbytery presented a report on the Revival at the Synod meeting of Ballymena and Coleraine on 25th May, stating, inter alia "... Wild, wicked and godless characters, whom no human power could remodel, are now to be seen sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in their right mind... This is the case, not in solitary instances, but in hundreds - not merely with the young, just initiated into a course of sin, but with the old, confirmed in their sinful habits."<sup>7</sup> At this same meeting, Ballymena Presbytery reported "... A spirit of genuine religion has fallen upon many of the people, and the power of godliness is manifested in their conduct. Men of irregular habits have been suddenly, and, it is hoped,

1. Seaver, op. cit. p. 7.

2. Ballymena Observer, 26th March, 1859.

3. Presbyterian Magazine, May, 1859, p. 99, footnote.

4. Ballymena Observer, 23rd April, 1859.

5. The British Messenger, July 8th, 1859, p. 3.

6. Crookshank, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 422. See above pp. 24, 25.

7. Ballymena Observer, 28th May, 1859; Missionary Herald, June, 1859, p. 324.

7. Adams, op. cit. p. 20.



permanently changed; drunkards have become peaceable, sober, religious members of society; houses, once the habitation of wickedness, have become sanctuaries of praise; and roofs that formerly echoed with songs of obscenity, now resound with the anthems of the Royal Psalmist, hallelujahs of heart-felt praise."<sup>1</sup> Writing in November, 1859, a few days after the celebration of the Communion service, when this time no less than 127 new communicants came forward for the first time, Adams was able to testify that of the seven hundred families forming the congregation "not much less than 700 of our people have been graciously awakened since the revival began."<sup>2</sup> "Of those awakened not more than one in seven have suffered anything like the bodily prostration, trance or convulsion which the small minority have experienced."<sup>3</sup>

A moral test of some magnitude was soon to come to the revival in Ahoghill, for on the Ahoghill Old Fair in the first week in June, there was always held at a place called the Creagh-rocks<sup>4</sup> - midway between Ahoghill and Randalstown - contests in cockfighting, and with this, all the attendant evils, drink, gambling and cardsharpping. What were these people with their newfound faith in Christ to do with this scene? A goodly number of the "awakened" - some of them onetime 'cockers' themselves - determined to hold a religious meeting. That Tuesday, 7th June, was a fine sunny day, and at ten a.m. many were assembled - some having come as many as six miles. It is believed about two thousand were present.<sup>5</sup> "The meeting was earnestly and usefully addressed by four ministers,<sup>6</sup> and pious prayers were offered up by fervent laymen," wrote Adams.<sup>7</sup> The

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1. Missionary Herald, June, 1859, p. 336; Ballymena Observer, 28th May, 1859.
  2. Adams, op. cit. p. 9.
  3. *ibid.* p. 10.
  4. Ballymena Observer, 18th June, 1859; also Adams, op. cit. p. 27; and Gibson, op. cit. p. 35.
  5. Adams, op. cit. p. 28; also Gibson, op. cit. p. 35.
  6. The Revs. J. Smyth, Craigmole; D. Adams, First Ahoghill, F. Buick, Second Ahoghill; and Hall Stewart, Grange (Ballymena Observer, 18th June, 1859).
  7. Adams, op. cit. p. 28.



meeting was conducted by the Rev. J. Smyth, of Craigmore, and lasted till 3 o'clock. The converts' hopes were realised, for that day was the finish of the cock-fighting at the Creagh-rocks, and on the site a hall was erected for the regular preaching of the Gospel, under the care of neighbouring churches.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile at Ahoghill, there were continuous rounds of meetings held, some of them in the working hours of the day, others far into the night, and throughout the countryside the sound of praise and prayer was continually heard. The excitement was intense everywhere, not least in the churches. At the memorable meeting in First Ahoghill on 14th March a strange irresponsible trait made itself seen. Ministerial authority was flouted, and it was said when Adams tried to restrain Bankhead, that "converts declared that he spoke by the command of a power superior to any ministerial authority" and "every attempt to restrain him was impossible."<sup>2</sup> Some weeks later, during the summer, in First Ahoghill after the morning service was over, and the people, as the custom was, waited in the graveyard for the usual quarter of an hour interval before the second service, some young men engaged in prayer, with the result that difficulty was experienced in gathering in the congregation. After a time, Mr. Adams announced from the pulpit the opening psalm, when a youth standing on the ground floor began to talk about "the Blood." He was followed by others, and for a time bedlam reigned. All Adams' efforts to quiet them only increased the excitement, and once again he had to clear the church. Outside the impromptu meeting continued with praise and prayer and the exhortation of favourite converts.<sup>3</sup>

1. In 1866 it was proposed in the Ballymena Presbytery to gather a congregation here at Creaghrocks - Ballymena Presbytery Minutes, 3rd April, 1866.
2. Ballymena Observer, 26th March, 1859.
3. McMeekin, op. cit. p. 23.



After the awakening in Ahoghill, things now began to move with rapidity. Portglenone, a village of five hundred people, was soon visited. "The town and neighbourhood could not have been better prepared for such a visitation ..." <sup>1</sup> for it was aroused from an apparently hopeless lethargy by the earnest preaching of the Rev. William Kennedy McKay, despite the criticism of his elders (earnest men who conducted five prayer meetings) who objected to his whiskey drinking habits and his broken family life. <sup>2</sup> One Sabbath morning, in the old First Presbyterian Meeting House, on the site of which the present building now stands, during the service a cry was heard from a woman in a state of prostration. Others were deeply affected, and McKay, in a calm, collected way, pointed the way of salvation. In the interval between the services serious discussion took place in the graveyard, and during the second service, which was much longer than usual, there were several cases of prostration. Meetings were now held every evening throughout the district in the open air, as there was no place big enough to hold the crowds. Prostration was a feature of the movement in Portglenone, but it did not affect the general progress of the work, and both Presbyterians and Episcopalians united in a way never seen before. Even Roman Catholics spoke respectfully of the change in their Protestant neighbours, and not a few attended the meetings, <sup>3</sup> as they did at Ahoghill, where one Roman Catholic hearer "on being asked how he liked the advices he heard at a revival meeting, replied 'I like them well; I wonder who could dislike them'." <sup>4</sup> On Sunday, 27th March, Adams of Ahoghill preached in Portglenone on "How can these things be?", and the following Saturday, a letter appeared in the Ballymena Observer about the awakening

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1. R. M. Sibbett, The Revival in Ulster, p. 35.

2. Ballymena Presbytery Minutes, 4th May, 1858.

3. Sibbett, *op. cit.* p. 40.

4. Presbyterian Magazine, May 1859, p. 98.

in Portglenone stating among other things that "one woman says she never heard a sermon till last Sabbath though she had attended Divine Service from childhood,"<sup>1</sup> - a fair enough testimony to the power of an applied sermon.

The Revival now spread. In quick succession the neighbouring districts of Tully, Largy, Grange, Straid, Galgorm Parks, and Killyless (Killalers) - these are all within the ambit of the Second Ahoghill congregation, i.e. members of this congregation are scattered about through them all<sup>2</sup> - Slatt, Cloughwater, Clough, Rasharkin,<sup>3</sup> were visited by the end of April, a period of less than six weeks from the momentous meeting in Ahoghill on 14th March. At Grange, near Ahoghill, a Mr. James Lea brought Meneely, McQuilkin and Campbell, as well as other converts, to speak at The Grange Corner. Prostration occurred here when Campbell began to pray, after the other two had spoken. Subsequently Campbell spoke from Isaiah LV, 6 and 7, when the people literally fell in dozens in front of him. The Rev. H. Stewart, minister of the Presbyterian Church at Grange, met with some of the leaders at his house to discuss their perplexity, for they did not know what to do. During their deliberations, the people had entered the Meeting House, and the church was full to overflowing when they returned. This meeting continued all through the night till daybreak, and many rejoiced spiritually from this date.<sup>4</sup> The townland of Straid (Ahoghill) had a weekly prayer meeting held on a Tuesday night. Converts and local ministers addressed these meetings, and it is known that the Rev. David Adams preached there on 29th March.<sup>5</sup>

In several townlands between Ahoghill and the New Ferry so great was the interest in revival that ordinary everyday

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1. Ballymena Observer, 2nd April, 1859.

2. G. R. Buick, MSS Book of Ahoghill, p. 243.

3. Missionary Herald, June, 1859, p. 325.

4. McMeekin, op. cit. p. 33.

5. Ballymena Observer, 9th April, 1859.



work was suspended. In the townlands of Castletown and Kilcurry the effects of the revival were very marked. In Longstone Schoolhouse and in the home of a Mrs. Poyntz nearby meetings were held, and many conversions effected. Innumerable prayer meetings were held and services conducted in the principal houses on Sabbath evenings and at other convenient times in regular succession. Here there was almost an entire absence of violent physical prostration. Due to the wise counsel of many experienced Christians residing in this district the community was not broken up into ecclesiastical fragments and sectarian bitterness did not appear as in some other localities.<sup>1</sup> In Rasharkin Presbyterian Church a meeting was held on the 7th June.<sup>2</sup> The church was full, and while the speaker was calling on God that the Holy Spirit might descend, a flash of lightning which filled the building at the moment struck the congregation with awe and trembling. With terror they prostrated themselves on the floor. On that occasion, of a congregation of five hundred, there were one hundred cases of deep conviction of sin.<sup>3</sup> This was the occasion in the Rev. William Wallace's congregation of the awakening spreading round the district, whole families being brought under conviction in the same house.<sup>4</sup> The Revival was "now more or less apparent in all the neighbouring parishes, slightly so in Kilconriola and Ballyclug, but in Rasharkin, Portglenone, Grange, and Duneane the cases are numerous and on the increase,"<sup>5</sup> while about Ahoghill and the western district of Drumaul a blessed change is noted among the people. In Antrim revival services were held in the various churches, and open-air meetings held in the whole square in front of the Court-house. On at least occasion W. M. Speers from near

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1. McMeekin, op. cit. p. 39.

2. Ballymena Observer, 11th June, says on Sabbath, 5th.

3. Presbyterian Magazine, July 1859, p. 168.

4. Massie, op. cit. pp. 7 and 8.

5. Ballymena Observer, 23rd April, 1859.



Portglenone spoke to "an audience of several thousand"<sup>1</sup> here, and strained his voice, bearing the mark the rest of his life. In the month of May the revival had reached Cullybackey and Broughshane in the north, and simultaneously in the south it had reached Ballyclare, - the whole country from Toome to Rasharkin was awakened.<sup>2</sup>

Coming nearer to Ballymena, there was a great interest at Laymore (Kilconriola) two miles away, where on the 17th April (Sunday) ten were "struck". A similar visitation took place at Clinty nearby, and on Sunday, 15th May, an enormous prayer meeting in the open air was held at Kilconriola, when between 1,500 and 2,000 people were present. Three men from Ahoghill spoke, twenty were stricken, and one hundred and fifty converted.<sup>3</sup> The meeting was conducted by the Rev. A. Robinson, Broughshane, who stayed until after midnight. But Ballymena, "... perhaps, the only place in Ulster where the town bell summons the people to Presbyterian worship - a memorial to the ancient attachment of the lords of the soil<sup>4</sup> to Presbyterian discipline,"<sup>5</sup> the revival seemed peculiarly enough to skirt all around the town, though there were earnest souls deeply anxious for its coming, yet it seemed to evade them. Nearby at Connor, at the beginning of May, the number of conversions had now reached between three and four hundred,<sup>6</sup> and despite the fact that a revival prayer meeting was held in Harryville School<sup>7</sup> (Ballymena) on the 5th March, and Connor men came to address the meeting where interest was so great that it was necessary to adjourn to First Ballymena Church, there was no apparent result. Another evidence of disquiet that Ballymena was being omitted is seen in a letter, written

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1. Sibbett, op. cit. pp. 57, 58.

2. Ballymena Observer, 21st May, 1859.

3. *ibid.* 21st May, 1859.

4. The Adairs, - formerly Presbyterians.

5. McComb's Presbyterian Almanac, 1866, p. 74.

6. The British Messenger, July 8th, 1859, p. 3.

7. Ballymena Observer, 9th April, 1859.



towards the beginning of May<sup>1</sup> "... Ballymena is dry, as yet. Surely we will not be passed over. Pray for us. Ask God to cause religion to flow down our streets as a mighty stream. There is a little good going on in our town but how very little in proportion to the means employed." That the news of the Revival was well known in the town is evident from the numerous notes given of its progress in the weekly newspaper The Ballymena Observer . Conspicuously enough these notes began on the 26th March, 1859, after the outburst at Ahoghill, and it was not until the 21st May that the Revival was stated to be extending towards Ballymena, nearly three weeks after it had arrived in Belfast.<sup>2</sup> The town of Ballymena was not bereft of Godly ministers, for there were good, zealous men in the many churches of all Protestant evangelical denominations throughout the town, and, besides private trysts of prayer in many homes, there were united church prayer meetings, and a weekly mid-day prayer meeting in the Town Hall. S. J. Moore wrote: "In the first and third Presbyterian Churches in Ballymena addresses were delivered and prayers presented to God, a few weeks before the revival made its appearance in town, by two of the original members of the Connor fellowship meeting ... a youth ... had been brought to Christ after weeks of anxiety... But when the Spirit's power began to be extensively and manifestly exerted in prostrating the moral and immoral in conviction of sin ... that power seemed to fall like a sun-stroke."<sup>3</sup> So long was the wait for the coming of the Spirit, that two months and more had passed by after the Ahoghill visitation (14th March) before the principal seat of the linen trade with its six thousand souls was blessed. Although James McQuilkin of Connor worked in the town and was active

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1. The British Messenger, 8th July, 1859, p. 3. The letter was from "J--- M---" (possibly McQuilkin) to a friend in Stirling.

2. Seaver, op. cit. p. 7.

3. Moore, op. cit. p. 6, my italics.



in the prayer meeting, along with other keen Christian laymen such as William Carlisle, James Compton and William Bortrick,<sup>1</sup> still it was not till a strange prostration of an Ahoghill man took place on Saturday, 16th April, in Galgorm Street, that expectations were alerted. "The Ballymena case referred to by our correspondent occurred in this town on Saturday last, on the public thoroughfare opposite the house of Mrs. Diamond, in Galgorm Street, and amid a crowd of market people. It presented some very remarkable peculiarities. A man, apparently about thirty years of age, formerly of Ballymena, and now resident in the neighbourhood of Ahoghill, suddenly fell upon his knees and alarmed the entire neighbourhood by loud and desperate cries, expressive of the most appalling agony. His despairing shouts were such as might be expected from a man who felt himself suddenly attacked, and sinking under the repeated and deadly stabs of an assassin. People ran to the spot from all directions, expecting to find that an unfortunate sufferer had become the victim of some terrible accident ... The man continued his cries for the space of about ten minutes, after which interval he became more composed; and, being in a very weak and agitated state, he was assisted by some friends to the house of a relative in Bridge Street. On passing down Linen-hall Street he was repeatedly heard to exclaim, "Unclean! Unclean! - Lord, be merciful to me a sinner!" In the course of the evening he was visited by some religiously disposed young men of the town, who prayed with him; ..." <sup>2</sup> About the same time a lad of sixteen was converted, and then followed the conversion of two women of good moral character, who were agonizingly convicted of sin. <sup>3</sup>

The first little "shower" of revival fell in Jackson's Schoolhouse in Springwell Street on 15th May, in a meeting

1. McMeekin, op. cit. p. 46.

2. Ballymena Observer, 23rd April, 1859.

3. ibid., 23rd April, 1859.



conducted by the Rev. S. J. Moore, minister of the Wellington Street Presbyterian Church. Within ten days the shower had grown to a downpour and multitudes were converted. "On my return, after two days' absence at the meeting of Synod" - Moore was Moderator<sup>1</sup> of the Synod of Ballymena and Coleraine which met in First Cuckstown on Tuesday, 23rd May, - "I found the town in a state of great excitement."<sup>2</sup> Indeed by the 25th May, the Belfast Newsletter could report "Not a single street in Ballymena itself where some cases have not occurred." On Saturday, 21st May, six or seven young women were affected at the Raceview Weaving Factory<sup>3</sup> early in the morning, and in another between twenty and thirty were prostrated, so that the place had to shut at noon. On Monday following, it reopened with nearly half its employees absent. A similar story is told of Ballygarvey Bleachworks on the same weekend. On Sunday, 22nd, there was an enormous open-air prayer meeting at Broughshane church-yard which was filled by some four thousand people, which meeting was conducted by the Rev. A. Robinson, the minister. One hundred people were affected. On the same evening another enormous concourse of two thousand people met at Carniney, one mile from Ballymena, while two miles away at Cullybackey, some four hundred to five hundred people gathered. At Straid (Ahoghill) more than a thousand congregated, "several trees being loaded."<sup>4</sup> On the Monday night following about a thousand people attended an open-air meeting on the Fair Hill (Ballymena) when lay speakers addressed the meeting from a platform in front of the Weigh-house. By ten o'clock this meeting adjourned to Wellington Street Presbyterian Church and continued for some time. On Thursday evening there was a large meeting in First Ballymena addressed by the Rev. H. H. Carson of Ballyweaney.<sup>5</sup> On Sunday, 29th

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1. Minutes of the General Assembly, Vol. II, p. 635.

2. Moore, op. cit. p. 4.

3. Ballymena Observer, 28th May, 1859.

4. ibid. 28th May, 1859.

5. ibid. 28th May, 1859.

May, at Kilconriola, some two thousand attended an open-air meeting and on Wednesday evening at Laymore a similar meeting took place, while at Connor on the Sunday and Monday thirty new "cases" were reported.<sup>1</sup> On Wednesday, 1st June, the Rev. Dr. John Johnston, Moderator of Assembly and father of the open-air preaching, with the Rev. T. Y. Killen, Ballykelly, and the Rev. George Shaw, Alfred Street, Belfast, attended a meeting in Wellington Street,<sup>2</sup> where at least one prostration took place, and others were converted.

On the next Sunday, 5th June, the news from Kells and Connor, where the work was very quiet hitherto, was that six or seven men began to cry for mercy in the midst of the service, interrupting Moore during the sermon;<sup>3</sup> while that same afternoon a girl from the Grange Corner, beyond Randalstown, who was walking to visit friends in Kells, fell on the roadside outside Kells village.<sup>4</sup> A doctor was sent for, but what was needed was spiritual help. She said she had been under conviction for a long time, but now had got peace. On the same day meetings were held at Broughshane, Glenarm, at Lakeview, near Randalstown, and numerous other places.<sup>5</sup> About this time the pastor and congregation of Connor made arrangements to send forth James McQuilkin as a Scripture reader and missionary among the people.<sup>6</sup>

In Ballymena all ministers, except the Unitarians and Roman Catholics, heartily supported the work of the Revival. The Methodists shared richly in the showers of blessing, and the increase to the Wesleyan congregation was such that the chapel had to be considerably enlarged.<sup>7</sup> The Curate, the Rev. Daniel Mooney, was a strong supporter of the movement,

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1. Ballymena Observer, 4th June, 1859.
  2. ibid. 4th June, 1859.
  3. ibid. 11th June, 1859.
  4. ibid. 11th June, 1859.
  5. ibid. 11th June, 1859.
  6. Banner of Ulster, 14th June, 1859.
  7. William Arthur, Beginnings of Great Revival, p. 13.



ascribing it to the work of the Spirit of God, and lecturing and speaking on Sundays and at weekly meetings.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Maguire,<sup>2</sup> incumbent of Muckamore, was also associated with the work. It would appear that once Ballymena was influenced the surrounding districts seemed to be overwhelmed, probably for the simple reason that many people worked in the town, but their relatives still lived in the surrounding countryside. Having found this salvation, one of their first efforts must be to tell others, and who better than their relations? In the town itself Moore's congregation received many new members, so much so that a new church had to be erected on the Ballymoney Road, and the old one was continued as a separate congregation - Wellington Street.

A sure indication of what this revival meant in practical Christian living is seen in the report of the Petty Sessions held in Ballymena on Monday, 6th June - before Charles Hunt, Esq., R.M. - when Head Constable Elliott stated that there were only two cases of drunkenness in the last three weeks, when usually there were thirty in such a time. Equally favourable reports came from Kells, Connor, Ahoghill, and Broughshane.<sup>3</sup> Truly revival had now come in all its strength, and it was soon to be said "the whole history of the Christian Church furnished no parallel to the power and progress of religion as manifested during the last six months in the province of Ulster."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ballymena Observer, 4th June, 1859.

2. ibid. 4th June, 1859.

3. ibid. 11th June, 1859.

4. See 'Introduction' to Another Stone in the Temple - the conversion story of a Belfast Tradesman's twenty-year-old daughter by prostration in Berry Street Church, on 29th June, 1859.

CHAPTER IV

THE SPREAD OF THE REVIVAL

One of the prominent men of the Revival wrote that its "origin is to be traced alone to the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit,"<sup>1</sup> while another writer said "... never before, within the memory of living men, have we received such a measure of divine blessing as within the last few months."<sup>2</sup> Such was the introduction to the forthcoming General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, due to meet in July, 1859. At its previous meeting a year before it had hoped and prayed for a revival, but there was no doubt now in the minds of those who met that in an unmistakable way there was a genuine spirit of revival. Another official "voice" of the same church wrote,<sup>3</sup> after a reference to Ahoghill and its district, "We have heard of the Lord's work extending also to Killymurriss, Broughshane, Ballymena, and Antrim."

We consider first the work at Ahoghill, where "the revival properly so called began first near the village ... about the beginning of this year",<sup>4</sup> and where the revival phenomena was first seen in January, 1859, (and which did not appear in Ballymena and Connor till May, nearly four months later.) Prayer meetings were held every night, and frequently at mid-day in the busiest season of the year - the spring crop sowing time - "in kitchens, barns, school-houses, churches, fields, wayside and hedge-side, while secret and family prayer became very general."<sup>5</sup> Adams stated that towards the end of April the wind of the Spirit calmed a little, but that by the middle of May, the work was as great as ever.<sup>6</sup> Eight months later

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1. D. Adams, writing in The Ballymena Observer, 28th May, 1859.  
2. Missionary Herald, July 1859, p. 329.  
3. Presbyterian Magazine, June 1859, p. 144.  
4. David Adams, The Revival at Ahoghill, p. 3.  
5. Adams, op. cit. p. 8.  
6. ibid. p. 8.



he wrote "... not much less than seven hundred of our people have been graciously awakened ... all, with a few exceptions ... decided Christians."<sup>1</sup>

At Ahoghill village the huge prayer meetings were held three times a week, hundreds attended and many were awakened. Outside First Ahoghill Presbyterian Church on Sunday, 22nd May, a startling incident transpired when an eighteen-year-old "mockery" lad, who had delighted for weeks in a fiendish way to mimic the awakened in language of grossest obscenity, was smitten. After some he had shouted "Ha, the Devil will get hold of you today." To others he called "Run fast or you'll not get the touch." After morning service, when Adams was called to visit an "impressed" one, the mockery stood by watching. Adams in prayer denounced any who sat in the chair of the scorner, and the lad went out only to fall to the ground prostrated. Some thought he was dead, but the visitation was in mercy, not in judgment. He was awakened and converted, and afterwards made his way to every prayer meeting in the neighbourhood. By the 11th June Adams was able to testify in the public Press that this waif "seems converted."<sup>2</sup> On the following Sunday (29th May) "upwards of twenty" people were impressed.<sup>3</sup> In the same district another very interesting incident recorded was that of a woman who was never in any Protestant place of worship, so far as is known, for she was a bigoted Papist. On Monday, 30th May, she appeared at First Ahoghill prayer meeting, a gathering of upwards of a thousand. Until the previous Friday she had taken no interest in the revival nor was she at any revival meetings, and she could not even read. That night she was spiritually influenced, spending Saturday under conviction. Her husband wished to send for the priest, but she would have none of him, instead she called for the Rev.

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1. Adams, op. cit. p. 9.

2. Ballymena Observer, June 11th, 1859.

3. Weekly Press, June 11th, 1859.

5. Ballymena Observer, July 18th, 1859.



David Adams, who when he came instructed her in the path of the truth, so that she found peace. By Tuesday, 31st May, she had begun to learn to read, with the help of neighbours.<sup>1</sup>

A few days before the Twelfth of July - when Protestants celebrate the victory of William III at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690 - Adams mentioned that he needed a new pulpit Bible. A poor, young working man gave him 25/- to buy one. What this meant in terms of purchasing power is seen in the current market prices: flour was 16/- to 11/- a cwt., potatoes 1/6 to 3/- a cwt., butter 10d. to 1/- a lb., beef 4d. to 7d. a lb., and eggs 5d. to 8d. a dozen.<sup>2</sup>

The Twelfth of July celebrations usually took the form of political demonstrations held in various centres, often referred to as "fields." The Orange Brethren from Ahoghill district met in a large open-air meeting held in Mr. John Ballagh's field, at Loan, Ahoghill, at twelve noon on the 12th July, 1859. Some six thousand Orangemen, with numerous friends attended. This time the political note was omitted, and the religious service took its proper place. No fifes or drums were used, but only "grave melody" - singing of religious songs - took the place of party tunes. This meeting was addressed by the Revs. Gass, Cowan and Buick, and by some local converts. It continued until 6 p.m., and the public press noted that here, as at other places, there was no drink or disturbance.<sup>3</sup> Not all the local Orangemen were present, however, for there was also an indoor meeting<sup>4</sup> held in First Ahoghill Presbyterian Church, where Adams addressed his audience on the subject of 'The present duties of Protestants, with historical allusions to William III and his times.'<sup>5</sup> At the end of May, 1859, it was noted of these early converts that

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1. Ballymena Observer, June 11th, 1859.

2. Market prices taken from the Ballymena Observer, 25th June, 1859.

3. Ballymena Observer, 16th July, 1859.

4. Banner of Ulster, 16th July, states that the collection was for religious purposes and amounted to £5-5-0.

5. Ballymena Observer, July 16th, 1859.



they were narrowly watched and that "not a single act of theirs has been pointed out as contrary to their Christian professions."<sup>1</sup>

On April 7th the Rev. J. M. Abernethy, minister of Third Ahoghill (now known as 'Brookside') referred to human blemishes "... after we have made every allowance for all this, when we find the good far preponderating, when we find such love to Christ manifested, such zeal and devotion to His cause and glory exhibited, are we not bound to admit that it is the 'Lord's doing' ...? The work is a progressive one."<sup>2</sup>

A year later the Rev. Frederick Buick, minister of Second Ahoghill (Trinity), said "After making minute inquiry of those who have been connected with the revival from its commencement, as to its present state in their several districts, it is their universal and decided testimony that the fruits are still abiding without any symptoms of decline. There are some few cases of inconsistency, and of returning back to their former state and habits, but these are extremely few - indeed the wonder is that they are so few."<sup>3</sup> The measure of Buick's wonder that converts' failures were so few is seen in the writings of a more recent writer who said, "In every great religious movement there always have been, and always will be a number of individuals who cast in their lot with it, without knowing the power which inspires it. Beware of them! They cannot stand the stress of the life of separation to God. The mere excitement will soon die away from them."<sup>4</sup>

Adams wrote his Narrative about November, 1859, and he was able to say that "there have been more true prayers ... during the last eighteen months, than there have been in the previous eighteen years ... some of the converts have prayed so intensely, that they have assured me that 'they felt their

1. Belfast Newsletter, 25th May, 1859.

2. Presbyterian Magazine, May 1859, p. 99.

3. ibid. March 1860, p. 66.

4. F. B. Meyer, Abraham, p. 44.



supplication contained both the prayer and the answer', thereby fulfilling to the letter that remarkable promise 'before they call I will answer'." There were seven or eight prayer meetings each night in the bounds of the congregation, "either in the church, school-house, farm-houses, barns, or fields."<sup>1</sup> These were led by the minister or elder or one of the more experienced converts - women and children do not take a public part. Three new Sabbath schools have been established and the old one in the Church numbered nearly four hundred, being almost doubled. The converts were noted as displaying a good sense of honesty and justice with one another; and slander, ill-feeling and party spirit were fast dying out.

Adams further reported that there were 145 new communicants in First Ahoghill in 1859,<sup>2</sup> whilst "at a Presbytery visitation in Second Ahoghill on 26th April, 1859, it was noticed that there was a fourfold increase in the communicants due to the Revival."<sup>3</sup> Remembering that First Ahoghill was rebuilt in time for the Revival, it is interesting to read that "the three Presbyterian Churches in Ahoghill are full; and the 2nd and 3rd are contemplating large additions to their accommodation."<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that the Parish Church was later rebuilt to accommodate additional worshippers.

Ballycarry - formerly known as Broadisland - was the scene of the first Presbyterian settlement in Ireland, when in 1613 the Rev. Edward Brice unfurled the banner of Scotland's Covenant. The Rev. William Glendy, ordained on 30th July, 1812, was an Arian, and in 1829 he seceded over the Arian question from the Synod of Ulster<sup>5</sup> with a portion of his congregation in the year when he was Moderator of the Templepatrick

1. Adams, op. cit. pp. 18, 19.

2. *ibid.* p. 16.

3. G. R. Buick, Book of Ahoghill, p. 70.

4. Presbyterian Magazine, March 1860, p. 66.

5. Minutes of the Synod of Ulster, Cookstown, 1829, p. 13.



Presbytery.<sup>1</sup> The people of the district who adhered to the Synod of Ulster, formed a new congregation and gave a call to Mr. John Stuart who was ordained by the Presbytery of Templepatrick on 3rd April, 1832.<sup>2</sup> This cause grew stronger as the days passed, and early in May, 1859, the flame of revival blazed forth.

Soon the church was crowded with anxious, earnest hearers, even the aisles were filled, and many converts were registered; so much so that on Sunday, 12th June, Stuart received no less than one hundred new communicants for the first time - more than any former occasion. It is also stated<sup>3</sup> that about eight hundred persons attended prayer meetings every evening. On Monday, 13th June - thanksgiving for communion service - the Rev. G. T. Payne, vicar of Templecorran, assisted Mr. Stuart, and addressed a vast audience, many of whom were stricken. It is said that "young converts and elders of the church are busily engaged day and night in visiting and comforting the brethren and sisters under conviction."<sup>4</sup> No building was big enough to contain the crowds coming to the prayer meetings. Stuart's church was crowded to suffocation on the Lord's Day; in the evening he despaired of accommodating the people in the church and went to the Fair Green and preached to one thousand souls.<sup>5</sup> The people hungered and thirsted after righteousness, for about two hundred persons were prostrated<sup>6</sup> and many more awakened. The above June Communion was truly a feast of fat things - "never before had we experienced a day of such refreshing from the presence of the Lord."<sup>7</sup> Such multitudes attended evening services in Ballycarry Church that often the building could not contain them and resort was had to open-air meetings. Stuart

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1. Minutes of the Synod of Ulster, Lurgan, 1829, p. 23.
  2. ibid. Monaghan, 1832, p. 6.
  3. Banner of Ulster, 16th June, 1859.
  4. ibid. 16th June, 1859.
  5. ibid. 12th July, 1859.
  6. Reid, Records of Revival, p. 18.
  7. ibid. p. 17.



said "... for forty-two successive nights I preached, conversed with anxious enquirers and frequently prayed over 'stricken' ones till the first streaks of young day warned us to retire ..."<sup>1</sup> At every weekday evening meeting and often on the Sabbath people were 'stricken' sometimes as many as twenty at a time, and people of all ages were awakened. After seven months' experience Stuart thought that the prayer meetings were still on the increase and that "more than a thousand persons attend" these meetings, conducted for the most part by godly laymen.<sup>2</sup> The new communicants in October 1859 were seventy in number, the entire communicants partaking at this service numbered about four hundred - "nearly two hundred more than any former occasion."<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Stuart laboured so hard during the Revival that he fell ill and was forced to seek rest on the Continent. Writing at the end of 1859 Stuart said "I do not know of one back-slider", and later again "I do not yet know of a single backslider."<sup>4</sup> His Continental holiday was insisted on and paid for by his congregation, and in the course of his journey he met in London the Rev. John Weir and acquainted him of the fact that as early as September, 1859, nearly three hundred persons had been awakened and that there had been no backsliders, "all over an extensive district of fifty-four square miles, meetings, attended by hundreds, are conducted by converts."<sup>5</sup> In a personal letter to Weir, Stuart said that since his return home "the work of grace had progressed with marvellous power in his absence, ... Drunkenness had ceased. At Ballycarry Fair, not a single member of the church went into a public-house."<sup>6</sup>

The Revival commenced in Ballycastle when a party of converts from Rasharkin visited the town on Monday, 13th June, and addressed an open-air meeting. At this meeting there was interest

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1. Reid, op. cit. p. 18.

2. *ibid.* p. 19.

3. *ibid.* p. 19.

4. *ibid.* p. 19; Gibson, op. cit. p. 131; Weir, op. cit. p. 126.

5. Weir, op. cit. p. 126.

6. *ibid.* p. 126.



in large measure, but no manifestation of the Spirit. The following Friday the Wesleyan ministers of Ballymoney and Ballycastle, the Revs. Crook and Lawrence, along with Mr. W. G. Boyd, assistant minister of Ramoan Presbyterian Church, and six Ballymoney laymen, conducted an open-air meeting at which there were several cases of conviction. Late in the evening the meeting adjourned to the Wesleyan Chapel, where it was prolonged until long after midnight.<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Samuel Lyle, minister of Ballycastle Presbyterian Church, co-operated heartily with the Methodists and with the Rev. W. G. Boyd, his neighbour in Moyarget Meeting House (Ramoan).

There seem to be two strands in the story of the Revival in Ballyclare. One is that a local Ballyclare resident went to Ahoghill to see for himself what took place in revival "that if a blessing could be received there, he could not return without it,"<sup>2</sup> and upon his return began meetings in Ballyclare on Thursday, 19th May, in the Methodist New Connexion Church, when the Rev. John Jordan preached and several laymen prayed. "Some evidences of revival were visible."<sup>3</sup> The second account is that at the May Fair in Ballyclare, a slater named Samuel Todd, said to be a wicked backslider, was awakened by seeing a man from the neighbourhood of Broughshane under deep conviction of sin crying aloud in the fair for mercy. Todd enquired how to obtain peace, and bystanders told him, "Go to Connor; for there is the country where you'll find people you want." It is related that Todd went to Connor, and there found peace.<sup>4</sup> On Saturday evening, 28th May, the Rev. Robert Collier standing by the monument, preached to about four hundred people including some of the most reckless characters in the neighbourhood. At the close of the service those who were anxious crowded into an adjoining house, where Todd gave an account of his conversion.

1. Banner of Ulster, 25th June, 1859.

2. Belfast Newsletter, 7th June, 1859.

3. ibid. 25th May, 1859.

4. Crookshank, History of Methodism, Vol. III, pp. 509-510.



One or two were greatly affected.<sup>1</sup> On Sabbath, 5th June, a Revival meeting was held in the grounds of the new Presbyterian Church, when an immense multitude gathered, over two thousand people - there never was such a crowd in Ballyclare - some from as far as Glenwherry, Carrickfergus, Carnmoney, and even Belfast. This audience was addressed by the Rev. Robert McCully, the Presbyterian minister; by the New Connexion Methodist minister, the Rev. Robert Collier; by an elder from Great George's Street Presbyterian Church in Belfast; and by a new convert. "Ballyclare became most religious."<sup>2</sup>

On Friday, June 3rd, an open-air meeting was held in Ballynure to which about three hundred converts marched, singing hymns, from Ballyclare less than three miles away. About a thousand people were present to hear the Rev. R. Collier, and also old Robert Vance, from Connor - one of the stalwarts of the early prayer meeting. The meeting lasted till the close of the day, and it would appear that scores were stricken.<sup>3</sup> A further open-air meeting was held the following Thursday, June 9th, in a place called 'the meadow', and a public meeting in the town next day. It is said that there were "prayer meetings in every second house."<sup>4</sup> All the public houses were shut and groups of people met together in the streets with the one topic of conversation. All public works stopped due to this serious interest in the Revival.

Ballyeaston, like the previous two, is situated in the valley of the Six-mile-water, all three being close together. There were two strong Presbyterian churches in the district of Ballyeaston. On Tuesday, 31st May, there was a meeting held at Ballycorr at 7 o'clock in the evening when the Rev. Alexander Pollock, minister of Second Ballyeaston, preached.

1. Crookshank, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 510.
2. Ballymena Observer, June 11th, 1859.
3. Crookshank, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 511.
4. Ballymena Observer, June 11th, 1859. The funeral of one of the Ballyclare converts passed by a local mill. The mourners sang hymns, which attracted the workers. Collier on his way home entered the mill and had a meeting, when about half-a-dozen people were converted, including one Roman Catholic. (Belfast Newsletter, 9th June, 1859.)



Towards the end of the meeting, said Pollock, in a letter dated 7th June,<sup>1</sup> a wild cry arose from the audience, and when the meeting drew to a close at about ten o'clock, many were converted, some of these from Ballyclare. On the next day a great meeting was held in Second Ballyeaston Church, when great interest was aroused. From then on it was said "every day is a Sabbath now." Many of these converts went to the nearby Wesleyan Church, and it was estimated that no less than three hundred converts met there. Similar meetings took place in First Ballyeaston, led by the Rev. W. J. Raphael. All these meetings were specially notable for the fervent singing of the people.

The devoted pastor of Second Ballyeaston died as a result of his strenuous labours on Sunday, 3rd July, 1859,<sup>2</sup> and it was not until the 28th March, 1860, that his successor, the Rev. A. B. Porter, was ordained there. Pollock, in a letter written but a few days before his death, described his last Communion Sabbath with his people - "The joy of converts, the cry of penitence, the wailing of friends, reminded me of the building of the second temple, when some shouted and others wept. Our tokens were soon all given away, which never happened before. About one hundred had to be provided for on Sabbath morning, and we could not persuade the people to disperse. On Sabbath morning the house was filled to overflowing, and, with little preparation, it was no easy task to ascend the pulpit. I addressed them from the words 'Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain.' The Holy Ghost was there indeed, as a mighty rushing wind. Many were removed; and in the evening the green was filled, and no man can tell the number of the souls which were added to the church. The young converts wished to go to the first table, and sit together. We saw their eyes beaming with the light of heaven, their faces shining like angels', their hearts

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1. Ballymena Observer, June 18, 1859.

2. Minutes of the General Assembly, Belfast 1860, p. 855.



heaving with the love of Jesus, and their hands clapping with joy before the God of Jacob. Such a table! It was a foretaste of heaven. All was in accordance with order, nothing extravagant, no extraordinary excitement. God was there; and all were bowed before Him. To Him be glory!"<sup>1</sup>

The first part of the story of the revival in Ballymena was detailed above.<sup>2</sup> Briefly, revival first manifested itself in Springwell Street. Here the first converts were Hessie Herbeson and Mary Beattie. It would appear that at first the movement spread more among the masses than among the educated classes.<sup>3</sup> The house in Springwell Street was quickly crowded with excited people, and its inmates testified what God had done for their souls. Interest grew at a phenomenal speed and at Jackson's Schoolroom, further along the same street, meetings commenced. The movement spread from street to street, and from house to house. Indeed it is said "the houses where converts lived were always crowded." Regular weekly prayer meetings were established in Springwell Street, Fountain Place Schoolroom, William Street, Broughshane Street, Ballymoney Street, Galgorm Road, Coach Entry, Mill Street Place, Mill Street, Galgorm Street, Robert Street, Brocklemount, Dunclug, Harryville Schoolroom, Meeting-House Lane, Alexander Street, Bridewell Street, Bridge Street and Railway Street.<sup>4</sup>

The preliminary to all this was a weekly prayer meeting<sup>5</sup> connected with the names of William Carlisle, James Compton, William Bortrick, and James McQuilkin, in Ballymena; then came the strange prostration of an Ahoghill man in Galgorm Street<sup>6</sup> on 14th April. Next a sermon preached in Wellington Street Church by the Rev. S. J. Moore added to the spirit of expectancy.<sup>7</sup> Prayer meetings in the town and the surrounding

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1. Gibson, The Year of Grace, p. 132.

2. Pages 129-134.

3. McMeekin, op. cit. p. 44.

4. *ibid.* p. 48.

5. See above page 131.

6. *ibid.*

7. McMeekin, op. cit. p. 46.



country became very numerous. A union prayer meeting was held in the Town Hall at noon on Tuesdays and Fridays attended by ministers and members of the Presbyterian, Episcopalian and Methodist churches.<sup>1</sup>

The force of the Revival struck Ballymena about Tuesday, 17th May. From 17th till 24th May was one of the most memorable weeks in the town: "When the great outpouring came, worldly men were silent with an indefinite fear, and Christians found themselves borne onward in the current, with scarce time for any feeling but the overpowering conviction that a great revival had come at last ... There was great earnestness ... ministers who had often toiled ... suddenly found themselves beset by inquirers, and wholly unequal to the demands which were made. Every day many were hopefully converted ... All this came suddenly, and many thought it strange ... We were astonished that God took us at our word, and sent at last the quickening grace for which we had been dreamily praying so long. ... Every evening the churches were crowded and family worship became almost universal. In the country, large meetings were held in the open air, and hundreds were often visibly impressed by strong conviction. Part of the dinner hour was generally devoted to singing and prayer, and the sound from numerous groups of worshippers could be heard at a distance as it was borne on the summer breeze. Thousands of tracts were circulated and read with avidity, and long-neglected Bibles came into general use."<sup>2</sup>

Moore, on his return after two days' absence at a meeting of Synod held in Cookstown, found the town in great excitement. "Many families had not gone to bed for the two or three previous nights. From dozens of houses, night and day, you would hear, ... loud cries for mercy ... or prayer ... or sacred song. Business seemed at a standstill. In some streets four or

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1. Moore, op. cit. p. 4.

2. Gibson, op. cit. pp. 39, 40.

five crowds of people ... engaged in prayer or praise, all at the same time ... A goodly number of young men, in business establishments in town, and not a few young workmen - shoemakers, carpenters, sawyers and labourers, who were depending for their daily bread on their daily wages - gave up almost their entire time, day and night, during the first week, to minister to the religious instruction, and physical and spiritual comfort, of the poor stricken sufferers. ... But for them, in this crisis I do not see what would have been done; for, in their alarm, the people of both town and country would demand that a minister, an elder, should be in a dozen places at once."<sup>1</sup>

By the 25th May, at the end of the first week of awakening, every street in the town knew of the Revival, as some of the members were witnesses to it, and there were "cases now found in every street, among all classes of people." The total cases in Ballymena now could not on the lowest estimate be reckoned at less than three hundred.<sup>2</sup> A local reporter visited Springwell Street for the space of about four hours. He found two thousand people engaged in prayer and praise led by various laymen. Some six or seven houses in addition presented a wondrous spectacle - they were filled to suffocation and had their windows taken out to enable others to see the stricken ones within. Some of these afflicted were in great weakness and indeed partial stupor, others were dreadfully excited. Hymns and psalms were sung and seemed to afford a measure of peace to the stricken.<sup>3</sup> So widespread was this interest that it was said that there was "not a single street in Ballymena itself where some cases have not occurred."<sup>4</sup> It was not unusual to see thousands assembled for prayer in a graveyard or a large gravel pit - at one quarry there were about five thousand.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Moore, op. cit. p. 4.

2. Ballymena Observer, 28th May; Belfast Newsletter, 30th May, 1859.

3. Ballymena Observer, 28th May, 1859.

4. Belfast Newsletter, 25th May, 1859.

5. The Revival, 30th July, 1859.



An anonymous writer in a letter to a friend in Limerick on June 2nd, 1859, told of a visit he made to Ballymena on Saturday, May 28th, when he was expected to speak at a meeting held in a large quarry. When he arrived he saw about five thousand people and his heart sank within him. Towards the end of the preaching a remarkable old man, dressed in rags and bearing the marks of a confirmed drunkard, stood up trembling as he spoke, "Gentlemen, I appear before you this day as a vile sinner, many of you know me, you have but to look at me and recognize the profligate of Broughshane; you know I was an old man hardened in sin; you know I was a servant of the devil, and he led me by that instrument of his, the spirit of the barley. I brought my wife and family to beggary more than fifty years ago; in short I defy the townland of Broughshane to produce my equal in profligacy, or any sin whatever; but ah, gentlemen, I have seen Jesus, I was born again on last night week (Friday, 20 th May), I am therefore a week old to-day, or about; my heavy and enormous sin is all gone, the Lord Jesus took it away, and I stand before you this day, not only a pattern of profligacy, but a monument of the perfect grace of God! I stand here to tell you that God's work on Calvary is perfect - yes, I have proved it - His work is perfect - He is not like an architect who makes a drawing of a building, and then he looks at it, and he takes out this line and that, or makes some other alteration, and frequently alters all his plan, and even when the building is going on he makes some other change, - but God drew out the plan of salvation, and it was complete, and he carried it out with his blessed Son Jesus, and it is all perfect, for had it not been so, it would not have been capable of reaching the depth of iniquity of ---- ----, the profligate nailer of Broughshane."<sup>1</sup>

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1. The Revival, 30th July, 1859; and John Baillie, What I saw in Ireland, pp. 61, 62.

4. Ballymena, 1859.  
5. Ballymena, 1859.



The letter continued to tell of the effect of this testimony, for various ones were smitten to the ground; and a small crowd gathered round a stricken woman, to whom the writer's attention was attracted. He saw a boy of about twelve or fourteen standing at her head, earnest in prayer for her, and he heard him say "Lord Jesus, you know I do not know how to pray to you; you know I do not know how to say one word pleasing to you; but you have forgiven my sins, and oh, I ask you to shew this woman your loving heart, and that you are willing to forgive her her sins also."<sup>1</sup>

On an ordinary week evening one or other of the spacious Presbyterian Churches in Ballymena was filled to overflowing "even to suffocation"<sup>2</sup> by an intensely serious congregation. What is still more extraordinary, was that on the weekly market day - Saturday - when scarcely a dozen people could be got for prayer hitherto, it was now the case that Wellington Street Church, seating one thousand, was filled to capacity for such a Saturday prayer meeting.<sup>3</sup> On Sunday, 29th May, the Rev. John Macnaughtan, minister of Rosemary Street Church, Belfast, spoke of his visit to Ballymena and how he was taken to Talbot Street (Barrack District), and he thought that Mr. Dill was mistaken in asking him to preach - "for there is no one about." But once he began, every door opened, and he "never preached to a more listening congregation in his life."<sup>4</sup> By the 12th June, there were meetings every night of the week around the town. The mid-day united prayer meetings in the Town Hall on Tuesdays and Fridays were often led by ministers of the Episcopal, Presbyterian and Methodist churches.<sup>5</sup> The open air every market day was also the scene of much interest, as it was in practically every town in the Revival. About this time the Rev. S. J. Moore was conducting a service in his

1. The Revival, 30th July, 1859.
2. Belfast Newsletter, 25th May, 1859.
3. Presbyterian Magazine, June 1859, p. 145.
4. Belfast Newsletter, 1st June, 1859.
5. Ballymena Observer, 18th June, 1859.



church, when a mysterious influence was noted to be at work. At the close of the meeting Moore dismissed the congregation, only to discover that they would not separate. Suddenly, no less than twenty people were 'struck'; and it was noticed that one of these most peculiarly stretched 'arch-like' on his heels and head for several minutes.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile the Protestant churches were filled to capacity during the Sabbath services, while Moore's church was said to be 'more than full', and very often there were members of the congregation converted. It was Moore's practice to preach at an open-air meeting at Galgorm Road, every Sunday afternoon, when it was said that "all the churches in Ballymena could not have held the vast crowd that assembled". Moore had often the assistance of four or five laymen in these meetings.<sup>2</sup>

It would appear that some Romanists were influenced at the close of the month of May, when it is noted in the local press that a poor Roman Catholic lad was beaten by his bigoted parents for reading the Bible. Stung at this boy's harsh treatment the story was related that it was a well known fact that there was a certain party at 'cards' in boisterous merriment on Sunday, 29th May. These were no ragged gamblers, hidden half-ashamed in a sand pit, but rather in the town of Ballymena in broad day-light; one was a Roman Catholic cleric, and "it is known that his reverence held the deuce!"<sup>3</sup> A further indication of the Roman Catholic attitude to revival is seen in the fact that on the walls of the town were numerous placards to inform those afflicted with nervous diseases that an unobtrusive "secrecy" doctor would attend in Ballymena on certain days in a public house kept by a Roman Catholic to give advice. One of the placards read "Conviction, Convulsions, Epilepsy, Insanity". One Roman priest in the locality acknowledged that all the members

1. Belfast Newsletter, 20th June, 1859.

2. Ballymena Observer, 18th June, 1859.

3. ibid. 18th June, 1859.

4. Ballymena Observer, 25th June, 1859.

5. ibid. 9th July.



of his flock who had been affected by the revival spirit had ceased to have any intercourse with him. Moore said that the priest very judiciously did not interfere in anger or tyranny, but Gamaliel-like said of the revival movement "If it is not of God it will soon come to nothing."<sup>1</sup>

Another mysterious incident similar to that in the Church occurred at one of the open-air meetings on the Gallowgorm Road, for when Moore pronounced the Benediction the audience would not separate at 9 o'clock, despite the fact that it was a wet evening, on Sunday 19th June. There were some three thousand present, and many stayed till 11 o'clock. Quickly and mysteriously a few minutes after 9 p.m., when the Benediction was pronounced, this mysterious influence began work, and one was stricken, followed immediately by a second and a third in quick succession, till by 10.30 there were no less than nine circles round stricken ones, and the reporter noted eleven stricken in one circle.<sup>2</sup> At a meeting in connection with the Parish Church of Ballymena, at which the Rev. Daniel Mooney presided, on Thursday, 16th June, three people were stricken. One was a little girl of seven or eight years of age. Another case similar occurred in Alexander Street on Tuesday, 21st June - this person had "never been at any Revival meetings."<sup>3</sup> Other great open-air meetings were held at Laymore, Artibrannon, Loughmagarry and Carnlea, all within the parish or the immediate neighbourhood of Ballymena.<sup>4</sup>

On Sunday, 3rd July, the Bishop of Down, Connor and Dromore (Dr. Robert Knox) preached in Ballymena Parish Church. He told his hearers that his clergy had had a diocesan consultation, and that they were "resolved to assist the good work in every way."<sup>5</sup> He further warned the audience not to think that only

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1. Moore, op. cit. p. 21.

2. Belfast Newsletter, 20th June; also Ballymena Observer, 25th June, 1859 (their italics).

3. Ballymena Observer, 25th June, (their italics). Details of both in the Chapter

4. Ballymena Observer, 25th June, 1859.

5. ibid. 9th July.



the prostrated were the converted, or as the Reformed Presbyterian Synod of 1859 declared "... even strong convictions of sin do not amount in themselves to conversion, and may never issue therein."<sup>1</sup>

By mid-July, contrary to the expectations of many, the town revival proceeded with unabated energy, and there were more prayer meetings than ever. Even students for the ministry were used extensively, for we read that on Sunday, 3rd July, a Presbyterian licentiate, Mr. Rea, presided at a very large open-air meeting, at which there were numerous conversions.<sup>2</sup> The following Sunday he again presided over an audience of three thousand. Many laymen spoke, and the meeting lasted from 6 p.m. till 9 p.m. At Kilconriola about two miles from Ballymena another open-air meeting took place on the same evening at the same time, when some two thousand people were present to hear some laymen speak. On Monday evening (11th) another open-air meeting was held in the town at which the Rev. S. M. Dill presided, when the Rev. H. Grattan Guinness spoke on Acts XXVI, 29, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a christian."<sup>3</sup>

At the July Orange Celebrations the greatest hopes were more than realised in quiet thanksgiving services. In fact "we neither saw a policeman, nor a single badge of Orangeism during the entire day! ... We saw thousands of Bibles with orange ribbon markers."<sup>4</sup> Some six thousand Orange brethren assembled and the meeting was presided over by John Jellett, Esq.; the Rev. Daniel Mooney led in prayer, whereupon the Rev. William Davison, of Cloughwater Presbyterian Church, first addressed the audience. The next speaker was the Rev. A. Gault, of Cushendall, who based his remarks on I Peter II, 7.

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1. Reformed Presbyterian Synod Minutes, 1859, p. 19.

2. Ballymena Observer, 9th July, 1859.

3. ibid. 16th July, 1859.

4. ibid. 16th July, 1859.

A visitor, the Rev. J. Meade Hobson, of Kilkenny, addressed a few affectionate remarks and the Rev. D. Mooney read without comment Isaiah LV. The national anthem was led by Mr. David Campbell, precentor of First Presbyterian Church, Ballymena, after which the Rev. A. Gault pronounced the benediction, and at 4 o'clock the Orangemen left the field quietly and orderly. Some two thousand spectators, however, remained till 9 p.m. engaged in religious exercises. That evening the Rev. Mr. Rosborough, of Glasgow, spoke in First Presbyterian Church, and Messrs. Gault and Hobson spoke in the Parochial Hall. There was not a single arrest for drunkenness or disorder.<sup>1</sup>

By the end of July religious revival about Ballymena was proceeding with "unabated steadiness and effect." New cases of public conviction were now less and less numerous, and if they did occur it was almost always with those previously affected - "the natural result of renewed mental excitement, in its action upon persons of a peculiar temperament; but abundant and much more reliable evidence of spiritual operation is found in the silent and steadily progressive transformation of an entire community; for the great bulk of the population appear to have risen from the torpidity of mere formalism to a life of faith, as exemplified in a regeneration of character unparalleled in the national records of the present century."<sup>2</sup>

A great influence in this work came from the fervent exhortations of Brownlow North, who preached four times to vast congregations. On Friday, 22nd July, he spoke in Wellington Street Church; next day in First Ballymena, and also on Sunday. On the Sabbath afternoon, at 5 o'clock, in the Demesne of Sir Robert Shafto Adair, "he addressed the largest audience that had ever congregated in Ballymena for a religious purpose."<sup>3</sup> This Sunday School Union meeting "fully amounted

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1. Ballymena Observer, 16th July, 1859.

2. *ibid.* 23rd July; also Revival, August 6, 1859, p. 10.

3. *ibid.* 30th July, 1859.



to eleven thousand."<sup>1</sup> Another estimate gave the number as fifteen thousand.<sup>2</sup> This steadying influence saw a calm, earnest and persistent spirit for good among the people. By October it was said "every feature of society, both in town and country, is decidedly improved,"<sup>3</sup> while by November it was noted that Christian principle and character "in the social intercourse of every day ... (was) manifested in a sense of moral and religious obligation now extensively pervading every rank and class of the community."<sup>4</sup> "As compared with the corresponding period of last year there has been an increase of more than five hundred sacramental communicants in Ballymena during the present autumn ... ordinary churches are still crowded to excess, two additional evangelical congregations assemble for public worship in Ballymena every Sabbath day," (one in Harryville Schoolhouse under the new town missionary, and the other in the spacious granary of James Taylor in Broughshane Street led by the Rev. John G. McVicker<sup>5</sup>, late of Cullybackey Reformed Presbyterian Church.)<sup>6</sup>

Ballymoney, another stronghold of Presbyterianism, boasted no less than four such churches at the time of the Revival: First Presbyterian, whose minister was the Rev. Robert Park, M.A.<sup>7</sup>; Second Presbyterian, the Rev. John Lawrence Rentoul;<sup>8</sup> Third Presbyterian 'erected' about 1834,<sup>9</sup> the Rev. James Ussher.<sup>10</sup>

1. Ballymena Observer, 30th July, 1859.
2. Banner of Ulster, 26th July, 1859.
3. Revival, 8th October, p. 82.
4. ibid. 5th November, p. 114.
5. Sometimes written "McVicar".
6. Ballymena Observer, Nov. 5; Belfast Newsletter, 18th Nov. 1859.
7. Born at Stewartstown; Moderator, Synod of Ulster, 1829. In 1830 he was chosen to be assistant clerk of Synod, and later Junior clerk of Assembly. Synod of Ulster Minutes 1830, p. 16; General Assembly Minutes 1841, p. 54.
8. Rentoul was ordained in Ballycopeland, April 3, 1833, and installed in Ballymoney, May 16, 1837. His successor in Ballycopeland was S. J. Moore, later of Ballymena. Kilpatrick, Millisle and Ballycopeland Pres. Church, p. 114.
9. Synod of Ulster Minutes, 1834, p. 9.
10. Ussher ordained 1835. Third Church opened in March, 1836, at a cost of £1,160. Synod of Ulster Minutes 1835, p. 23. Dill, Armour, Boyle and Ramsay, The Presbyterian Churches of Ballymoney, p. 53.



The Reformed Presbyterian Congregation in Ballymoney built their church in 1830, and at the time of the Revival the minister was the aged Rev. Dr. W. J. Stavely, who laboured till his death on the 4th December, 1864, after a ministry of sixty years.<sup>1</sup> In an historic statement printed after Mr. Park's death, the communion seasons in First Ballymoney are described thus:- "The sacramental seasons under Mr. Park's ministry will never be forgotten. These were the solemn occasions of the year. The usual length of the communion services was from 10.30 to 6 p.m., with about forty minutes' intermission. Usually there were six tables and about six hundred communicants. When the time of awakening came in the Revival of 1859, Mr. Park found that many traced their deep impressions to these solemn communion services."<sup>2</sup>

The Methodist minister stationed in Ballymoney, the Rev. William Crook, Junior, would appear to have been the first to make contact with the revival forces, for when news of the Ahoghill outburst reached him, he made his way thither, "saw and judged for himself, and brought back with him to Ballymoney some of the young men recently converted."<sup>3</sup> Public services were organized, these converts spoke, and the work of grace was begun. Revival meetings were held in Ballymoney with great regularity in the town since the news of the American awakening was brought to Ireland. Fervent prayers were offered by many. Apparently on Friday, 3rd June, a meeting was held at Scroggy, when some two thousand people attended - many of these from Ballymoney - to hear six converts from Rasharkin. No immediate results followed, save that a deep and solemn impression was made. Next Sabbath was the communion Sabbath - all Presbyterians had appointed this to be the Sacrament Day - and earnest prayers were offered. On the Sunday evening a married man was prostrated and, sending

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1. Dill, Armour, Boyle and Ramsay, op. cit. p. 62.

2. *ibid.* p. 36.

3. Crookshank, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 507.



for the Rev. James Ussher, was saved. News of this event spread quickly, and interest was quickened in the next revival meeting on Monday, 6th June, arranged to be held in a field adjoining the railway line, and called by some 'Gordon's meadow'. Towards the close of this meeting, while a man was praying - asking indeed for the Holy Spirit's power to be shown - fifteen souls were simultaneously stricken. The speaker had to desist from prayer as all gathered in groups to pray over these prostrated ones. Most of those 'afflicted' were young girls,<sup>1</sup> but the awakening spread with such rapidity that by Wednesday evening there were between forty and fifty 'enlightened.' One such was a lad of fourteen years who went to scoff, had his soul aroused, spent two days in prayer, and found peace on Wednesday morning.<sup>2</sup>

Regular open-air meetings were held in that same field.<sup>3</sup> "in the religious movement of 1859 Mr. Park took a deep interest. He regarded it as a genuine work of God, and he laboured earnestly during that season of earnestness, preaching daily in the open-air and visiting early and late. It is believed he quite overtaxed his strength and led to the attack of paralysis which came on him in 1861."<sup>4</sup> Writing in 1859 of the Revival he said "... As in other districts the Divine sovereignty was exhibited here in the conversion of some of the despised of the people; but a larger proportion of those who have given evidence of a real saving change were connected with our Sabbath-schools, either as teachers or receiving instruction, or were the members of families well instructed in Divine truth, and more or less regular attendants on the means of grace. It is not the least interesting thing in the history of God's work here that He so touched the hearts of many young men who have since been active in religious things ..."<sup>5</sup> Further on he related the story of a deaf and dumb man of thirty years,

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1. Ballymena Observer, 11th June, 1859.

2. ibid. 11th June, 1859.

3. The Revival, August 13th, 1859.

4. Dill, Armour, Boyle and Ramsay, op. cit. p. 38.

5. Gibson, op. cit. p. 71



who working alone in the bog was preparing fuel for the winter. So prostrated was he that he had to lie down twice on his way home to his sister's house where he lived. A night of anguish was endured and next morning at breakfast time he was relieved. The description of his manner and appearance, as given by his sister was most striking. Literally he jumped some height from the ground, clasped as if some person to his bosom, his countenance beaming with delight, and his whole person indicating gratitude and love.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile Ussher had seen the Third church grow till in 1858 a gallery had to be built at a cost of £215, to afford suitable accommodation for the worshippers. This church was filled to overflowing in 1859, and on the 10th April, 1859, had a 'revival' soiree - surely the only such. Among those who spoke were Ussher, Park, Rentoul, Dill of Ballymena, Field of Dervock, and Simpson of Portrush.<sup>2</sup>

To Broughshane, a village three miles east of Ballymena, and a Presbyterian stronghold, where the Rev. Archibald Robinson was minister, the Revival came in a rather strange way. In 1858 a confirmed drunkard was awakened in his bed by a dream in which an angel warned him to pray for mercy, and told him he would die next day at four p.m. Waking the house, who thought he was mad, he prayed for mercy, went to bed at one, and died happy at four o'clock.<sup>3</sup> Early in May, 1859, the Revival commenced in Broughshane. "For about six weeks almost all agricultural operations, and indeed every kind of secular employment, were suspended, no man being able to think of or attend to anything but the interests of his soul. ... I should say about one thousand people were suddenly, sensibly, and powerfully impressed and awakened. Fully one half of this number, if not more, have profited by their experience, and are now as fair and hopeful cases of conversion as one could well desire, while not less than five hundred were silently, gradually, and without observation

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1. Gibson, op. cit. p. 73.

2. Dill, Armour, Boyle and Ramsay, op. cit. pp. 53-56.

3. Gibson, op. cit. p. 56, quoting Robinson's mss.



brought ... from death unto life."<sup>1</sup> The extremes of experience of conversion are shown in the cases of the profligate nailer of Broughshane, converted instantaneously, and that of W. R. Thompson, Ballycloughan, who was under conviction for eighteen months (1860-61), and during this time "he thought that Satan spoke audibly to him."<sup>2</sup>

A great open-air meeting took place on Sunday, 22nd May, in Broughshane churchyard which was filled with four thousand at 6 p.m. when one hundred people were affected.<sup>3</sup> On the Broughshane June Fair Day a band of strolling players made their usual appearance, whereupon a prayer meeting was begun immediately and no less than five thousand people attended. The players had but two visitors - both Roman Catholic policemen.<sup>4</sup> Another open-air meeting, held in the Quarry on the Kilconriola side of Broughshane, was interrupted by a thunderstorm attended by flashes of lightning. So unexpected was this cloudburst with dread darkness that many fell prostrate on the ground, believing that the end of the world had come.<sup>5</sup> On Sabbath, 3rd July, the service in Broughshane Presbyterian Church, when the Rev. Archibald Robinson preached, was interrupted "from almost every part" with cries of anguish. There were many such cases in the forenoon and in the afternoon. That same day an open-air meeting was conducted in the graveyard by the minister. Some two thousand people were present, and again there were numerous convictions.<sup>6</sup> The next Sunday saw a similar outburst, while on Tuesday, the 12th July, a concourse of four thousand Orangemen met in the open air at Broughshane and were addressed by Robinson. There was no drum or fife, all was respectable.<sup>7</sup>

About the end of August the physical features of the Revival in great measure passed away, but the silent work of

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1. Gibson, op. cit. p. 57.

2. McMeekin, op. cit. pp. 64-65.

3. Belfast Newsletter, 25th May, 1859.

4. Gibson, op. cit. p. 61.

5. McMeekin, op. cit. p. 71.

6. Banner of Ulster, 9th July, 1859.

7. Gibson, op. cit. p. 61.



the Lord went on as progressively as ever. No less than 1,400 children attended the Sabbath School every Sabbath morning, and people had been converted by hundreds. The Bible was the Book of constant study. "Two of our National School-houses have been enlarged, in order to make them capable of accommodating the prayer-meetings, and we have subscribed about £550 for a new church", wrote Robinson, in an account dated the 26th April, 1860.<sup>1</sup>

News of the Lord's work in other places having reached Carnmoney, many were led to pray for a like outpouring. "We shall shortly have revival with us, because the Lord has put it into my heart to pray for it," said a lady member of the congregation.<sup>2</sup> The minister - the Rev. Joseph Barkley - and others were expecting it too, but not in the way that it transpired. Thomas Sinclair, a Christian merchant from Belfast, four miles away, on Sabbath, 5th June, felt constrained, though unsolicited, to address the congregation on the subject of revivals. As Sinclair was personally unknown to Barkley, the latter only reluctantly gave permission for him to speak. That night two women were in deep distress of soul within their own homes. On the following Tuesday Sinclair again addressed an immense audience in the church, and "although there was neither pith nor power in his address" - on either occasion - yet he had only spoken a few words when one and another were crying for mercy. Before morning no fewer than fifty souls found peace in believing.<sup>3</sup> A few weeks later the Communion service was held, and on the evening following, at the thanksgiving service, when the Rev. Alexander Pollock, of Second Ballyeaston, a Mr. Ormsby of Rothesay, and two young men from Connor, spoke, upwards of one hundred were brought to Christ.<sup>4</sup> After eight months, between three and four hundred people had been awakened, and there was hardly a backslider. No less than twenty prayer

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1. Gibson, op. cit. p. 60.

2. *ibid.* p. 126.

3. Reid, op. cit. p. 236.

4. *ibid.* p. 235; and Gibson, op. cit. p. 127.

5. *Missionary Herald*, October 1859, p. 427.



meetings were held weekly. The line of demarkation betwixt the Church and the world is now marked and distinct. Carn-money parish was one of the wealthiest, most prosperous and progressive spheres of Presbyterian labours, but not everyone belonged to that religious persuasion. Some worshipped in Ballycraigy Congregational Church, then worked as a branch church of Straid (the Rev. James Bain), and in the time of the Revival a Mr. David Quern was Scripture Reader.<sup>1</sup> A humble, earnest evangelist, he went about preaching to people in factories, open-air meetings, and anywhere opportunity was afforded. A typical day in his life was that of Thursday, 30th June, when he spent the morning and afternoon conversing with awakened sinners, and at night conducted a meeting on the bleach green where a thousand people were present. Next day was similar, but at night the church was crowded, and they did not leave till morning dawned. He was hardly to bed when a messenger rapped his door to say that two miles away there were no less than fifteen convicted in one house, and none to give them instruction. This servant of God had seen up to the middle of July some thirty-five who had been stricken in his own meeting-house, besides others in their homes.<sup>2</sup>

Lieutenant W. R. Aikman and Mrs. Colville, who had worked among the people in Ballymena in 1856 and afterwards, came to Carrickfergus in November, 1858, and frequently returned in the spring of 1859.<sup>3</sup> Communion Sabbath, 1st May, was a solemn occasion, but no bodily manifestation occurred until Sunday, 5th June, when the Rev. James Warwick, of Joymount Presbyterian Church (Second Carrickfergus), preached on "Multitudes in the valley of decision;"<sup>4</sup> while in the First Church a deputation from Ballymena addressed large audiences after the morning and evening services, and held an open-air meeting in the afternoon in the Scotch Quarter.<sup>5</sup> A deep impression was made, and

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1. Cairns, op. cit. p. 491.

2. Massie, op. cit. p. 36.

3. Reid, op. cit. p. 254.

4. Joel III, 14; Reid, op. cit. p. 255.

5. Missionary Herald, October 1859, p. 427.



two souls were immediately converted, while during the week many more were brought under deep conviction and cried for mercy,<sup>1</sup> and the work spread from street to street. Next Sunday, 12th, saw twelve converted throughout the town,<sup>2</sup> and it was said that "more persons assembled for the worship of God in Carrickfergus, than in the history of this town ever met on any previous occasion for a similar purpose."<sup>3</sup> Nightly prayer-meetings were held in several churches, and good weather favoured open-air meetings in country districts. Salt was discovered at Duncrue, near Carrickfergus, on the property of the Marquis of Downshire in 1851, and a company was formed to work the mines.<sup>4</sup> In these salt mines prayer meetings were held every day some seven hundred feet beneath the surface, in a cavity fitted up with forms and plentifully supplied with Bibles.<sup>5</sup> In First Presbyterian Church the Communion Roll increased by one hundred over the average of former years. Sabbath attendance likewise increased. A union prayer meeting conducted by laymen, held in the old courthouse, was well attended. During the revival the Rev. James White said that he had only one application for pecuniary aid by a professing convert, and this due to illhealth.<sup>6</sup> In Second Presbyterian Church (Joymount) in the October Communion, 480 communicants partook, while the previous largest number was 206. This church also saw 137 people attend the communicants' class in the same month - no less than sixty of these were married and some were grandfathers.<sup>7</sup> Speaking of the converts, the Rev. James Warwick declared "Probably the most hopeful cases ... are the ones ... without any bodily manifestations."<sup>8</sup> There were nearly two hundred such in Joymount.

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1. Banner of Ulster, 14th June, 1859.

2. Ballymena Observer, 18th June.

3. Missionary Herald, October, 1859, p. 427.

4. Ulster Directory, 1857, p. 535.

5. Missionary Herald, October 1859, p. 427; and Reid, op. cit. p. 260.

6. Missionary Herald, October 1859, p. 428.

7. Reid, op. cit. p. 262.

8. *ibid.* p. 264.



The Presbytery of Carrickfergus did not remain inactive when the Lord's gracious work required their extra labours. They held three sets of revival meetings within their bounds<sup>1</sup> - those in Carrickfergus on August 9th taking the form of thanksgiving services for revival in First Carrickfergus at 12 noon, and in Joymount at 7 p.m.<sup>2</sup>

In May the Revival reached Cullybackey,<sup>3</sup> coming up from Ahoghill and Portglenone. One report declared that the Revival "very recently ... begins to extent strongly ... northwards by Cullybackey ..."<sup>4</sup> Here the Rev. Hugh Hamilton was minister in the Presbyterian Church, and the Rev. J. G. McVicker was in the Reformed Presbyterian Church. The first large open-air meeting held in the village was on Sunday 22nd May, when between four and five hundred people attended.<sup>5</sup> Another enormous meeting was held on the lawn of James Woods, Esq., on Sunday, July 3rd., when some eight thousand people attended the annual Sabbath School anniversary service, in connection with the Cullybackey Sabbath School union. The special preacher was the Rev. Hugh Hanna, and here "the largest number of conversions ever heretofore recorded" took place. There were "116 cases of public and impulsive penitence" besides numerous others on that same evening quietly.<sup>6</sup> A second service was held at six o'clock, when the Revs. Hanna, Buick, Hamilton, and Cowan took part.<sup>7</sup> Hundreds remained from the earlier meeting, and earnestness was pictured on every countenance; while at one period in the day's proceedings nothing could be heard but the cry of the prostrate ones bemoaning their condition. In one place were to be seen converts ministering comfort to weeping penitents, while in another quarter were heard the voices of others beseeching sinners to repent and be converted, that their sins might be blotted out. The scene was truly Pentecostal.<sup>8</sup>

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1. Reid, op. cit. p. 256.

2. Belfast Newsletter, 4th August, 1859.

3. See above, page 129.

4. Ballymena Observer, 28th May, 1859.

5. ibid.

6. Banner of Ulster, 5th July, and 'Leader' in Ballymena Observer, 9th July, 1859.

7. Banner of Ulster, July 5, 1859.

8. McMeekin, op. cit. pp. 73-74.



On Tuesday, 7th June, an evening revival meeting with two thousand people was held in Dervock Presbyterian Churchyard at 6 o'clock, when six young men from Rasharkin attended. Great excitement prevailed, signs of revival took place, some in the Meeting House, and three of the young men from Rasharkin spoke, and one, a lad of about twelve years, prayed.<sup>1</sup> So great was this interest that one of the largest landowners in the district was unable to get his cows milked or his cattle fed,<sup>2</sup> while a local violin player - who played at dances and socials for a living - becoming converted and wanting very much to purchase a Bible, and who even thought of selling his violin to get the needed money, was prevented from doing so, however, when he considered that it might fall into another's hands for the same purpose as he had used it. Being assured that he would get a Bible he went to his home and committed the fiddle to the flames! Another open-air meeting was held at Seneril, about two miles from Dervock on Friday, 24th June, when a violent conversion took place at the meeting. Other moderate conversions took place at home among many of the people.<sup>3</sup>

The Rev. Thomas Hincks, rector of Derrykeighan (Dervock) wrote, "At the beginning of the movement, it was observed that sometimes at preachings, sometimes at prayer-meetings, and not infrequently when employed about their usual avocations; in fact, whether at home or abroad, one or more persons, without reference to either age or sex, were "struck"; the effect of which was to render them powerless, with great prostration of spirits, as well as of bodily strength, the mind being oppressed with feelings bordering on despair." Writing to a friend, Hincks said of his own congregation "... there are among them many gratifying instances of conversion to God ... I have a considerable increase to the congregation and a larger number of communicants." For a time Hincks conducted a short revival

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1. Ballymena Observer, 25th June, 1859.

2. Banner of Ulster, 18th June, 1859.

3. Ballymena Observer, 25th June, 1859.



meeting at the close of the morning service, when usually some fifty people remained to hear a "short affectionate address."<sup>1</sup>

The Revival commenced at Dundrod on Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> June, according to the Rev. William Magill.<sup>2</sup> There had been prayer meetings<sup>3</sup> before this date, but on that day a man came early in the morning for Mr. Magill to come to his home where his family were prostrated. Peace came to that home, and that evening a prayer meeting was held "at this house, in the open air, in the street, before the door."<sup>4</sup> The weather was good, and hundreds of all ranks and ages met in prayer. Far on in the night the people separated, some rejoicing, but one or two had to remain all night. Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> June, there was a prayer meeting in the church in the evening, when people came from all parts, amazed at what was happening. On the Sabbath, Magill strove to restrain excitement, but even so, there were two manifestations in the forenoon.<sup>5</sup> In the evening, for the first time, a neighbouring minister helped Mr. Magill, as also did a laymen from Belfast. Throughout the service, parties rose and went out under deep conviction, whereupon the graveyard was filled with groups singing and praying round the prostrate bodies of men and women.<sup>6</sup> Twenty cases of conviction were noted in the church, and it was remarked that some stayed in the graveyard till 2 a.m. It is said that at least fifty were affected.<sup>7</sup> Around Dundrod the church was the centre of a great work with many stricken. "Whole townlands were awakened, all outdoor labour suspended, and people in crowds follow the minister from house to house to engage in prayer."<sup>8</sup> There had been good progress

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1. Thomas Hincks' manuscript.

2. Gibson, op. cit. p. 133.

3. Banner of Ulster, Tuesday, 14<sup>th</sup> June, 1859.

4. Gibson, op.cit. p. 136.

5. Ballymena Observer, 18<sup>th</sup> June, 1859.

6. Gibson, op. cit. p. 138.

7. Banner of Ulster, 14<sup>th</sup> June, 1859.

8. ibid. 25<sup>th</sup> June, 1859.



during the first ten days, with meetings every night, when there were many conversions. Magill now divided the congregation into nine districts and arrangements were made for simultaneous prayer meetings in each district in various families at the same time each evening - 7 o'clock.<sup>1</sup> Meetings were also held in the local schoolhouse on Wednesday nights when as many as two hundred people attended, and it was said that some people who had not been at church for ten years were now present<sup>2</sup>. "All work, except the indispensable, was suspended," and everywhere men and women went about carrying Bibles and hymnbooks.<sup>3</sup> Proof that the revival went deeply into the souls of the Dundrod people was seen in the closing of one of the largest public houses in the district, and its being turned into a grocer's shop. The owner had a large business, and had a wife and a rising family to support, but bags of meal and sides of bacon would earn an honest living.<sup>4</sup>

At Larne the Rev. H. Martin was rector, and the Rev. Francis Dobbs - an evangelical clergyman of the school of Mathias, Peter Roe and Dr. McNeile<sup>5</sup> - was curate till 1859<sup>6</sup>. The Revival touched the town in early June<sup>7</sup> and by the middle of July the visible manifestations were noted as being not so numerous.<sup>8</sup> In First Larne Presbyterian Church (the Rev. Dr. H.W. Molyneaux) on the 5th September the Presbytery of Carrickfergus conducted a thanksgiving service for the good work of the revival - the third centre of thanksgiving in the Presbytery<sup>9</sup>. John Getty, a native of the town and a prominent Belfast businessman, maintained a missionary in Larne, having built and endowed<sup>10</sup> two very

1. Banner of Ulster, 25th June, 1859.
2. Ballymena Observer, 2nd July, 1859.
3. Banner of Ulster, 28th June, 1859.
4. Gibson, op. cit. p. 144.
5. Belfast Newsletter, 18th September, 1878.
6. Hincks' MSS. op. cit.
7. Belfast Newsletter, 7th June, 1859.
8. Ballymena Observer, 23rd July, 1859; Banner of Ulster, 16th July, 1859.
9. Carrickfergus Presbytery Minutes, 9th August, 1859.
10. Ulster Directory 1857, p. 607.



handsome mission houses. In the Methodist Church it was claimed by the Rev. G. Alley that there were one hundred converts per week at the height of the Revival.<sup>1</sup> The increase in prayer meetings in the district was twelvefold, and all who made profession of faith until the end of the year seemed to be staunch. "Several individuals who were connected with the Unitarian communion have been stricken down and have never since entered the place of meeting they once attended."<sup>2</sup>

The Revival arrived in Belfast at the beginning of May<sup>3</sup>, and by June had broken out in a most extraordinary way.<sup>4</sup> Churches much used were Great Georges' Street, Berry Street, Fisherwick, Townsend Street, York Street, Linenhall Street, and Eglinton Street, among Presbyterians; St. John's, Christ Church, The Magdalene, Holy Trinity, and St. Paul's, among the Episcopalians; as well as the Methodist and Independent cum Evangelical Union churches. Numerous open-air gatherings were held in the Botanic Gardens, and in the plains between Eglinton Street and Agnes Street. Such visiting speakers as Brownlow North, the Rev. Grattan Guinness, and the Hon. and Rev. B. W. Noel, addressed these monster meetings. Large prayer meetings were apparently first tried in the Wellington Hall, but the press noted that these were not well supported by the Established Church for it was distinctly stated that "only the Rev. William Anderson, a curate, was present of the clergy."<sup>5</sup> Fortunately this state of affairs did not last long, for during the course of the next week the Music Hall prayer meetings were begun, and it was said "a building three times as large would have been filled".<sup>6</sup> The joint secretaries of this weekly meeting were the Rev. Charles Seaver, of St. John's, and the Rev. Dr. Morgan, of Fisherwick. The first visit of the

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1. Belfast Newsletter, 22nd June, 1859.

2. The Revival, 17th December, 1859.

3. Seaver, op. cit. p. 7.

4. Reid, op. cit. p. 113.

5. Belfast Newsletter, 6th June, 1859.

6. ibid. 17th June, 1859.

converts to Belfast was to Great George's Street Presbyterian Church at the Rev. Thomas Toye's invitation, "at the end of May, 1859, I invited three lay brethren (two of them recent converts) to come from Ahoghill to Belfast ... for three days, and excited remarkable attention. There were no screams nor prostrations ... but a deep and salutary impression ... the glorious work may be said to have begun in the congregation of Great George's Street."<sup>1</sup> Converts from Connor visited Linenhall Street Presbyterian Church on Sunday, 29th May,<sup>2</sup> and also spoke on Monday in Townsend Street. On the Tuesday two men who had visited Ballymena gave graphic description of the work there to May Street Presbyterian congregation, while the Connor converts addressed Berry Street Church. It will be noted that these Connor men followed in the steps of the converts from Ahoghill, who had already visited Belfast on Friday, 27th May, in Great George's Street,<sup>3</sup> when meetings were held at 1 p.m. and 8 p.m. So crowded was the church that "upwards of a thousand" were unable to get in and were addressed in the street opposite Mr. Toye's residence by the Rev. John White, Primitive Methodist minister.<sup>4</sup> On the Sunday revival meetings were conducted in Great George's Street Church by the two Ahoghill men - an aged convert and a youth - who had spoken there on the Friday and Saturday. Also on Sunday at Salem New Connexion Methodist Church in York Street there was a revival meeting at 4 p.m.<sup>5</sup> The ministers of the town were 'haled' apparently to speak to all and sundry, as when a clergyman passing down Market Street was asked to go into a poor miserable house where a penitent lay on a straw bed.<sup>6</sup> The employees of the York Street Flax Spinning Mill began to be much influenced and many became

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1. Reid, op. cit. p. 113.

2. Belfast Newsletter, 3rd June, 1859, and Gibson, op. cit. p. 96.

3. Belfast Newsletter, 28th May, 1859.

4. *ibid.*

5. *ibid.* 30th May, 1859.

6. *ibid.* 7th June, 1859.



new converts, manifesting a noted liberality in pecuniary matters and so demonstrating that the work was genuine.<sup>1</sup> About this time the Presbytery of Belfast, after considerable discussion, gave thanks to God for the work of Revival.<sup>2</sup> In the Donegall Place Methodist Church it was reported that people were going forward to the penitent form at the rate of "one hundred on each of the past two evenings".<sup>3</sup> Dr. Cooke preached on "Revival" on the 12th June, thundering against curiosity mongers; such had now made themselves manifest in the town, for Seaver wrote to the press warning of the harm done by such visitors.<sup>4</sup> Large meetings continued in York Street Linen Mill and also at Fenton's Mill, where about one thousand people assembled, and no less than four hundred went to a room to inquire the way of salvation, being addressed by Presbyterian, Methodist and Independent ministers. In this latter place, it was recorded that there were nearly one hundred converts at one meeting.<sup>5</sup> Helpful visitors who assisted in the work in Belfast included a coloured minister from Canada, the Rev. Mr. Troy, who addressed the Baptist Church in Academy Street on the American Revival;<sup>6</sup> Peter Drummond of Stirling, spoke in Berry Street; the Rev. Moody Stewart, of Edinburgh, and the Rev. J. Milne, of Perth, took part with converts from Ahoghill in Townsend Street,<sup>7</sup> while the Rev. Dr. Binney, of London, was noted in attendance at the Music Hall prayer meeting. In the midst of the Revival it was recorded "Prayer meetings can now attract larger assemblages of people than any other meetings which might be convened."<sup>8</sup> The Revival had now spread rapidly down the Lagan valley, and all the principal towns - Lisburn, Lurgan, Portadown, Armagh and Enniskillen were visited.

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1. Belfast Newsletter, 8th June, 1859.

2. ibid.

3. ibid. 11th June, 1859.

4. ibid. 18th June, 1859.

5. ibid. 21st June, 1859.

6. ibid. 22nd June, 1859.

7. ibid. 23rd June, 1859.

8. ibid. 17th August, 1859.



Lisburn at the time of the Revival was described as "one of the handsomest and cleanest towns in Ireland, and its inhabitants most respectable."<sup>1</sup> It has a population of eight thousand and was situated seven miles from Belfast. Here Dean B. Stannus, rector of the "Cathedral Church of the United Dioceses of Down, Connor and Dromore"<sup>2</sup>, observed at the end of August that it had been asserted that none of the upper classes had been influenced by the movement. "He was aware that, to a great extent, this statement was correct, and, so far as he could see, it appeared that the reason was simply because those classes had rarely exhibited the disposition to take part in the Revival. They had not asked for the blessing of conviction of sin, and hence so few of them were found taking interest in the great reformation."<sup>3</sup> The same sources tell us that "The marvellous incidents which have taken place in other parts of the country, in connexion with the religious awakening in the Christian church, have hardly had an existence in Lisburn" until the end of August, and when in many places the exuberances of the awakening had begun to be lost sight of; suddenly "about the beginning of September these new developments began in Belfast to attract attention, and to excite the eager curiosity of the multitude"<sup>4</sup>, and at the same time these physical phenomena called 'marks' - stigmata - appeared in Lisburn in force. Previous to this the revival had come to Lisburn in June, and at the end of that month remarkable effect had been noticed in the changed lives of the citizens and the increased public worship. The largest meeting ever seen in Lisburn was held on Friday, 24th June, when a crowd of some 2,500 - over a quarter of the whole town's population - collected in the church and school, with several hundreds outside unable to obtain entrance anywhere. In the church three converts from Ballymena spoke, while three

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1. Ulster Directory, 1857, p. 610.

2. ibid.

3. Banner of Ulster, 27th August,; Revival, 3rd Sept., 1859.

4. Gibson, op. cit. p. 146.



ministers - the Rev. Hartly Hodson, curate of the Free Church, the Rev. William Breakey, of the Presbyterian Church, and a Rev. Mr. Purcell - addressed the mass of people outside, dividing them into three groups.<sup>1</sup> On the Sunday, 3rd July, a Canadian minister, the Rev. Michael Bosner, of Galt, spoke in the Cathedral, and it was recorded that there was in the whole town a good spirit of Christian unity. The 'marks' appeared in September and created a sensation, so much so that Breakey preached in his church, stating publicly that the 'marks' were made with a 'blue bag' or some such thing, and that he and the Rev. J. S. Hall (curate to Dean Stannus) had visited Mary Saunders in her home.<sup>2</sup> They rubbed off the marks, and in doing so sparked off a bitter attack on themselves from a layman, Alexander McCann, in his pamphlet.<sup>3</sup> Despite this aside, the main work of the Revival was said to be going on well.<sup>4</sup>

Newtownards was a market town in County Down, about eight miles from Belfast, and consisted of one spacious square with several streets leading from it. Muslin weaving and its embroidery employed the most of the people; others worked at a newly erected flax factory, while not a few were employed at two extensive lead mines. The places of worship were the parish church, built in 1817, four Presbyterian churches, two Methodist churches, a Covenanters' meeting house, a Unitarian place of worship, and a Roman Catholic chapel. The population in 1851 was 9,567. It would appear that a Mr. M. Harbison, the principal teacher in 'Earl Street National School (No. 2)' in the town, himself a native of County Antrim, visited the Revival district around Ballymena and brought back with him two young men, who were to have a great influence in the town, William Craig, a schoolmaster, and his friend William McIlwrath.<sup>5</sup> The

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1. Banner of Ulster, 28th June, 1859; Ballymena Observer, July 2.

2. See below page 265

3. Alexander McCann, The "Strikings Down", and "The Marks" Vindicated, 22nd October, 1859, Lisburn.

4. Belfast Newsletter, 14th September, 1859.

5. See below page 219



former became a teacher in the town and later principal of the Model School; the latter became first a Scripture reader, then town missionary, and eventually minister of Greenwell Street Presbyterian Church, which he built literally with his own energy and money, if not his own hands. The early revival meetings were held in Zion Methodist New Connexion Church (the Rev. J. Nicholson), but this proved too small and a move was made to First Presbyterian Church (the Rev. Julius McCullough). The Revs. McCullough, Hanson, Hughes, Nicholson, Stewart, and Cather, as well as Craig and McIlwrath along with others, led the meetings.<sup>1</sup> The Rev. George Hughes,<sup>2</sup> first minister of the Fourth Presbyterian congregation in Newtownards<sup>3</sup>, wrote that "... early in June, a weekly union prayer meeting was established ... the doors of almost all the evangelical churches were thrown open on several days of the week besides the Sabbath, to accommodate the eager crowds that assembled for prayer and hearing the Word... At an early stage ... one speaker at one of the meetings referred to the revival in other places, and said the thought had occurred to him, What if Newtownards should be passed over? ..." <sup>4</sup> But that was not to be. News of the awakening in Comber in the Rev. J. M. Killen's church came to Newtownards and one woman was prostrated in the Market Square in Newtownards, on a Saturday. She had attended revival meetings in Comber the previous evening.<sup>5</sup> Afterwards "a very considerable number" were converted; daily prayer meetings were held in all churches and in many private houses.<sup>6</sup> A wonderful change transformed the town, and "the Sabbath ... is now so strictly observed that the stillness of the streets is seldom broken, except by the crowds that flock to the several churches.

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1. Belfast Newsletter, 22nd June, 1859; Armagh Guardian, 24th June.
  2. Ordained in 1854; served 53 years.
  3. Fourth Presbyterian Church erected in 1853, numbered well over one hundred families in 1870, was disbanded in 1906. General Assembly Minutes 1906, p. 46.
  4. Reid, op. cit. pp. 287-288.
  5. Banner of Ulster, 16th June, 1859.
  6. Ballymena Observer, 18th June, 1859.



Districts of the town that on Saturday evening used to be so turbulent that the very police were timid ... are now perfectly quiet and peaceful ..."<sup>1</sup> Some appreciation of the interest in the awakening can be judged from the fact that in May when the first prayer meetings commenced in one of the Covenanting churches it was thought a marvellous thing that two hundred people should congregate to pray. "One of our most popular divines could hardly have drawn together such an audience on a week-day evening a month previous."<sup>2</sup> Yet in a very short time, "the largest church in the town was crowded, ground floor and gallery, pews and aisles. Hundreds could not get admission, and would not go away. The lawn in front of the church was densely filled ... More than four thousand must have been present at that prayer meeting."<sup>3</sup> That this was no exaggeration is seen from a statement in the press that the congregation numbered about five thousand, and that more than half of them were unable to get into the Meeting House.<sup>4</sup> It was even said that at this time the Roman Catholic priest offered a 'pill' to keep the revival off. Furthermore, at the great harvest fair - one of the largest ever held - a public prayer meeting was held in the Square at two p.m. and it continued till six p.m. with the utmost decorum and solemnity. "It was, under the circumstances, interesting in the extreme, to see a large body of people kneeling down in prayer in the public market place of a populous town, many of whom had never before bent the knee for that purpose in any place. Such a scene, it is admitted, was never previously witnessed in Newtownards."<sup>5</sup>

Four miles away is the town of Comber, whence the revival had spread to Newtownards. The Rev. J. M. Killen, minister of First Presbyterian Church situated in Cow Lane, succeeded the famous controversialist the Rev. Isaac Nelson, stern critic of

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1. The Revival, 20th August, 1859.
  2. Gibson, op. cit. p. 181.
  3. *ibid.* p. 184.
  4. Banner of Ulster, 28th June, 1859.
  5. The Revival, 15th October, 1859.



the awakening. Mr. Killen, in contrast, could write "We had been holding meetings at stated intervals in our congregation for fourteen years, the great object of which was to seek a revival ..." <sup>1</sup> "...for about fourteen years, with the assistance of Mr. Patteson, of Bangor, Mr. Toye of Belfast, Mr. Hamilton of Saintfield, and others we had been wont to hold meetings at stated intervals for the purpose of seeking a revival of religion amongst us." <sup>2</sup> On the Communion preparation Sabbath, 15th May, Killen first noticed the congregation visibly affected, and on Monday, 30th May, converts from Ahoghill spoke, and many were impressed. During the week further meetings were held, and the awakening could be said to have begun on Monday, 6th June. "The first Monday evening after the revival commenced, viz., Monday, the 13th June, will long be memorable in the annals of First Comber, and indeed of the place generally. On that evening the Spirit came down on our assembled congregation with mighty power. Thirty-two "stricken ones" had to be removed to the schoolroom. Many other cases followed. The whole town was roused." <sup>3</sup> In the prayer meetings several more were prostrated, <sup>4</sup> and on Sabbath, 12th June, there were indescribable scenes, for at the morning service there were many cries and tears, while in the evening many were affected, and many converted. <sup>5</sup> "Our congregation having been the first in County Down blessed with the outpouring of the Spirit when the work commenced, a great sensation was produced. The whole town and neighbourhood were roused... for several days great numbers were unable to attend to their usual avocations... for the first month, with about three exceptions, I did not get to bed till morning ... For twenty-one days after the revival commenced we had on an average more than ten cases daily, and altogether we

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1. Gibson, op. cit. p. 175.

2. Missionary Herald, October 1859, p. 428.

3. *ibid.*

4. Ballymena Observer, 18th June, 1859.

5. Banner of Ulster, 14th June, 1859.



have had above three hundred and fifty cases of visible awakening in our congregation, not to speak of the still more numerous instances of a silent character, of which no proper estimate can yet be formed."<sup>1</sup> On Thursday afternoon, 30th June, a vast crowd gathered at a field at the Newtownards Road lent by George Allen of Unicarvel. The following ministers - McCullough and Cather of Newtownards, J. McCullough of Granshaw, Fisher of Raffery, Quartz of Ballygilbert, and Killen - addressed the meeting, which was conducted by the Rev. John Rodgers of Second Comber. Cases of prostration occurred among the crowd of some four thousand, but withal there was great quietness of soul among the people. The meeting lasted till 10 p.m.<sup>2</sup> By the end of July it was reported that some 270 awakenings had occurred in First Comber.<sup>3</sup> "We have had no very sudden conversions amongst us. True, those under conviction in the course of an hour or two generally got relief, which at first some were wont to mistake for true peace in Christ, but they mostly soon found out their mistake; and I had at a very early stage of the work to warn them against being satisfied with anything short of Christ himself, and to urge them to make sure, first of all, of Him, and that then He would give them pardon, peace, and all other blessings they might require. The consequence has been, that those awakened have not generally found true peace in less than a week. Many have been several weeks under conviction before they could say that they were truly converted, and some, though greatly changed in life and conversation, will not yet venture to say that they have found the Lord. The truth is, that for the most part they appear to be very jealous of themselves, and to be afraid of deceiving themselves; and the consequence has been, that the work, when effected, appears to be of a very thorough and decided character, and I am happy to state, that from what I am

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1. Gibson, op. cit. p. 173.

2. Banner of Ulster, 2nd July, 1859.

3. Belfast Newsletter, 26th July, 1859.



daily witnessing, I believe that the converts, as a body, are growing very rapidly in humility, and in the other graces of the Christian character. In not a few cases the bodily health has been greatly improved, as well as the soul saved. One woman, who was almost blind, has had her eyesight restored to her, and can now read the Bible, which she was unable to do for ten years before. Two others that were almost always confined to bed for years, are now quite convalescent in body, and rejoicing in spirit. A boy remarkable for stammering can now speak quite well; and a little girl, formerly noted for timidity and nervous weakness, is now fearless and strong. By this great revival, ministerial life has to a large extent become quite a new thing. It is now a continued joy, and, instead of being dispirited by the obduracy of sinners and the seeming barrenness of pastoral effort, we are now daily, I might almost say hourly, gathering in a great spiritual harvest, and are constantly rejoicing in the abounding communion of the saints."<sup>1</sup>

Banbridge was, in the days of 1859, a flourishing market town, about twenty miles south of Belfast on the mail road to Dublin. Its population in the 1851 census was 3,300. In the Arian struggle the Presbyterian meeting house had voted non-subscription, and the Rev. James Davis joined the Remonstrant Synod.<sup>2</sup> Those dissatisfied with these Arian views appealed to the Dromore Presbytery, were erected into Scarva Street Congregation, and on the 22nd June, 1830, the Rev. Robert Anderson, a probationer under the Letterkenny Presbytery, was ordained the first minister of Scarva Street Presbyterian Church. "Mr. Anderson was most assiduous in the ministry of the Word, preaching not only on the Sabbath day, but often during the nights of the week in the school rooms of the surrounding districts. In the summer months, like his neighbour, Dr. Johnston of Tullylish, Mr. Anderson often conducted open air services which were largely attended and proved helpful to many ... From time to time he

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1. Gibson, op. cit. pp. 173, 174.

2. T. Boyd, Scarva Street Congregation, 1830-1930.



arranged series of sermons on the vital doctrines of Christianity and invited his brethren to discuss the subjects chosen in Scarva Street Church, which they did with great acceptance. Those were the days of great preaching and of great appreciative audiences."<sup>1</sup> The Awakening displayed itself with great power and suddenness beginning at an open-air gathering, in a bleach field, on Thursday, 21st July, and on the following evening, at another meeting addressed by three students of theology, sixty-four cases of prostration occurred,<sup>2</sup> and "those who profess to be on the Lord's side are numerous, and increasing every day. The Unitarians have been reached here to a wonderful extent, and on every hand embrace the saving truths of the Gospel."<sup>3</sup> "There were not wanting instruments in the hand of God in preparing the way of the Lord in Banbridge. Many of the young men of the town had been gathered into Bible classes, and several of them were truly converted to God. These converts became willing-hearted workers in the evangelization of the neglected and outcast population. They established cottage prayer-meetings, and also local Sabbath schools, and there was thus an extensive sowing of the good seed of the kingdom ere the Awakening appeared in its power. To crown all, prayer, united, continuous and believing, had been long offered in faith and fervour by this band of young men, and by other associated Christian friends. In addition to this, evangelical truth had been long and faithfully preached in the town and neighbourhood. 'The public mind here' a friend wrote to me soon after my return home, 'was never in such a prepared state for the reception of the good seed, and I feel that he who has prepared it by His Spirit, will satisfy the desire he has created'."<sup>4</sup> A second witness to this preparation was Prof. William Gibson who wrote, "For the last few years an unwonted interest in religion has been created in the young men of the

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1. Boyd, op. cit. pp. 16, 17.

2. Weir, op. cit. p. 95.

3. The Revival, 10th September, 1859.

4. Weir, op. cit. pp. 96, 97 (his italics).



locality, mainly through the devoted labours of a Christian layman residing there. As a result of his exertions the most important moral and spiritual changes had been going forward, and the way seemed to be prepared for a still more extensive spiritual visitation."<sup>1</sup> Doubtless the layman referred to by Gibson was a Mr. Johnstone - "No reference to the '59 revival in Scarva Street would be complete which did not include the name of Mr. James Johnstone, Manager of the Provincial Bank, Bridge Street. Mr. Johnstone was a man of rare devotion and Christlike character ... Dr. William Magill of Cork, who knew Mr. Johnstone well, told the writer that Mr. Johnstone was 'one of the best men he ever knew.' Mr. Johnstone's work lay chiefly amongst the young men of the congregation, many of whom found in his classes salvation and eternal life."<sup>2</sup> A further source of information was William Greene, a civil engineer, employed in Spain for about a dozen years on railroad work, and who returned from Spain in 1858. In December of that year he attended a Y.M.C.A. prayer meeting in Banbridge, numbering some forty people. This devoted layman of the Episcopal Church recorded "We numbered about forty on that occasion. Several of us spoke, and many earnest prayers that the Lord would pour out His Spirit on that place were offered. The Lord was among us that evening and we all seemed to feel His presence in no common way."<sup>3</sup> Greene testified "The revival was slow in coming to Banbridge, but it has done a wonderful work ..."<sup>4</sup>

Further along the Lagan valley stands the old town of Lurgan whose population was about seven thousand at the awakening. Here again preparation was made over the years: "a work of preparation for revival had been in progress at Lurgan, as elsewhere, for years prior to 1859," so wrote the Rev. L. E. Berkeley, and he continued "A goodly number of earnest Christians were here, who

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1. Gibson, op. cit. p. 207.

2. Boyd, op. cit. p. 20.

3. Gibson, op. cit. p. 208.

4. *ibid.* p. 209.



continued in prayer and supplication, expecting a blessing; and they were not disappointed."<sup>1</sup> Early in June, Christian people of different denominations in town manifested a desire to come together for prayer, first in the different congregational prayer meetings, and afterwards in a neutral place, at the dinner hour of the working classes ... The first meeting for united prayer in which any of the Episcopal ministers took part was held in the Presbyterian church on the 28th June. Hitherto the brethren had rather kept aloof, doubting the real character of the movement, but from this period their doubts seemed to vanish. At that meeting one public conviction took place."<sup>2</sup> This was the first public conviction, and as it took place in the Presbyterian Church "That Church in which the sainted Rev. Thomas Miller laboured has been signally honoured as a scene of revival."<sup>3</sup> On the following Monday night a large open-air meeting was held at Kitchen Hill, where between fifteen hundred and two thousand people congregated to be addressed by Messrs. Armstrong, Meyes and Grant, Methodist ministers, and two Belfast converts. Nearly a dozen conversions took place in the evening,<sup>4</sup> in Queen Street Methodist Church.<sup>5</sup> Berkeley went to the General Assembly meeting in Dublin, and would appear to have left the affairs of his congregation in the hands of a licentiate of the Dromore Presbytery - Mr. Matthew Murphy - who wrote to Berkeley at Dublin of the developments in Lurgan. Summoned home by this news, and also by telegram from the congregation, Berkeley found "every pew was ... filled with mourning or rejoicing." On the next day at the Sabbath service, as Berkeley read the second chapter of Acts, with its reference to the multiplicity of tongues, and the charge that the disciples "were full of new wine", a woman said audibly "I am not drunken", and she bowed down on her

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1. Gibson, op. cit. p. 252.

2. *ibid.* pp. 252, 253, 254.

3. Londonderry Standard, 14th July, 1859.

4. Ballymena Observer, 6th July, 1859; Armagh Guardian, 8th July.

5. Londonderry Standard, 14th July, 1859.



knees in the pew, pouring out her heart to God, and had shortly to be removed. Another in the gallery cried aloud to God, but the singing of a psalm quieted the people, and left time for her removal also. At the close of the service a young man was helped out, whom I found shortly after in the school-room in a very agony of prayer, wrestling with God, and asking help against Satan. He continues steadfast in the faith and hope of the gospel."<sup>1</sup> Twenty prayer meetings a week were held<sup>2</sup> - "having helped greatly to confirm the souls of the disciples." In a rural district near the town "No manner of labour was being attended to, though the fields were white to harvest. The concerns of the soul and eternity were occupying exclusive attention." Berkeley could write further "I see numbers of young man, formerly given up to sinful pleasures and excesses, or at least stupid and unconcerned about spiritual and eternal things, now living as disciples of Christ, and for the glory of God. The cause of Temperance has greatly advanced. Party spirit has much diminished. Religious magazines are circulating in hundreds and supplanting mischievous 'light reading'. Christian liberality is greatly increased. Believers have been wonderfully quickened."<sup>3</sup> The rector of Shankill Parish (Lurgan), the Rev. Thomas Knox, could write on 16th April, 1860, "1st, Congregations, both in church and at cottage lectures, greatly increased. The increase is composed, in great measure, of young men and women who were formerly indifferent to spiritual matters. 2nd, The communicants nearly doubled, and from the same class of persons. 3rd, Adult classes have sprung up of persons anxious for instruction. 4th, A young men's society ... assist in district visitation and in distributing tracts that we supply... We require accommodation for five hundred more, at least, in the church, which I hope will be ready for them in about eighteen months."<sup>4</sup> This last hope was not fulfilled as quickly as the rector wished, for not till 1875 was the enlargement completed.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Gibson, op. cit. p. 256.

2. *ibid.*

3. *ibid.* p. 258.

4. *ibid.* p. 259.

5. Personal letter from Archdeacon Gransden, 4th November, 1960.



Portadown was a town of some three thousand people. Its weekly paper the Portadown News had but begun in the year of revival, on the 23rd April, 1859. The news of the revival was soon reported in this paper and on 4th June an Editorial was in favour of the work, while an advertisement stated that on Monday, 6th June, a revival prayer meeting would take place in the town. This series of meetings was in the Town Hall at 6 a.m., 12 noon, and 8 p.m., when Mr. John Shillington reported on the work at Ahoghill. Further meetings were held in the Methodist Church at 6 p.m. and 8 p.m., and in the Presbyterian Church at 12 noon.<sup>1</sup> It was reported that as yet none was stricken, but much good was done and several were converted. By July the paper's news coverage on the Revival extended to seven and a half columns, and a request appeared for 'field meetings.' By mid July it could be said that Derryanvil, Cloncore, Drumnakelly and Seagoe had all felt its power, while on Tuesday, 12th July, prayer meetings were held at Derrylea and Birches. The Editor stated "We cannot but conclude that it (the Revival) is a special means used by Him who will have all men to be saved, to drive formalism from the different parts of the church, and excite concern among all classes."<sup>2</sup> Remarking on the Williamite Loyalist celebrations of the 12th July, the newspaper said "we never recollect seeing on such an occasion so great a number of people together with less disturbance. All was harmony and goodwill."<sup>3</sup> To claim that this was not a local phenomenon the Portadown News then quoted the Lurgan Gazette as saying 'at Lurgan there was no disturbance whatever'; the Newry Telegraph in Newry, no displays of any description made, nor drums beaten, and no party emblems even on orange walls'. Soon the Portadown News could record "In reference to the beginning of the work here, it is our privilege to report the rapid progress of this

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1. Portadown News, 11th June, 1859.

2. ibid. 16th July, 1859.

3. ibid.



wonderful religious movement, the decided commencement of which we recorded last week. The public services held since have been exceedingly numerous and ... well attended. On Sunday last a prayer meeting was conducted in Messrs. Irwin's field near the railway gates. Although the afternoon was threatening, the attendance, it was thought, exceeded 1,500. On Monday evening the usual union meeting was held in Mr. John Montgomery's field. Many hundreds were present. The service was for the most part conducted by a young man from Belfast. In addition to these the usual meetings of a more denominational character were held."<sup>1</sup> The same newspaper later reported that at Ballydonaghy "... hundreds have sought and found peace, and hundreds are yet seeking earnestly and perseveringly ... hundreds come and kneel at our prayer meetings ..."<sup>2</sup> "As far as we can learn, the proportions of persons 'stricken' in the country districts has been much larger, as compared with the total number converted, than in the immediate town. In one locality ... between forty and fifty persons were prostrated. On another occasion ... twentyone individuals were arrested. In ... a mid-day prayer-meeting on one of the bridges over the Ulster railway ... eight persons were 'stricken', and in a house into which one of these was brought, five others."<sup>3</sup> "At the September love feast, when the Wesleyan chapel at Portadown was filled, the large school-room was thrown open, and it was soon crowded; then the town-hall was secured and proved inadequate, and then the court-house was placed at the disposal of a fourth congregation!"<sup>4</sup>

Armagh, the ecclesiastical capital of Ireland, had a population of about nine thousand, and boasted the Cathedral, St. Mark's church on the Mall, with three Presbyterian, one Independent, and two Methodist churches, as Protestant places of worship. As to the Revival "There was an impression abroad that God was not

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1. Portadown News, 23rd July, 1859.
  2. Quoted in Revival, 20th August, 1859.
  3. Banner of Ulster, 20th August; The Revival, 27th August, 1859.
  4. Memorial of T. A. Shillington, J.P., pp. 141, 148; and Crookshank, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 518.



going to visit Armagh"<sup>1</sup>, and it certainly was long in coming. Not till August was well begun did the work begin. There had been a serious riot in the city in July over street preaching,<sup>2</sup> and a battle took place in the street at Barrack Hill. By mid August a woman was heard to cry out for mercy in the Primitive Methodist church in Abbey Street, and at the following meeting four or five persons were stricken.<sup>3</sup> "For at least two months previously, it had been anxiously anticipated."<sup>4</sup> Apparently about the same time as the Methodist converts were stricken, "a similar scene to what had been realized at Ballymena and Coleraine among school children, had occurred ... in Armagh."<sup>5</sup> The pious teacher had led the children to Christ, and the Rev. J. R. McAlister was called in to assist in the work.<sup>6</sup> Such was the beginning in the Third Presbyterian Congregation. In First Church the Rev. Jackson Smyth stated that revival work commenced in the life of a young girl in the congregation "weeks before there was any public manifestation in the city."<sup>7</sup> Smyth visited the home of the girl, and "one after another, the young persons in the house were brought to the Lord, till no fewer than seven gave clear indication of hopeful conversion. There was not a case of prostration in the house at all."<sup>8</sup> The Rev. William Henderson, minister of the Second Presbyterian Meeting House, encountered a nominal member of the Established Church, "who had fainted, as her husband thought. ... The following day I first saw her, and she was then happy in the Lord... Previous to this occurrence little was known of the revival in this neighbourhood..."<sup>9</sup> Yet it must not be thought that a large proportion were stricken, for it was clearly stated "Ten, for one 'stricken' are entering into the kingdom of heaven without

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1. Gibson, op. cit. p. 262.

2. Portadown News, 23rd July, 1859.

3. Crookshank, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 518.

4. Gibson, op. cit. p. 260.

5. Weir, op. cit. p. 147.

6. Gibson, op. cit. p. 260; Reid, op. cit. pp. 31-36.

7. Gibson, op. cit. p. 261.

8. *ibid.* p. 262.

9. *ibid.* p. 268.



observation."<sup>1</sup> That things were not easy, can be seen from the writing of McAlister "The opposition from Roman Catholics, Arians, Puseyites, infidels, and profane and formal Protestants, is violent, bitter, and unceasing. These parties are more wicked than they were. Many of them are making a mighty effort to swell the calendar of crime. Antirevival officials now haul up little cases of crime of which they formerly took no notice. What is more to be lamented, that many in the revival work who attempt to lead the people commit extravagances, force sinners to their knees, create artistic prostrations, labour only to proselytise ... often there is not the shadow of true conviction, conduct their meetings with great irreverence... and denounce all who are not of their party..."<sup>2</sup> Typical of the prayer meetings held in the city - "such meetings were held nightly in the different places of worship"<sup>3</sup> - was that held on a Thursday night in the First Presbyterian Church in Abbey Street, when a great audience attended. The minister, the Rev. Jackson Smyth, expounded John iii, 1-10; then the Primitive Methodist minister, Mr. Kerr, spoke on the Holy Spirit's power and work; following which the Independent minister combated the idea of revivals being spurious in an address entitled 'divine truth, divine power and human nature', and to conclude the Rev. J. R. McAlister spoke on Psalm cvi, verse 4.<sup>4</sup>

A monster united prayer meeting in the open air, similar to the Botanic Gardens meeting, was organized for Wednesday, 16th September. It was to be a great united prayer meeting for all Ireland. A Mr. C. Kirtland, of Dublin, wrote "This was advertised in Dublin, 100 miles distant, a fact which shows how deep and wide is the interest which has been created by the movement." Trains came from Monaghan, Dungannon, Belfast and

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1. Reid, op. cit. p. 34.

2. ibid. p. 35.

3. Weir, op. cit. p. 46.

4. Ballymena Observer, 6th July, 1859.



Dublin. Mr. Kirtland continued "When the train arrived at Dundalk, 50 miles from Armagh, numbers were waiting to go, and at every station afterwards, the crowds became larger, so that many people had to get on the roofs of the carriages. At Portadown junction, 11 miles from Armagh, there was probably a thousand people in the station. Here there was a delay of over an hour, during which a prayer meeting was held in the large waiting room, while multitudes on the outside were singing hymns. The carriages were too few to take us on, so we had to be stowed away in cattle trucks and goods vans. The scene in Armagh was overpowering. Twenty thousand people, or nearly so, in a large field, met at a prayer meeting. Mr. Noel and his son were there, and took part. There was nothing wild, or extravagant, or ranting, in the exercises, a deep solemnity pervaded the vast assemblies. Many were 'struck down' and taken out of the crowds. In one circle there were twenty-five. I examined several cases very closely, prayed and conversed with them. There was great variety in the symptoms, some were perfectly still, others were convulsed, with agony such as I have never seen. Some who had found peace spoke of Christ and his salvation as if by inspiration. It was awful and mysterious to be brought so near to God, as he was discovering to one and another their sins. But the greater part of those who were struck down, had been under deep impression for some time past. It was then that they were brought to a crisis. Never can I forget that day, never may I forget the impressions which I received."<sup>1</sup> Other accounts of this titanic meeting in the ecclesiastical capital of Ireland tell of three and four thousand people in each train, many travelled on the carriage roofs, the trains slowing down, and they lying down to pass under bridges;<sup>2</sup> that a local doctor, James M. Lynn, M.D., presided over the immense audience of "not less than twenty thousand."<sup>3</sup> It took

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1. The Revival, 24th September, 1859.

2. Portadown News, 17th September, 1859.

3. Belfast Newsletter, 16th September, 1859.

See further detail in J. M. Lynn, Wesleyan Methodism in Armagh Circuit, pp. 138, 140.



place in Mr. Stanley's capacious field near the railway station; two chaplains of the Lord Primate Beresford were in the field, and as well as the Hon. and Rev. Baptist Noel addressing the meeting, his son Ernest Noel, the Rev. R. M. Henry, of Academy Street Baptist Church, Belfast, the Rev. S. J. Moore, of Ballymena, and a Rev. Mr. McCutcheon.<sup>1</sup> A sensational conversion in Armagh was that of a nun of six years' service in Newry convent, whose uncle was a priest. She was Ellen O'Hagan, and at a tea meeting in the Primitive Wesleyan chapel she "addressed the audience at considerable length and in really fluent style."<sup>2</sup>

At Enniskillen we find far less influence of the revival movement than in any of the other districts of the old province of Ulster. Gibson neglected Fermanagh almost completely in his narrative, while Weir related "we perceived we were getting a little beyond the great Revival wave."<sup>3</sup> However, a Captain Orr - sometime an officer in the Royal Artillery, and former student at Portora Royal School - who was used in Coleraine and Derry in revival meetings, came to his old school and addressed the boys on the subject of the Revival. Having done this he availed himself of the opportunity to speak to the people of the town of Enniskillen on the Fair day, 10th June, from the front of the County prison. His wife, who accompanied him, helped to raise a hymn.<sup>4</sup> A special revival meeting was held in the pleasure grounds surrounding the General Cole monument. There were present at this meeting about one thousand people.<sup>5</sup> As Dr. Orr has pointed out this lack of revival influence in County Fermanagh may be due to the small percentage of Presbyterians - only two per cent. - in the county, "when one notices that the movement was generally approved among Presbyterians but only approved in part by the clergy of the Establishment."<sup>6</sup>

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1. Portadown News, 17th September, 1859.

2. The Revival, 19th November, 1859.

3. Weir, op. cit. p. 140.

4. Londonderry Standard, 23rd June, 1859; Armagh Guardian, 24th June, 1859.

5. Weir, op. cit. p. 140.

6. Orr, op. cit. p. 53.



Indeed, a writer of the time - the Rev. John Crockett, minister of First Castlederg Presbyterian Church - testified "there is one thing connected with this movement that I have not seen noticed; it is this - and I say it in no sectarian spirit - that it appears to be very much confined to the localities in which Presbyterianism abounds. We are on the borders of Fermanagh, a Protestant county, but originally settled from England, where the principles of our polity are scarcely known, and other forms of Protestantism prevail. Now, every effort has been made by our Methodist brethren, who were very successful among us, to carry the work into Fermanagh, but hitherto to no purpose. I mention this fact, because to me it appears somewhat strange."<sup>1</sup>

Travelling on in County Tyrone to Castlederg we find "the agents being not the stated ministers or visitors of the usual class from the awakened districts, but commercial travellers, whose business had brought them to the village through some of the towns of Derry and Antrim."<sup>2</sup> Some such spoke to the congregations 'after service.' Two neighbouring Presbyterian ministers, the Rev. John Armstrong, Second Castlederg, and the Rev. Joseph Love, Killeter, with Dr. Motherwell of Termonamongan, joined with the Methodists in holding an open-air service every Sabbath evening at 5 p.m. in Dr. Motherwell's field near Castlederg bridge,<sup>3</sup> when some two-and-a-half to five thousand people attended. Messrs. Donnelly, Laird and McClean of Derry addressed this meeting on Sunday, 17th July<sup>4</sup>, when one strong man was prostrated and many converted. On the Fair day, 5th August, while the Rev. W. Doonan, Wesleyan minister, was holding his usual open-air service in the street of the town, he was attacked by a mob, whistling, shouting and throwing stones. It was believed that this rabble came from a distance. As the minister was protected by the constabulary, and some of the town inhabitants, he came to no harm.<sup>5</sup> A circus came to Castlederg, which

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1. Gibson, op. cit. first edition p. 255, second edition pp.248-9.

2. Gibson, op. cit. p. 246 (his italics).

3. Dondonderry Standard, 28th July, 1859.

4. The Revival, 6th August, 1859.

5. ibid. 20th August, 1859.



on previous occasions took £140, but this time only £15; while a publican employed five additional waiters, but did not sell one shilling's worth.<sup>1</sup> The Master of public markets in Castle-derg tried to stop the open-air preaching, but the people disapproved his conduct.<sup>2</sup> The Presbytery of Omagh, according to the Rev. John Hamilton of Cross Roads, near Omagh, "entertained the subject of revivals for a lengthened period for which purpose several special meetings were held, and a number of important resolutions drawn up and printed for public distribution among the different congregations, to which deputations from time to time were also sent to address the people. On hearing also of the great American revival in 1857 we sent ministers 'by two and two' to each congregation in the autumn of 1858, to address them on the subject of that widely extended religious movement."<sup>3</sup> The writer continued "The congregation of Cross Roads has ... for some time past (had)... stated prayer meetings, especially on Sunday mornings by the elders and members, but also a Monthly Christian Association regularly conducted by a number of steady, persevering young men of good promise ... spiritual life appeared for at least two years to be manifesting itself in an increased attendance upon ordinances and renewed interest taken in everything pertaining to the cause of Christ."<sup>4</sup> By 24th July two converts from Omagh addressed a large open-air meeting, when thirty cried aloud for mercy. Next evening in the Meeting House there was an all night meeting till the early hours of the morning when another twenty-five or thirty were afflicted and converted.<sup>5</sup> In Omagh town, on 3rd July, three very young Derry converts addressed one of the largest meetings ever seen in the Old Meeting House. It was estimated that 1,500 were present and that many

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1. Londonderry Standard, 25th August, 1859.

2. ibid. 25th August, 1859.

3. Reid, op. cit. p. 277.

4. ibid.

5. Revival, 20th August, 1859; Reid, op. cit. p. 278.



hundreds more were turned away.<sup>1</sup> About twelve were under conviction of sin, and next evening some forty in the prayer meeting in the same place, while on Tuesday, the prayer meeting being held in the Methodist church, more were converted.<sup>2</sup>

Londonderry - the city of no surrender in 1690 - awakened on Whit Sunday, 12th June, on which day the clergy and ministers of the city referred to the Holy Spirit's work - the clergy by order of the liturgy, the non-conformist ministers by coincidence (for the church calendar was not generally observed among non-conformists) spoke of the revival work in County Antrim, emphasising the Holy Spirit's work. Derry, with a population of twenty thousand in 1851, had three Protestant Established Episcopal places of worship, including a Cathedral, six Presbyterian meeting houses, an Independent and two Methodist meeting houses. On the Saturday an open-air meeting was held in the Victoria Market, when three ministers - Wallace, Smyth and Donnelly - assisted by Captain Orr, R.A., addressed the meeting. On Saturday evening, after 7 p.m., the Rev. Richard Smyth, with his brother, the Rev. Jackson Smyth of First Armagh, and the Rev. Marshall Moore of Second Glendermott, together with six young converts who had accompanied the Rev. Jackson Smyth from County Antrim, proceeded to the Quay to hold an open-air service. This meeting had not previously been announced, and yet a vast crowd gathered to hear the young converts tell of their conversion and speak of the need for repentance. The Rev. Jackson Smyth described the work in County Antrim; many were affected by the earnest wrestlings in prayer of the converts, especially a young convert from Kilrea district.<sup>3</sup>

Whit Sunday saw the work of revival begin in real earnest, with converts from Ballymoney and Ballymena speaking. In the Methodist church at 10.30 a.m. the first service took place, when two young men and a young woman spoke. In the afternoon

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1. Londonderry Standard, 7th July, 1859.
  2. The Revival, 6th August, 1859.
  3. Londonderry Standard, 16th June, 1859.



at the Victoria market about four thousand attended, when the converts and the Revs. Smyth and Donnelly addressed the meeting. At this meeting, a characteristic of the revival in Derry was noted - the fewness of the manifestations.<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Richard Smyth, writing of the awakening, said "... We have had in this city comparatively few cases of bodily affection or prostration - not one in ten - perhaps not one in twenty."<sup>2</sup> The open-air meetings in the Victoria market were continued every evening when "from two to three thousand souls" attended, and on the Sabbath "no fewer than five thousand souls assembled."<sup>3</sup> The intensity of the work can be judged from a letter of the Independent or Congregational minister, the Rev. Robert Sewell, when he said "... I was engaged day and night, preaching, visiting, and conversing with the anxious in my chapel. The amount of anxiety among all classes was unparalleled, and my chapel became one of the greatest centres. In less than six weeks I conversed with about three hundred persons under deep conviction, most of whom have found peace in Christ. What, for want of sleep, over-exertion, and excitement, I am partly laid up ..."<sup>4</sup> Even the annual meeting of the "Mission to Seamen" advertised for the Corporation Hall on Monday, 13th June, at 8 p.m., was filled to overflowing, so that they all removed to First Derry Presbyterian Church. There, when the Rev. Dr. Denham was reading the annual report, a woman was stricken and prayed over by the minister of the church. Denham urged every unregenerate soul to seek salvation, while the Rev. Robert Wallace related that one hundred and fifty people were stricken at Limavady the day before. A convert from Kilrea and another from Rasharkin testified. The press notice of the meeting stated, "This is the most impressive meeting that has been yet held in Derry in connexion with the movement!"<sup>5</sup> Of the work in general, the Rev. Richard Smyth wrote,

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1. Londonderry Standard, 16th June, 1859.

2. Gibson, op. cit. p. 218.

3. The Revival, 6th August, 1859.

4. ibid. 13th August, 1859.

5. Londonderry Standard, 16th June, 1859.



"I find that at the last communion in the First Presbyterian Congregation in the city there were about one hundred communicants above the average, and when I remember that there were perhaps not much less than a hundred Sabbath-scholars savingly impressed who did not come to the Lord's table, I am free to give my opinion that in that congregation there were perhaps two hundred brought into the fold of Jesus ... But this is what has been done in all the congregations in the city in, I should say, like proportion, some more and some less. One peculiar feature of the work here was this - no one congregation took any lead as distinguished for revival spirit. The four Presbyterian, the Reformed, the Independent, and the Wesleyan, seemed all equally favoured of God, and there was no one place to which strangers were specially attracted."<sup>1</sup> Of the Episcopal clergy in Derry, the Londonderry Sentinel - a paper with strong leanings towards the Established Church - said of its own clergy "... Is it right for the ministers of any church to stand with folded hands, and look coldly upon a movement, which there is every reason to believe that the angels in heaven regard with delight? ..." <sup>2</sup> These words are found in a leading article in the paper, and they had some result, for on Sunday, 26th June, it was announced in the Cathedral that the church would be open for divine service on Wednesday and Friday evenings at 7.30 p.m. and that the chapel of ease would be open on the other evenings for the same purpose. <sup>3</sup> Visitors who spoke in Derry were Peter Drummond of Stirling, who specially commended the 'Maiden City' ; "Londonderry excelled all the places I have seen, ... there were at least one thousand at the daily prayer meetings ... men coming from business to be present ..." <sup>4</sup>; H. G. Guinness spoke in the open air at Victoria Market on repentance, when he was

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1. Gibson, op. cit. p. 221.

2. Londonderry Sentinel, 24th June, 1859.

3. ibid. 1st July, 1859.

4. Glasgow Herald, 1st July, quoted by Londonderry Standard, 7th July, 1859.



reported as being "... decidedly more practical and less poetical than when he was last among us ..." <sup>1</sup>; and in August Brownlow North addressed a very large crowd of about seven thousand in the market. <sup>2</sup>

The Newtownlimavady district seemed to have first heard of the Revival authoritatively when the Rev. Hugh M. Butler, of Magilligan Presbyterian Church, who had recently visited Randalstown, gave an account of the work in that district. Presbytery then engaged in special prayer for an outpouring in their congregations. <sup>3</sup> Individual Christians prayed for revival, once news of the Antrim Revival came to them, and deep contrition occurred. <sup>4</sup> A modern accurate account <sup>5</sup> of the Revival in the valley of the river Roe tells of the work in Ballykelly. There the story of revival in County Antrim retailed to the congregation of Ballykelly on Sabbath, 5th June, sparked off the movement. In this church for some two years the minister, the Rev. T. Y. Killen, had a Bible class of two hundred young people aged from thirteen to thirty years. By August some fifty-one people were admitted to communion, of whom thirty-nine had been stricken. In the town of Limavady the awakening began on the Wednesday, 8th June, after a sermon in the open air by the Rev. Samuel McClure, standing at the gates of Major Lancey's house beside the Fair Green, which is now the market. Next evening another meeting was held at the same place, and on Friday night a meeting in the Rev. George Steen's church saw many stricken, while a second meeting was held at Lancey's gate. Remarkable results were manifest and ministers sat up with the people all night to comfort their souls. Some three thousand attended a service at Drumachose graveyard for the meeting house was too small.

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1. Londonderry Standard, 21st July, 1859.

2. *ibid.* 11th August, 1859.

3. *ibid.* 28th April, 1859.

4. *ibid.* 15th June, 1859.

5. The Rev. T. J. Simpson, The 1859 Revival in the Roe Valley.



All the manifestations at this meeting - and there were several - were strong men, none of them were females.<sup>1</sup> It was immediately followed by a meeting in Steen's church, which lasted till morning, when another hundred people were affected. Next day was the fair day, and a large open-air meeting was held at the Fair Green when Major Lancey spoke, together with the Rev. Mr. Martin of Crossgar, County Derry. Some six converts from Ballymena, as well as the Presbyterian, Wesleyan, and Independent ministers, addressed the gathering. It was said that one hundred and fifty were stricken, many of them strong men.<sup>2</sup> Meetings continued day and night, often till 2 a.m., and hundreds were converted, amongst them the three young daughters of a prominent Romanist who was a government official; whilst in the workhouse when seven were 'struck', four were Roman Catholics. It was now stated<sup>3</sup> that physical manifestations had become fewer in Limavady by mid June, and that services were now quiet but thoughtful; business was almost completely suspended and families were thrown into disorder in their ways, while some were anxious at not being stricken. A week later business was still paralysed.<sup>4</sup> "Up till the end of August the excitement continued with little if any abatement. An aggregate meeting was held every evening at eight o'clock. The First and Second Presbyterian churches and Drumachose (the oldest Presbyterian church in the town) had the meeting in turn. All the places were well attended, and crowds waited upon devotional exercises and the ministry of the word every evening."<sup>5</sup> In Limavady Parish Church on Whit Sunday, 12th June, when the rector - the Rev. Mr. Stewart - was preaching on the "Day of Pentecost", four people fell and cried for mercy. When these were removed, more were stricken, and the Rev. T. Olpherts, who seemed to be much affected, was to be seen on his knees beside them affording spiritual help.<sup>6</sup> "Our town was

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1. Londonderry Standard, 15th June, 1859.

2. *ibid.*

3. *ibid.* 23rd June; Revival, August 20th, 1859.

4. *ibid.* 30th June, 1859.

5. Reid, *op. cit.* p. 338.

6. Londonderry Standard, 15th June, 1859.



visited by those two eminent evangelists, Brownlow North and H. Grattan Guinness. The former preached four times to us, the latter once."<sup>1</sup> At North's last open air in Limavady it was estimated that "more than 12,000 persons were present."<sup>2</sup>

In completing our circuit of the larger spheres of influence Coleraine at the mouth of the river Bann has to be considered. "Much prayer had been offered, and when the work came so nigh as Ballymena, faith and hope grew stronger. At length united prayer meetings were held, indoors and out of doors, of Churchman, Presbyterians, Methodists, Independents, Baptists - all classes who preach salvation by grace through faith - working together, as one heart and one soul. A mighty power of the Spirit was shed down."<sup>3</sup> The Rev. J. A. Canning, of Coleraine, wrote on 12th January, 1860, that on 7th June, 1859, "an open air was held in one of the market places of the town, called the 'Fair Hill' ... to hear one or two of the 'converts' ... from some eight or ten miles south of Coleraine ... Shortly after 7 p.m. dense masses of people began to pour into the square... After singing and prayer the converts ... both of humbler class proceeded to address the meeting."<sup>4</sup> Later four ministers spoke, and many were stricken in the market square, and very shortly afterwards in the homes of the people. Next day similar scenes transpired "in private houses in almost every street."<sup>5</sup> Early in June a union prayer meeting began at 9.30 a.m. each day in the Town Hall, when many tradesmen and labourers in shirt sleeves were attentive listeners to the preached word. Eight fallen women were restored, and the head constable, who was eighteen years in the town, never before had it to say that he was without any prosecutions till Friday, 17th June, while a public house that usually sold £30 worth of liquer on

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1. Reid, op. cit. p. 341.

2. Stuart, op. cit. p. 216.

3. William Arthur, The Revival in Ballymena & Coleraine, p. 9; also The Revival, 26th November, 1859.

4. Gibson, op. cit. p. 76.

5. *ibid.* p. 78.



a Saturday, sold nothing till 3p.m. in the day.<sup>1</sup> Among school children, we read of a school boy so convicted of sin that he could not do his lessons, and was sent to go home along with another converted lad. On the way they entered an empty house where at prayer the unhappy lad found peace. The boy returned to the school whereupon one after another of the lads went out to pray, and this in turn influenced the girls, so much so that "Clergymen of different denominations, and men of prayer were sought, and spent the day in pleading for the mourners ... Dinner was forgotten, tea was forgotten, and it was not till eleven o'clock that night that the school premises were freed from their unexpected guests."<sup>2</sup> At the Town Hall, where the union prayer meeting was carried on, a presentation Bible was given to mark the 7th June when many were saved.<sup>3</sup> At the end of the year Canning could state that "attendance at public worship is now doubled. The Communion took place a fortnight ago when a great many were added to the Church. The young communicants were four times the ordinary number on such occasions; ... One half of the public houses are about to be closed ..." <sup>4</sup> The great bulk of the people were "impressed with eternal things."<sup>5</sup> "Episcopalian, Presbyterian, and Wesleyan ministers were extremely active and faithful in the advancement of the work. The places of worship were crowded on every Lord's day and 'indeed few inducements, save the certainty of hearing the Gospel preached in its purity, were now needed to induce as many to leave their homes as to fill all the open churches with devout worshippers'."<sup>6</sup> Wednesday, 27th June, saw a multitude of seven thousand listen to the Rev. H. G. Guinness, "During the progress of the sermon several people were convicted and carried away."<sup>7</sup>

This town of six thousand people was so changed by the Revival that the Grand Jury were told at the Quarter Sessions by his Worship "... I am greatly struck by the appearance of

1. Londonderry Standard, 23rd June, 1859.

2. Arthur, op. cit. pp. 12, 13.

3. W. Gibson, op. cit. pp. 79-81.

4. Presbyterian Magazine, January 1860.

5. *ibid.*

6. Weir, op. cit. p. 73.

7. *ibid.*



this calendar, so small is the number of cases... How is such a gratifying state of things to be accounted for? I believe I am fully warranted now to say that to nothing else than the moral and religious movement which commenced early last summer can the change be attributed ..."<sup>1</sup> The Presbytery of Coleraine met on the 14th June, 1859, when the following resolution was unanimously adopted: "That this Presbytery desire to record their deep sense of gratitude to the great Head of the Church, for the solemn awakening which, we believe, the Spirit of God has produced, and is still producing, throughout the land; that we regard that awakening as given in answer to the prayers of God's people for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit; that we feel it to be our duty to seek earnestly the aids of Divine Grace, that wisdom may be given to us, and to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, to guide and direct the many convinced sinners, who have been led to confess Christ; and that the Presbytery do, therefore, now engage in special prayer for that measure of grace, which, we are made deeply to feel, is so necessary to help us in this 'time of need'."<sup>2</sup> A second special Presbytery meeting on the Religious Awakening was held on Tuesday, 9th August, when fourteen ministers and twelve elders of the Coleraine Presbytery met in New Row Presbyterian Church, Coleraine. "... It was ultimately moved and agreed to, that it be recommended to all the brethren to interest themselves in the religious movement and especially to have numerous local prayer meetings established in their respective congregations."<sup>3</sup>

The Hon. and Rev. Baptist Noel, who had addressed meetings in Ulster during 1859, when he spoke at an Evangelical Alliance meeting on the 'State of Religion in the Nations of Christendom' thought that 100,000 converts was probably an underestimate of the work in Ulster.<sup>4</sup> In this he echoed the thought of the Rev.

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1. The Presbyterian Magazine, March, 1860; Gibson, op. cit. p. 82.
  2. Coleraine Presbytery Minutes, 14th June, 1859.
  3. ibid. 9th August, 1859.
  4. R. C. Morgan, His Life and Times, Mighty days of Revival, by G. E. Morgan, p. 96.



Robert Wallace, Methodist minister at Derry and Belfast, who estimated "I judge that no less than one hundred thousand persons in Ulster were brought under gracious influence during that time."<sup>1</sup>

From this survey it would appear evident that the Revival Movement had its origin in the Sovereign grace of God the Holy Ghost, moving in the hearts of men and women met for prayer in little groups over the whole province, not merely in County Antrim alone, but in the counties of Derry, Down, and Armagh, as well as Belfast and other centres.

... be found in "let those who have been known as revivalists take care that they do not throw themselves into view, that they show their faith by quiet and humble reliance upon God."<sup>2</sup> An American wrote of the Revival in the United States that it was "from the start to finish a lay movement,"<sup>3</sup> while one who lived through the Revival in America said "this work ... has been conducted by laymen. It began with them. It continued with them. Clergymen share in the conduct, but no more than laymen, and as much as if they were laymen ... they assume no control ... are in no way distinguishable from others ... This lay conduct of the union of prayer has been eminently successful, and very conducive to its catholic spirit."<sup>4</sup> What was the position in Northern Ireland? Let us hear the voice of one who worked through the early part of the Revival from 1857 till the middle of 1859, and worked here on these shores on the 11th August, 1859; John Jones, late Vice-Superintendent of the Tract Distribution in New York, came from there to reside in Great Street, Belfast. He is known to the present day as the man who conducted the prayer meetings in Belfast with those in Ulster, and the laymen who conducted the

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1. Gibson, op. cit. p. 217.

1. Orr, op. cit. pp. 187, 188 (in italics).

2. William Arthur, Why We Hope for a Great Revival? pp. 14, 15.

3. W. K. Sweet, The Story of Salvation in America, p. 112.

4. Price, op. cit. p. 60.

## PERSONALITIES OF THE ULSTER REVIVAL

It has been said by a modern writer on the Revival in contrasting the situation in the British Isles with North America "the emergence of leaders in Great Britain was a distinct feature of the British Awakening of the 1860s. In Ulster the movement was more like that of the American Revival of 1858, a spontaneous, leaderless, turning to God."<sup>1</sup> Some support for this contention might be found in "let those who have been known as revivalists take care that they do not thrust themselves into view, that they show their faith by quiet and humble waiting upon God."<sup>2</sup> An American wrote of the Revival in the United States that it was "from the start to finish a lay movement,"<sup>3</sup> while one who lived through the Revival in America said "this work ... has been conducted by laymen. It began with them. It continues with them. Clergymen share in the conduct, but no more than laymen, and as much as if they were laymen ... they assume no control ... are in no way distinguishable from others ... This lay conduct of the union of prayer has been eminently successful, and very conducive to its catholic spirit."<sup>4</sup> What was the position in Northern Ireland? Let us hear the voice of one who worked through the early part of the American Revival from 1857 till the middle of 1859, and arrived back on these shores on the 13th August, 1859; John Cooke had been Superintendent of Tract Distribution in New York, and came from there to reside in Dover Street, Belfast. In a letter to the press he contrasted the prayer meetings in New York with those in Ulster, telling us that in New York it was the laity who conducted the prayer meetings, whereas in Belfast it was the clergy; in

1. Orr, *op. cit.* pp. 230, 231 (my italics).

2. William Arthur, May We Hope for a Great Revival? pp. 14, 15.

3. W. W. Sweet, The Story of Religion in America, p. 312.

4. Prime, *op. cit.* p. 60.



Fulton Street, New York, it was the rule that prayer and speaking were both limited to three minutes, and in other prayer meetings, five minutes. In contrast, Belfast allows twenty to twenty-five minutes to a speaker, and prayers lasted ten to twelve minutes - these he called 'theological discourses.' Furthermore, he instances the case of the meeting in Botanic Gardens, ostensibly for prayer, where there were only seven prayers in four hours and fifteen minutes; whereas in New York it was usual to have six prayers at least every hour, besides praise and witness bearing. Cooke mentions other Irish prayer meetings with only two prayers in one hour, and suggests that the plan pursued in New York is much better, for "if it is to be a prayer meeting, the greater part of the time should be spent in prayer." The writer continues "if the laity (in Ulster) had more opportunity it would have better effect than to have the whole of the time monopolised by the ministers."<sup>1</sup>

The newspaper editor's comment on Cooke's letter was that the Revival was safe in the clergy's hands, for the ministers knew better than the most experienced stranger.<sup>2</sup> However, the prayer meeting in the Music Hall, May Street, Belfast, took note of the stranger's suggestion, and within a week "one of the Committee" wrote that speakers, either clergy or laity when taking part were now confined by the tinkling of a bell to five minutes, and all prayers limited to the same time.<sup>3</sup>

It would appear then, that there was a difference between Ulster and America as regards the way in which the Revival advanced. If it were true that the American scene was more or less leaderless - i.e., without great preachers in the forefront - the scene in Ulster had leadership, largely ministerial, but to a certain extent the laymen played their part too.

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1. Belfast Newsletter, 27th August, 1859.

2. *ibid.*

3. *ibid.*

1st September, 1859.

4. *Princeton Revue* 1859, p. 113.

5. The Rev. Prof. J. M. Mackay's *Life of the Revival of 1859*.



One of the most important personalities was the Rev. Prof. William Gibson, (Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in 1859) who wrote a history of the Ulster Revival entitled "The Year of Grace". William Gibson was born in 1808, educated in Belfast and Edinburgh, and licensed in 1832. His first church was Ballybay, where a congregation was split in two and a son of the former minister ordained to part of the congregation and Gibson called to the remnant. So well did he succeed that in 1840 the congregation of Rosemary Street, Belfast, called him to be their minister. In 1847 Gibson received the Chair of Moral Philosophy under Assembly's College Committee. In 1858 he went to America with the Rev. William McClure,<sup>1</sup> visiting his son, James, a student at Princeton Theological Seminary. Gibson was so impressed that he called Princeton "the headquarters of Presbyterianism in the world."<sup>2</sup> Elected Moderator in 1859-60,<sup>3</sup> the year of revival, Gibson threw himself into that work with great zeal, presiding and addressing all sorts of meetings. A Boston publishing firm asked for his findings on the Revival, and published his book "The Year of Grace." A second edition was printed in Edinburgh in 1860. In places his work proved most unreliable "because it suffers from the defect that Gibson apparently believed every story he was told, and several times he had to withdraw his statements, because they were proved to be false."<sup>4</sup> Gibson's work appeared in three editions - two for Ulster and one for America. The two Ulster editions vary considerably because the extremism and falsity of the first edition was exposed by the Rev. Isaac Nelson and others. For example, in the first edition there were fifteen illustrations of prostrated conversions - eleven said to be 'exemplary' - and all were withdrawn in the second edition. Comparing the second edition with the first it would appear that about ten per cent. was omitted or altered, and in some places other material sub-

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1. See above p. 98.

2. Robert Allen, The Presbyterian College, Belfast, p. 101.

3. Princeton gave him her D.D.

4. The Rev. Prof. J. M. Barkley's MSS. on the Revival of 1859.



stituted. Dr. Gibson died suddenly in 1867 in the midst of the General Assembly meetings in Dublin. It was thought that a suitable memorial to his memory would be a suite of dormitories at Assembly's College. These were for the use of students, being named the 'Gibson Chambers' and opened on the 12th January, 1869.

Three months after Gibson came to Rosemary Street, the Rev. Thomas Toye, an ordained minister of the Independent Church, became a minister of the Presbyterian Church in 1841. Born in Clonakilty<sup>1</sup> in 1801, and brought up in the Episcopal Church, Toye considered the profession of the law, but in 1818 was converted and engaged in Christian work. Having to leave Clonakilty on medical grounds, he resided for a time in Mallow, becoming a member of Zion Independent Church. The Independents gave him liberty to preach, and in 1836 it was reported at the Congregational Union Meetings that Mr. Toye had been ordained for work around Clonakilty.<sup>2</sup> In 1841 he removed to Belfast, was received into the General Assembly, and soon got a loft in James Street where he built a good congregation. Next year Great George's Street Church<sup>3</sup> was built, whence the congregation removed, and three years later a gallery was added. In 1859 it was found necessary to enlarge the church and build a schoolroom. Toye, remarkable for zeal and earnestness, was even thought eccentric, but his work lasted. Ever a persistent soul winner, he wrote most original tracts, his church was a constant place of prayer, and the Revival in Belfast might be said to have begun in his church. Blessed with a very capacious memory, stored with rich thought from Puritan writers, and a most pleasing voice, together with a most fastidious taste in expression, he mingled humour and pathos in all he said. Deeply interested in the work of his own church, he took little part in church courts, and meddled even less in political affairs.

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1. Evangelical Witness, June 1870.

2. Cairns, *op. cit.* p. 288.

3. Mrs. T. Toye, Brief Memorials of the late Rev. Thomas Toye, p. 23.



The brothers Moore were the sons of the Rev. David Moore, minister of the Secession Congregation in Markethill, County Armagh. Samuel James<sup>1</sup> was born in 1810, educated at the Belfast Academical Institution, and became minister of Ballycopeland Secession Church, County Down, in 1838. In 1845 he was installed in Donaghmore, also in County Down, and in 1850 was installed in Third Ballymena Presbyterian Church. Nine years later the Awakening occurred, and attendances in Wellington Street so increased that a new church was a necessity. Built at a cost of £5,000, it was opened on January 1st, 1863, as West Church, Ballymena, and contains a memorial window commemorating the Revival. Moore laboured most assiduously in the Revival, as can be seen above.<sup>2</sup>

His brother, the Rev. John Hamilton Moore, born in 1813, entered Trinity College, Dublin, taking his Arts degree, and proceeded in 1834 to the old Presbyterian College in Belfast. Much influenced by student life, he supported the Union of the Synods, and though brought up a member of the Secession Church, he was ordained in Connor on Monday, 6th July, 1840, as the last minister so ordained by the Synod of Ulster. So great a crowd gathered for his ordination that it was feared that the gallery would be forced out of Connor church. Indeed, the gallery gave forth such signs as made the people evacuate the church and go into the churchyard where the ordination proceeded.<sup>3</sup> Whether the fears for the gallery were as real as imagined is a matter of question, when one remembers the vast congregations that thronged the church in Revival days, and it was not till half a century later in the ministry of the Rev. Dr. Colvin (1884-1914) that the church was rebuilt.<sup>4</sup> Nothing remarkable seems to have occurred in Connor until 1855, when Moore said to a young man "Could you not gather at least six of your care-

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1. T. Kilpatrick, Millisle and Ballycopeland Presbyterian Church,

2. See above pp. 129-134, and 145-154.

p. 150.

3. Belfast Newsletter, 7th August, 1888.

4. Irish Presbyterian, February, 1935.



less neighbours, either parents or children to your own home, or some other convenient place on the Sabbath, and spend an hour with them, reading and searching the Word of God?"<sup>1</sup> A Sabbath School was commenced and in the next two years a prayer meeting began and prospered greatly. In the summer of 1859, "the great concerns of eternity were realised as they had never been before. People, when they met, talked a new language. Many people walked about in anxiety about the one thing needful, while others witnessed to the experience of a present peace and a complete salvation."<sup>2</sup> At the General Assembly in July, 1858, it is claimed<sup>3</sup> that Mr. Moore was publicly requested by Dr. Johnston, Moderator, to tell something of the Connor Awakening, and next year, a ruling elder, Mr. George Slater, proposed Moore for the Moderator's chair. The Rev. Dr. Cooke opposed on principle, and Prof. Gibson was appointed.<sup>4</sup> In 1859, Belfast's population was almost 120,000. Four or five new congregations were being considered necessary owing to increased population and interest in spiritual things due to the Revival. One of these was Elmwood, opposite Queen's College, now Queen's University. Here Moore was installed minister in 1862,<sup>5</sup> when the church was built at a cost of £5,000.<sup>6</sup> "As a preacher he was evangelical, thoroughly Calvinistic, earnest, pointed and practical. In prayer he was abrupt, powerful, and impressive. No one could be in his presence when at the Throne of Grace, without feeling his earnestness and sincerity ..."<sup>7</sup>

A meteoric character, the Rev. David Adams, born in 1818, near Killymurriss, County Antrim, and educated at the Belfast Academical Institution, was "called by the Lord when a boy, in quite as remarkable a manner as any of the recent converts."<sup>8</sup>

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1. Irish Presbyterian, March, 1935.

2. ibid. February, March, 1935.

3. ibid.

4. Londonderry Standard, 17th July, 1859.

5. General Assembly Minutes, 1862, p. 124.

6. James Dewar, History of Elmwood Church, p. 22.

7. Belfast Newsletter, 7th August, 1888.

8. Adams, op. cit. p. 4.



In June, 1841, he was ordained minister of First Ahoghill Presbyterian Church<sup>1</sup>, as assistant and successor to the Rev. George McClelland, an eccentric and erratic man, who in a fit burned all the papers of the church and the house in which he lived. Ahoghill boasted three Presbyterian churches, but no school, and Adams' first task was to satisfy this need. Neither was there a Sabbath school, and this also he rectified. The eccentric McClelland had split the congregation into fragments, but Adams bound together the torn threads. A fervent preacher, desperately in earnest, within half a generation First Ahoghill numbered five hundred and fifty families, and the church building grew too small. With courage it was taken down, and a beautiful new church was built in 1858 to seat twelve hundred people at a cost of £1,600.<sup>2</sup> It was one of the largest churches in the district, and opened free of debt. Diligent in his pastoral work, zealous in his preaching with one consuming passion - revival - Adams strove to establish no less than twelve district prayer meetings, regularly visiting them in succession, but alas, success was denied in all but one. This began in the winter of 1845, in the session house, but soon the attendance increased so much that the church building had to be used, and a regular evening service was begun. Eventually by 1855 many prayer meetings were commencing and were well attended. It was as a result of a meeting on 14th March, 1859, in First Ahoghill, that the Revival can be said to have burst forth into a flame, and Adams laboured around the district, in kitchens, barns, schoolhouses, churches, fields, wayside and hedgerow. Before the end of the Revival, First Ahoghill numbered some seven hundred families, and "not much less than 700 of our people have been graciously awakened."<sup>3</sup>

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1. W. D. Killen, History of Congregations, p. 13.

2. Adams, op. cit. p. 6.

3. ibid. p. 9.



The Rev. Frederick Buick, of Second Ahoghill, was the son of two Scottish settlers who lived at Ardraccon, Navan, County Meath. He was born in 1811, and attended Belfast Academical Institution in 1829, acquitting himself so well that, at the close of the year 1833-34, the Secession Synod, hearing of his good report, remitted his last year.<sup>1</sup> In 1835 the Secession Synod placed Buick at the disposal of the Presbytery of Ahoghill, who in turn put him in charge of Second Ahoghill, where he was ordained. Five years later this Secession church was rebuilt at a cost of £500. Sometime about 1852 a gallery was erected, and in 1859 there was a fourfold increase in the communicants, due to the Revival. Buick gave every encouragement to the Connor laymen, allowing them the use of his church for meetings. He wrote accounts of the work in Ahoghill, and these were published in the Presbyterian Herald<sup>2</sup> and in "Authentic Records"<sup>3</sup>.

One of the most outstanding men in the preparation for the Revival was the Rev. John Johnston, M.A., D.D., minister of Tullylish Presbyterian Church, County Down. Born in 1786, the seventh son of William J. Johnston, farmer, of Clogher, County Tyrone,<sup>4</sup> he was educated at Glasgow, a companion of Henry Cooke, and licensed by the Clogher Presbytery in 1806. In 1808 he was ordained at Cootehill, and installed by the Presbytery of Dromore at Tullylish in 1811. Johnston, much influenced by the Methodists around Clogher in his very early days, continued all his life to be a fervent evangelist, and when the General Assembly called for open-air preaching in 1845<sup>5</sup> he assisted this work in such a way as to become its leader. In 1851 ten ministers assisted him, speaking to 13,000 people. In 1858 he became Moderator, and Westminster University (U.S.A.) graduated him Doctor of Divinity.<sup>6</sup> His open-air labours contributed abundantly to the Revival's progress, and it was said of him by the General Assembly<sup>7</sup> that they felt "... called on to bear testimony to his

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1. G. Buick, The Book of Ahoghill, p. 56.

2. Presbyterian Herald, March, 1860.

3. Reid, op. cit. pp. 161-173.

4. H. B. Murphy, Three Hundred Years of Presbyterianism in Clogher,

5. General Assembly Minutes, Vol. I, p. 405. p. 145.

6. Banbridge Presbytery Minutes, 23rd August, 1859.

7. General Assembly Minutes, Vol. 3, pp. 234, 235.



abundant and long continued labours in the cause of Sabbath schools, to his zeal on behalf of the Hibernian and British and Foreign Bible Societies, and especially to his ardent and successful efforts to promote the preaching of the Gospel in the open air."

One of the most influential preachers in the city of Belfast was the Rev. James Morgan, 'the model pastor.' A native of Cookstown, born in 1799, he was much influenced by his mother and his minister, the Rev. Thomas Millar. For a year he went to Glasgow College and then to Belfast Academical Institution. In 1820 he was ordained minister of Carlow Presbyterian Church, where he had profitable fellowship with the clergy of the Church of Ireland.<sup>1</sup> In 1824 he removed to First Lisburn Presbyterian Church,<sup>2</sup> and in 1828 became first minister of the new congregation of Fisherwick, Belfast. Soon Fisherwick was filled with attentive worshippers, and in the Arian struggle he edited The Orthodox Presbyterian<sup>3</sup>. On the formation of the General Assembly he became secretary of Foreign Missions, and played a leading part in the establishment of Assembly's College, and in 1846 he was unanimously elected Moderator<sup>4</sup> of the Presbyterian Church at the early age of forty-seven. Meanwhile his old College of Glasgow did not forget the one-time student, for he soon became Dr. Morgan.<sup>5</sup> Blessed with tact, zeal and business acumen, the 1846 Assembly under his leadership was the shortest on record at that time. Much used in the Great Awakening, and a close associate with Charles Seaver in the organising of the Music Hall prayer meetings, he published "Thoughts on the Revival of 1859."

The great critic of the Revival was the Rev. Isaac Nelson, born in Belfast in 1812,<sup>6</sup> the son of Francis Nelson, a grocer

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1. See above P. 7. T. Morgan, Life and Times of Dr. Morgan, pp. 158-163.

2. W. D. Killen, op. cit. p. 264.

3. *ibid.* p. 265.

4. General Assembly Minutes, 1846, Vol. I, p. 471.

5. T. Morgan, op. cit. p. 267.

6. The Witness, 9th March, 1888.



of Barrack Street.<sup>1</sup> A classical scholar, he acted for nine years as assistant master in the Belfast Academical Institution.<sup>2</sup> He was ordained minister of Comber in 1838.<sup>3</sup> However, four members of the congregation appealed to the Synod on the question of the vote for Mr. Nelson, and the result was a new congregation, now called Second Comber. In 1842 Nelson moved to Donegall Street, Belfast,<sup>4</sup> where he served thirty-eight years. He was a man of keen, strong intellect, and extensive scholastic attainment, thoroughly equipped for the work of the ministry.<sup>5</sup> About twenty years before his death a writer in The English Independent sketched him as "Mr. Nelson appears to covet the honours of a polemical and ecclesiastical Ishmaelite, he is a strong man ... in scholarship, thought ... and hate ... imperious ... dogmatic, oracular, but thoughtful, profound and original ..."<sup>6</sup> Apparently the reason for Nelson's bitterness of outlook was that he had been passed by for the Chair of Greek<sup>7</sup> in connection with the General Assembly, and thought himself harshly treated. Cooke said of him "I could fight Mr. Nelson when necessary, and I could walk ten miles to hear him pray."<sup>8</sup> Always a fearless critic, Nelson wrote a sketch of the Revival in 1860, called "The Year of Delusion", passing severe strictures on the extravagances. But it must not be assumed that he was against the revival of religion as such, for while the Donegall Street Independent Church was being rebuilt and the Sunday services were held in the Corn Exchange, Nelson allowed the Rev. John Bagley to conduct revival meetings in Donegall Street Presbyterian Church.<sup>9</sup>

Much of the work at Broughshane was guided by the Rev. Archibald Robinson, who was born at Garvagh in 1826, and ordained

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1. Belfast Telegraph, 11 February, 1932.

2. Northern Whig, 9th March, 1888.

3. J. K. L. McKean, History of First Comber Presbyterian Church, p. 11. Killen, op. cit. p. 98.

4. General Assembly Minutes, 1842, p. 124.

5. McConnell, op. cit. p. 67.

6. The Witness, 9th March, 1888.

7. Belfast Newsletter, 9th March, 1888; Northern Whig, 9th March, 1888.

8. Northern Whig, 9th March, 1888.

9. Belfast Newsletter, 7th June, 1859.

in Broughshane in 1853, where he laboured thirty-three years. Keenly interested in education, he built a number of national schools, and was the manager of no less than seven in the district. He provided Prof. Gibson with a manuscript of the character of the revival work in his district.<sup>1</sup> Vast open-air meetings were a feature, many were stricken in his own church, and his Sabbath school was possibly the largest in the General Assembly at the time, with some 1,400 children attending every Sabbath morning.<sup>2</sup> For his work in the Revival he received a gold watch and chain and a purse of sovereigns from his people in 1861.<sup>3</sup>

At the time of the Revival the minister of Berry Street Presbyterian Church, Belfast, was the Rev. Dr. Hugh Hanna, who was born in Belfast in 1826, was for a time a school master, and was ordained in the newly founded congregation in 1852. Under his ministry the congregation prospered exceedingly in "what some might regard as one of the hopeless parts of our town, Smithfield,"<sup>4</sup> so much so that six years later in 1858, the church had to be rebuilt, and in 1865 no less than seven hundred and fifty families were connected with it. "The Sabbath school, which crowded the church, was composed largely of adults, and was a most impressive sight."<sup>5</sup> Leader of the battle for open-air preaching in Belfast in 1857, Hanna was much used in the Revival, his church being one of the main centres of the movement in Belfast.

The Rev. Dr. John Edgar was the man responsible for the dark picture of religion before the Revival. Born near Saintfield in 1798, he became minister of Alfred Place Secession Church<sup>6</sup>, in the neighbourhood of Donegall Street, Belfast, in 1820, being ordained in Donegall Street Independent Church,

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1. Gibson, op. cit. pp. 55-63.

2. *ibid.* p. 59.

3. Belfast Newsletter, 26th February, 1902.

4. E. Dornan, Y.M.C.A. Centenary, p. 19.

5. McConnell, op. cit. p. 95.

6. Stewart, The Seceders in Ireland, pp. 285-287.



granted for the occasion. Edgar espoused the cause of temperance in 1829, to which he was introduced by his fellow Irishman, the Rev. Dr. Joseph Penney, President of Hamilton College, Clinton, Utica, New York State, which later in 1836 conferred on Edgar the honorary degree of D.D.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Edgar rendered noble service to Ireland during the Famine of 1847, and was a great supporter of the Connaught Mission. He also secured the site for Assembly's College, Belfast, and encouraged its erection.

In Armagh, the Rev. John Richard McAlister was one of the main leaders of the Revival. Born at Garvagh in 1816, and originally a member of the Episcopal Church, he was induced to be a Presbyterian by the Rev. James Brown, minister of First Garvagh, and later entered the Presbyterian ministry. He was ordained in Ballygrainey, County Down, in February 1838, but three months later resigned, and in June was installed minister of the Third Presbyterian Church, Armagh.<sup>2</sup> Here he settled into his life's work at the age of twenty-two, building a splendid new church seating six hundred people, a fine suite of halls and a commodious manse. Ever an earnest, energetic man, whose congregation flourished as the result of his labours he introduced a Presbytery Sabbath School Examination system, which still exists, was convener of the Assistant Ministers' Fund, and Honorary Secretary of the Sustentation Scheme. Nominated for the Moderatorship of the General Assembly no less than six times,<sup>3</sup> he was always unsuccessful. His church was the focal point of a prayer meeting begun in 1853, and in the days of revival he was much used in personal work. With others he was associated in the organising of the monster all-Ireland prayer meeting held on Wednesday, 21st September, 1859, when twenty thousand people assembled in Armagh. McAlister supplied

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1. Killen, op. cit. p. 90.

2. Synod of Ulster Minutes, 1838, p. 26.

3. General Assembly Minutes, Vols. III and IV.

(In the years 1864, 1865, 1866, 1868, 1869, 1871)

a chapter on the work in Armagh for "Authentic Records of Revival", edited by the Rev. William Reid.

The Rev. Richard Smyth was born near Dervock in 1826, educated at Glasgow University, ordained in 1855 at Westport,<sup>1</sup> County Mayo, and installed in 1857 minister of First Derry Presbyterian Church. Later, at the age of thirty-nine he was appointed Professor of Biblical Criticism<sup>2</sup> at the newly-established Magee College, Derry, in 1865, and when the question of Disestablishment arose in 1869-70, Dr. Smyth was Moderator of the General Assembly both years. In 1874 he became a Member of Parliament, being notable for the passing of the "Sunday Closing Bill."<sup>3</sup> In 1859 Smyth guided with a tight reign the work of revival in the city of Derry, and he testified "converts were of all ages, ranks, and conditions - from the child of eight years to the hoary-headed man - from the most moral and exemplary in outward life, to the most worthless and abandoned in the community."<sup>4</sup>

Possibly most of the spadework for the Revival was done by Henry Cooke, born in 1788 near Maghera. Educated at Glasgow, but prevented by illness from taking his degree, he was ordained in Duneane in 1808.<sup>5</sup> In 1811 he was installed in Donegore, and in 1818 moved to Killyleagh, County Down.<sup>6</sup> Here he met Sydney Hamilton Rowan, who as an army captain had been brought under deep religious impressions in England. Rowan influenced Cooke so that the latter became the champion of orthodoxy, and in 1821 he began his struggle in the Synod of Ulster with Arianism.<sup>7</sup> This work was watched by thousands in the United States of America, and a tribute of esteem that Cooke prized more than all things was his D.D. from Jefferson College, in 1829. Eight years later Trinity College, Dublin, conferred the degree of

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1. General Assembly Minutes, Vol. II, 1856, p. 439.

2. ibid. Vol. III, 1870, p. 1416.

3. ibid. 1876, p. 47.

4. Reid, op. cit. p. 362.

5. Synod of Ulster Minutes, 1809, p. 336.

6. ibid. 1819, p. 496.

7. See above pp. 37-39.



LL.D.<sup>1</sup> for his work against heterodoxy in Presbyterianism, and his defence of the Establishment. Cooke took an active interest in the Revival in Belfast, and presided over many meetings, seeking to dissuade curiosity mongers who came only to see prostrations.

A visitor who addressed the largest audience in Ulster in company with Dr. Cooke at a field meeting of thirty thousand people near Carlisle Circus, Belfast, was the Rev. Henry Grattan Guinness, born at Kingstown in 1835.<sup>2</sup> Educated at Cheltenham and Exeter, a world-wide wanderer before he was of age, he returned home, sick in body and troubled in soul, and soon the Bible became a living Book to him. Attending New College, London, he quietly began preaching, and quickly became famous as a speaker. At the time of the Revival he addressed gatherings in Ballymena, Coleraine and Derry, as well as Belfast, where he spoke in May Street and Berry Street Presbyterian Churches.

Half-way between minister and layman came Brownlow North, the evangelist, born in 1810, and relation of Lord North, George III's Prime Minister. Though grandson of the Bishop of Winchester, and himself Registrar of the Winchester Diocese, with an income of £300 a year, he had no interest in spiritual things. Awakened from his ways to some extent by the illness of his second son, he determined to enter the English Episcopal Church, and graduated from Oxford in 1842, but an anonymous letter frustrated ordination, and he wandered back to the ways of pleasure and sin. Meanwhile his Christian mother prayed for him, as did many other friends, but the change did not come till 1854. By 1859 the Free Church of Scotland, at its General Assembly in Edinburgh, formally recognised him as one of their evangelists.<sup>3</sup> The Rev. John Johnston, Moderator of the Irish Church, was present, and asked North to visit their Assembly

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1. Provost's letter, 9th February, 1837, quoted

Porter, op. cit. p. 276.

2. The Christian, 30th June, 1910.

3. K. Moody Stuart, op. cit. p. 115.

in Dublin.<sup>1</sup> During the Revival North preached for about two months in the North of Ireland, in, amongst other places, Rosemary Street and May Street Presbyterian Churches, Belfast, addressed the General Assembly in Dublin, visited Ballymena and spoke to eleven thousand people in the demesne.<sup>2</sup> In Portrush twice he spoke in the Presbyterian Church, and addressed two open-air meetings - at one some seven thousand people were present.<sup>3</sup> At Limavady he gave four addresses, and it has been calculated that at one open-air meeting some twelve thousand people were present.<sup>4</sup> In Derry he preached in various churches, and addressed open-air meetings.

The Bishop of Down, Connor and Dromore, for thirty-seven years - 1849-1886 - was Dr. Robert Knox,<sup>5</sup> born in 1808 and educated at Trinity College, Dublin. Ordained in 1832, he became Chancellor of Ardfert - 1834-1841 - and Chancellor of Limerick and Prebendary of St. Munchin's - 1841-1849. At the age of forty-two he became Bishop and was consecrated in St. Patrick's, Armagh. On the 1st June, 1886, he became Archbishop of Armagh, dying in his 86th year in 1893. In politics he was a Liberal, and a strong anti-Home Ruler; in theology he was evangelical in outlook. His kindly word, generous heart and liberal hand made him a general favourite with all classes, and in the Revival we find him by far the most co-operative of the Bishops, taking his place in the Music Hall prayer meetings, preaching often in Belfast, Ballymena and other places. Of the numerous Confirmation services which he held he said "It has been my habit to hold one annual Confirmation in Belfast; but on this occasion, from the number pressing forward, I must hold five,"<sup>6</sup> and in a letter to Prof. Gibson he said "... The numbers confirmed annually by me in the parish of Belfast have averaged

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1. Stuart, op. cit. p. 211.

2. Ballymena Observer, 30th July, 1859.

3. Simpson, in Reid, op. cit. p. 84.

4. Stuart, op. cit. p. 214.

5. Belfast Newsletter, 24th October, 1893.

6. N. D. Emerson, The 1859 Revival, p. 6.



about two hundred and fifty, but last year they reached seven hundred and five, and never since I have administered that rite of my Church have I witnessed such solemnity of manner and deep feeling as was exhibited by all whom I then confirmed."<sup>1</sup>

In the town of Ballymena the Rev. Daniel Mooney was perpetual-curate and was very much used along with Messrs. Moore and Dill in 1859. He was the son of the Rev. Daniel Mooney, and born in Dublin in 1808, he entered Trinity College, where he graduated in 1829. For some years he was curate at St. Mary's, Dublin, and then moved to St. Patrick's, Ballymena, where a new church had been built in 1855. In January, 1860, he was instituted rector of Clondevaddock<sup>2</sup>, Co. Donegal. In April, 1860, he received a silver coffee service from his appreciative parishioners in Ballymena, and an address in which it was stated "... in your private intercourse amongst us you were ever kind, and considerate, gentle and unaffected ... In the pulpit we found in you a faithful preacher of the gospel who did not shun to declare us the whole counsel of God ... one whose teaching, while seasoned with truth was tempered with meekness, forbearance and love... (We cannot) pass over in silence the active part you took in the Revival ... in the conversion of sinners ... co-operating with the ministers of other evangelical churches."<sup>3</sup> That this was no over-statement is seen from the vast amount of work that Mooney accomplished. Besides the numerous services in the Established Church he assisted at many open-air meetings, took part in the six-thousand-strong July Orange celebrations at Ballymena, and in the Parochial School organised many week-night meetings.

In Belfast the Rev. Charles Seaver "by common consent ... was the life and soul of this (Revival) movement in the North" from the Anglican point of view.<sup>4</sup> Born near Newry, in 1820,

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1. Gibson, op. cit. p. 169.

2. J. B. Leslie, Raphoe Clergy and Diocese, p. 52.

1860.

3. Belfast Newsletter, 2nd March, 1860. Irish Ecc. Gaz. April 15,

4. George Seaver, History of the Seaver Family, 1950 (for private circulation).

and entering Trinity College, he was ordained in 1843 in Armagh Cathedral by the Primate, Lord John G. Beresford, for the curacy of St. Mary's, Newry. Two months later he became curate at Mullabrack (Markethill). Seaver's efforts during the potato famine were prodigious, and made his a household name in the countryside. After being Assistant Archdeacon in Dublin he visited Belfast in 1853 as a deputy on behalf of the Protestant Orphan Society, and accepted the rectorship of St. John's, Laganbank, Belfast. His theology was evangelical and Low Church, in politics he was Conservative. A leader in open-air work during the preparation for revival he often preached around Cromac Street, Belfast, and when the Bishop wished open-air meetings suspended in August, 1857, we find that the clerk of the special meeting of the Board of the Belfast Parochial Mission was Charles Seaver. During the Revival itself Seaver was most intense in his efforts, and "it may here be stated, that, of the Episcopal ministers of the North of Ireland, the Rev. Charles Seaver of St. John's, Belfast, was among the most earnest and successful in connexion with the revival movement. At an early period he came forward, in his own pulpit, with a vindication of its genuineness; and subsequently, at the meeting of the Evangelical Alliance, his admirable statement produced a deep impression."<sup>1</sup> In the matter of prostrations he warned the people against curiosity mongers,<sup>2</sup> and also suggested<sup>3</sup> four ways for the laity to help the clergy: by prayer, visitation, Bible and tract distribution, and that converts should buy such and place them in men's hands. With Dr. Morgan he was joint secretary of the Music Hall prayer meeting, and he addressed the Evangelical Alliance on the 22nd September, 1859, in Belfast, on "The Ulster Revival". "His visit to London, at the request of the committee of the Evangelical Alliance, did much to commend the movement in the metropolis..."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Gibson, op. cit. p. 381.

2. Belfast Newsletter, 18th June, 1859.

3. ibid. 22nd June, 1859.

4. Gibson, op. cit. p. 381.



Seaver's fellow-labourer in Belfast, in the Established Church, was the Rev. Theophilus Campbell, who was curate of Munterconnaught, in County Cavan in 1838, but next year became incumbent of Tunstall in Staffordshire. In 1843 he became the first incumbent of Holy Trinity, Belfast, where for twenty-two years he was an industrious worker. In the 1859 Revival Campbell bore testimony to it as a work of God.<sup>1</sup> He had, he said, "discouraged the physical manifestations, and unlike many other places not a single physical prostration had occurred in his church."<sup>2</sup> At Confirmation Services that year he was able to present one hundred and twenty candidates, against an average of twenty. After the Revival had passed its zenith, Campbell saw the fruit of its work in the establishment in an office in Belfast of the Belfast Church Extension and Endowment Society. It came to birth in the office of Messrs. Ewart, in Donegall Place, on the 26th November, 1862, an outcome of the layman's movement. Some £50,000 was raised for building and endowing churches.

Among the Congregationalist leaders was the Rev. Robert Sewell, minister in Derry in Revival days. He was born in Ballyconnell<sup>3</sup> in 1825, converted at sixteen years of age<sup>4</sup> under the first sermon of the Rev. John White, and was received as a Primitive Wesleyan minister in 1845.<sup>5</sup> Eight years later he resigned<sup>6</sup> from the Primitives to do work for the Congregationalists, at first at Youghal and later at Londonderry, where he began in 1855 in the old Independent Chapel, Bridge Street.<sup>7</sup> Soon he increased the congregation, secured a good site in Great James Street, raised the necessary money, some £2,000, and built the new church, with the school house and manse. This church seated more than six hundred and fifty people, and

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1. Seaver, op. cit. p. 7 (footnote).

2. S. H. Reid, The Story of Holy Trinity Church, Belfast, p. 12.

3. Crookshank, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 359.

4. J. E. Archibald, The Story of Donegall Street Church, p. 79.

5. Crookshank, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 359.

6. *ibid.* p. 442.

7. Cairns, op. cit. p. 404.

when the Revival broke out on 12th June, 1859, Sewell saw at least three hundred converted.<sup>1</sup> Laid aside in sickness<sup>2</sup> he had to rest in Portrush, but he wrote that not only were there dinner-hour prayer meetings by workmen and the Corn Market meeting at 7 p.m. with an attendance of five hundred to five thousand, but several Protestant churches had prayer meetings till 10 p.m.<sup>3</sup> Sewell stated: "I was engaged day and night, preaching, visiting, and conversing with the anxious ... the amount of anxiety among all classes was unparalleled, and my chapel became one of the greatest centres. In less than six weeks I conversed with about three hundred persons under deep conviction, most of whom found peace in Christ ..."<sup>4</sup> In 1861 Sewell launched a scheme for the publishing of the Irish Congregational Magazine, beginning in January, 1862, and for some years was its editor.

In Belfast, the Independent or Congregational Church in Donegall Street, begun in 1801, had a fluctuating career. About 1857, the meteoric and Elijah-like Rev. John Bagley became minister of what was then known as 'The Tabernacle.'<sup>5</sup> Bagley had formerly laboured in England and latterly at Galway. Within a year he so enthused a weak congregation that they made plans to build a new church, which was begun in 1859 and completed in 1860. Thus the congregation were out of their own building in the eventful days of revival. They worshipped in the Corn Exchange<sup>6</sup> on Sundays, and on some occasions during the week met in the Rev. Isaac Nelson's church. Bagley was very happy with his people in the first few years and received tangeable tokens of esteem. During the Revival, he saw much fruit for his labour, but unhappily, a pastorate which began so well came to an untimely end through the tactless zeal of two of the congregation's missionaries.<sup>7</sup> Bagley resigned in August, 1861, and eventually emigrated.

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1. Weir, op. cit. p. 131. See below p. 243.

2. Letter of 20 th August, 1859, to Massie, op. cit. p. 40.

3. Weir, op. cit. p. 130.

4. Banner of Ulster, 3rd August, 1859.

5. Cairns, op. cit. p. 465.

6. Archibald, op. cit. p. 39.

7. *ibid.* p. 42.



1834 Straid is a village half-way between Carrickfergus and Ballyclare, where a Congregational Church was formed in 1816 by the minister of Carrickfergus Congregational Church, the Rev. George Hamilton. The Rev. James Bain, first regular minister of Straid Congregational Church was born in Dundee in 1811, and began to preach in Straid in 1837.<sup>1</sup> Beginning with a church fellowship numbering only eighteen, poor and dispirited, and a most uncomfortable church, Bain in ten years so increased the congregation that in the Famine days it withstood the loss of no less than three hundred and fifty souls by death and emigration.<sup>2</sup> Not dismayed, Bain again built up the congregation, till in 1859 there were ninety-three members, a congregation of three hundred, a Sabbath school of two hundred and seventy, and no less than fourteen cottage meetings in the neighbourhood. As if this were not enough, the year 1858, saw a new church building erected and opened, which had to have a gallery added in 1859, a schoolroom and vestry built in 1861. During the Revival many were converted in the meetings, which were the daily routine in every part of the congregation. Religious fervour became intense, and on the Sabbaths many literally remained the whole of the day in the chapel. Sixty-nine were added to the fellowship of the church, and Bain claimed to have conversed with four hundred who found peace. Many public houses were shut, a cock-pit became a preaching station, and great good was done.<sup>3</sup>

In Coleraine, the Congregational Church had as its pastor in the days of revival, the Rev. John Kidd (or Kydd). Born and brought up in the district of Moy, Kidd was a student under the Armagh Presbytery<sup>4</sup>, attended the Belfast College, and was licensed as a probationer of the Presbyterian Church.<sup>5</sup> In

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1. Straid Church Registrar, 1837.

2. Cairns, op. cit. p. 546.

3. Reid, op. cit. p. 144.

4. General Assembly Minutes, 1846, p. 471.

5. ibid. 1849, p. 751.

1854 he became a licentiate of the Presbytery of Derry,<sup>1</sup> but later withdrew on becoming a minister of the Congregational Church in Coleraine in 1855.<sup>2</sup> For fourteen years he laboured diligently, and a new church edifice was opened for worship in 1862,<sup>3</sup> to some extent the product of the Revival.

Another stalwart of the days of Revival in Derry was the Rev. Robert Wallace, born in Newtownards in 1812, of Presbyterian stock,<sup>4</sup> and at the age of sixteen brought into Methodism by the preaching of the Rev. James Patterson and the Rev. Thomas Hull. In 1836 he was received on trial by the Wesleyan Conference in Dublin.<sup>5</sup> In view of the prominence of open-air preaching in Ulster in the preparation for the Revival, it is interesting to notice that Wallace, stationed at Kingstown Methodist Church, conducted open-air services as Methodists were wont to do. About the time of the battle in Belfast in 1857, Wallace, in Kingstown, was interfered with in open-air meetings. Instituting legal proceedings, Lord Chief Justice Monahan asserted the right to conduct open-air services provided there was no obstruction to the thoroughfare.<sup>6</sup> In 1858 Wallace moved to Londonderry, and had much to do with the coming of Revival to the city. He assisted in the numerous open-air meetings, and had three converts from Ballymoney speak in the Wesleyan Chapel on Whit Sunday.<sup>7</sup> Later he moved to Belfast and provided Prof. Gibson with much information for "The Year of Grace."

The Rev. William Crook was born at Newtownbarry about 1824 and received by Conference of 1846, after training at Didsbury College, Manchester.<sup>8</sup> He was stationed in Ballymoney at the time of the Revival, and made a journey specially

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1. Derry Presbytery Minutes, 7th February, 1854.

2. Cairns, op. cit. p. 518.

3. *ibid.*

4. Crookshank, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 119.

5. *ibid.* p. 235.

6. *ibid.* p. 463.

7. Londonderry Sentinel, June 17, 1859.

8. Christian Advocate, 22nd October, 1897.



to Ahoghill, bringing back with him some young converts, commencing "a series of public services which were characterised by remarkable displays of Divine power."<sup>1</sup> Crook felt the need of a paper devoted fully to the cause of evangelical religion, and commenced a monthly journal called "The Irish Evangelist."<sup>2</sup> During the Revival it attained a large circulation, and for nearly a quarter of a century served the cause of evangelical truth and civil liberty. It was taken over by The Christian Advocate in 1883.<sup>3</sup> Crook was a most forceful writer, and one of his most outstanding literary works was on "Plymouthism", which appeared in The London Quarterly Review. He also wrote "Ireland and the Centenary of American Methodism," for which he received his D.D.<sup>4</sup> As a result of the Revival the Methodist Church Orphan Society<sup>5</sup> was originated, on parallel lines to William Johnston and the Presbyterian Orphan Society. Crook became the first secretary. A further result of the Revival was the union of Wesleyans and Primitives in 1878-79, and in the introduction of lay representation at the Methodist Conference, a feature with which Crook had much to do.<sup>6</sup>

The Rev. Samuel Marcus Dill, minister of First Ballymena Presbyterian Church during the Revival, was born near Castlefinn, County Donegal, in 1812. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Letterkenny in 1833, and ordained in Magherally, near Banbridge, in 1835, moving to Hillsborough in 1837.<sup>7</sup> Here he passed the most formative years of his life, using to the utmost those sixteen years in study, for in 1853 he was installed minister in First Ballymena. Twelve years later, in 1865, at the opening of Magee College, Londonderry, he was appointed unanimously to the Chair of Systematic Theology. It was said of him that

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1. Crookshank, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 507.

2. *ibid.* p. 524.

3. R. L. Cole, op. cit. p. 7.

4. Christian Advocate, 22nd October, 1897.

5. Cole, op. cit. p. 9.

6. *ibid.* p. 70.

7. Evangelical Witness, June, 1870.

"he was never common-place; his sermons were no heaps of withered straw, seven times threshed; they were never dull, idealess, or incoherent, but living and powerful expositions of evangelical doctrine. He read much and thought much, and gave his hearers plenty to carry away."<sup>1</sup> He began as something of a liberal in theology, but in his later years, especially after the Revival and possibly because of it, his Christianity ripened to the evangelical outlook. In the Revival in Ballymena he threw himself whole-heartedly into the movement from the beginning, presiding at many of its meetings, assisting in the united prayer meeting in the Town Hall, preaching in the open air, in contest with the Rev. John Lynch, P.P., and in June, 1859, he wrote<sup>2</sup> a brief account of the Revival in Ballymena. He had Brownlow North address his church on Saturday and Sunday, 23rd and 24th July, and assisted North at the Sabbath School Annual Meeting in the Demesne, when between eleven<sup>3</sup> and fifteen<sup>4</sup> thousand people were present.

The Rev. William McIlwrath, who did such splendid work in Newtownards, was born at Ballyclose, near Ballymena, in 1833, eldest son of a large family. It was said of him that he was "accustomed to attend Sabbath School at seven in the morning when of a tender age, and till late at night to read Brown's Family Bible."<sup>5</sup> A decided Christian from early years, he soon became a teacher in the Sabbath school of Cullybackey Presbyterian Church, and took on the self-imposed task of conducting prayer meetings in the neighbourhood, as well as his Sabbath School class.<sup>6</sup> One of his helpers in this work was his friend, William Craig, a good scholar who assisted McIlwrath, when the latter was required to leave school early, being the eldest in the family, to acquire a good education in the hope of entering the Christian ministry. After the daily farm work was done he studied

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1. Evangelical Witness, June, 1870.

2. Missionary Herald, July, 1859.

3. Ballymena Observer, 30th July, 1859.

4. Banner of Ulster, 26th July, 1859.

5. Evangelical Witness, 2nd March, 1900.

6. Newtownards Chronicle, 3rd March, 1900.



at night and went to a night school in Ballymena, where young men were prepared for the university.<sup>1</sup> Two years later, in May, 1859, he accompanied William Craig to Newtownards to tell of the Antrim Revival, and addressed a meeting in First Newtownards Presbyterian Church. Soon he was invited to become the agent of the Newtownards Town Mission. In 1860 he married, and some time later resigned his paid agency, though continuing his evangelistic work, attending the Free Church College in Scotland. Fitting up a store at the rear of his residence, he preached the Gospel to the poorer people, and in 1867 memorialised the General Assembly to have a congregation organised. In 1869 he was licensed and ordained, and at his own expense erected a church in Greenwell Street, where he laboured for upwards of thirty years.

James McQuilkin was one of the most prominent laymen in the Revival movement. He was a young married man, who lived with his wife and his two children in the village of Kells, working during the week in Ballymena, in a linen warehouse. Weekends he spent at home with his wife who kept a shop, devoting his leisure to fighting cocks, card playing, drunkenness, and other degrading practices. In 1856, Mrs. Colville, an English Baptist lady, called at the house in Mill Street, Ballymena, where McQuilkin lodged, and her conversation aroused spiritual conviction in the soul of this hitherto reckless sinner. He felt, to use his own language, "like one who had but a short time to live, and who was sinking into hell."<sup>2</sup> Some time later, in the autumn of 1857, he attended the ministry of the Rev. W. G. Campbell, in Antrim Methodist Church, where it is said "among those converted was a young man named James McQuilkin, a Presbyterian from the Parish of Connor."<sup>3</sup> Upon conversion McQuilkin put away all worldly pleasures, had great assurance of salvation, and claimed to be cleansed from all his sins.<sup>4</sup> With characteristic energy he set himself to beseech

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1. Newtownards Chronicle, 3rd March, 1900.

2. Richey, *op. cit.* p. 109.

3. Crookshank, *op. cit.* Vol. III, p. 505.

4. See above p. 100.

sinners to be reconciled to God, prayed for companions in prayer and gathered some others - Jeremiah Meneely, Robert Carlisle, John Wallace - to form the Kells prayer meeting. It is claimed that Robert Vance, from Connor, met with them, and another name given is Johnston.<sup>1</sup> Friday nights saw the Kells prayer meeting of believers meet steadily through the winter, when they prayed for the work in Connor church, its pastor and the Sabbath school. In the actual Revival, as well as his work around Connor, McQuilkin helped at Ahoghill, Ballymena, and Belfast, and crossed to England where he spoke at meetings in Coventry, Leamington, Birmingham, and other places.<sup>2</sup> The pastor and congregation of Connor, at an early stage in the Revival movement, made arrangements for sending forth the principal agent of the Kells prayer meeting, as a Scripture reader and missionary among the people.<sup>3</sup> The Lord owned the labours of His servant in this sphere in the salvation of many, and as the spread of the awakening widened, the sphere of his service grew, so that it could be written of him "few individuals were more self-sacrificing than the large-hearted, prayerful, earnest and humble-minded James McQuilkin."<sup>4</sup>

Other laymen like Sinclair, Clow, Capt. Orr, Dr. Lynn, Shillington, Fullerton, Hogg, to name but a few, were much used with the stalwart host of faithful ministers, working almost always in conjunction with the ministers and being guided by them. Though by no means a layman's movement, the Revival of 1859 in Ulster gave laity its sphere of service, and contributed not a little to the strengthening of the Anglican Church in the days of Disestablishment, and the Presbyterian Church in the loss of its Regium Donum. Laymen have since taken a much more active part in the conduct of church government.

thirst for prayer. This, in its turn, led to little prayer meetings all over Ulster, which were not only one of the main

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1. Jonathan Simpson, Annals of My Life, p. 435.

2. Presbyterian Magazine, October 1859, p. 239.

3. Banner of Ulster, 14th June, 1859. p. 417.

4. Richey, op. cit. p. 110.

5. Annals of the Revival in Ireland, 1859, p. 127.

6. Annals of the Revival in Ireland, 1859, p. 127.



CHAPTER VI

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REVIVAL

Before the commencement<sup>1</sup> of the Revival certain features were noticed - Church Courts urged the preaching of 'applied sermons' leading to personal salvation; there was open-air work in Ulster, and its struggle in Belfast; with numerous prayer meetings scattered over the province, and a great increase in the Sunday School movement, while large quantities of Bibles and tracts were distributed, not to speak of a considerable interest manifested in sacred music, to name but a few; these with the Missionary Synod of the Presbyterians at Dublin in 1833, and the formation of the General Assembly in 1840, clearly demonstrated that evangelical trinitarian teaching was now a feature of the Presbyterian pulpits in general, as well as of the majority of other Protestant denominations.

The value of "sound teaching", as it was termed,<sup>2</sup> in the vast number of preaching places of all creeds for a period of more than fifteen years, and an increased urgency inspired by the instructions of the General Assembly,<sup>3</sup> the example of fervent Methodists and zealous Bishops of the Church of Ireland, as well as the enthusiasm of the Irish Evangelical Society, not to mention the Congregational Union established in 1829,<sup>4</sup> and the Quakers fellowship, led to a far more serious interest in the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God, and this in turn, thanks to plain, expository preaching - rather than rhetorical essays, with an intensified desire on the part of many elders for catechetical teaching in the numerous cottage meetings, produced a thirst for prayer.<sup>5</sup> This, in its turn, led to little prayer meetings all over Ulster, which were not only one of the main causes of the upsurge of religious awakening, but also the main-

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1. Chapter II.

2. Missionary Herald, October 1859, p. 417.

3. Minutes of General Assembly, Vol. I, 1844, p. 327.

4. Alexander Cairns, The Independents in Ireland, MSS. loaned by his son.

5. Reid, op. cit. p. 56.

spring of its advance; for as the Revival progressed the place of prayer was more and more used. There were mid-day prayer meetings in the main centres of the revival, while cottage prayer meetings went on continually even in the very height of the spring planting season. "Meetings for praise, prayer, reading of the Bible, and exhortation being held every night, and frequently mid-day at the busiest season in kitchens, barns, school-houses, churches, fields, way-side, and hedge-side, while secret and family prayer became very general. Many careless (about spiritual things) left work (corn-sowing and potato-planting) and crowded the house."<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Charles Seaver, who was joint Secretary with the Rev. Dr. Morgan, of the Music Hall weekly Prayer Meeting, and Secretary of the Board of Belfast Parochial Mission on Open-Air Preaching,<sup>2</sup> told the Evangelical Alliance: "Prayer is a great reality. It is a glorious statement, made in one of the early reports of the Church Missionary Society, 'That the man who prays most helps on the work most.' ... Depend upon it, one Moses in the Mount is better than ten thousand fighting men in the valley."<sup>3</sup> "A daily prayer-meeting has been held for a short time past in the Philharmonic Society's Room, under the Victoria Hall, from twelve to one o'clock, conducted on the 'Fulton Street' (American) system - of speakers being limited to five minutes each. It is daily increasing in numbers and interest. Persons belonging to the Episcopalian, Presbyterian, and Methodist churches take part in conducting it."<sup>4</sup> "We learn that a considerable number of the shipwrights on the Queen's Island continue to assemble for prayer and exhortation after the mid-day meal, whenever the weather permits. These meetings are of the most solemnising character, and the deepest feeling is evinced during the services, which are conducted by a Christian

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1. Adams, op. cit. p. 8.

2. Belfast Newsletter, 29th August, 1857.

3. Seaver, op. cit. p. 13.

4. The Revival, December 24th, 1859.



friend who attends statedly for the purpose of explaining 'the truth as it is in Jesus.' It is not unusual, while prayer and praise are being offered up, to see numbers of strong men prostrate, and all the rest of the audience upon their knees."<sup>1</sup> It was reported from Killymurriss district in the spring and summer, when the conviction of sin became strong, that "for a time there was not the performance of manual labour"<sup>2</sup> due to the want of bodily strength to do it. It was said "whole townlands are awakened, all out-of-door labour suspended, and the people in crowds follow the minister from house to house to engage in prayer."<sup>3</sup> "All work, except the indispensable, suspended, and men and women meet you with Bibles and hymn books," at Dundrod.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, though these prayer meetings were crowded, they seemed in no way, generally speaking, to deter the work of the countryside, for we read of new potatoes being marketed on the 18th June, and by the end of the month the people were hopeful of a good harvest in County Derry, though not so good in County Tyrone. In County Armagh more rain was needed, and in County Down this much-needed rain began to fall 'last Sunday evening, the 19th June'.<sup>5</sup> It is also said that 'the crops are far forward, and oats in full ear', and the people expected a good harvest.

As to what kind of prayers these people offered, we find a description stating that the prayers of the people had "a directness, an urgency, an earnestness, and an unction ... No one who hears a penitent's prayer, or the prayer of one of the converts, will ever mistake its character. There is no selfishness in these prayers ..."<sup>6</sup> A notable characteristic of the power of prayer is often its emotional warmth, and many ministers led their people in earnest petition. The Rev. James Hervey -

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1. The Revival, October 1, 1859, p. 74.
  2. Ballymena Observer, 18th June, 1859.
  3. Banner of Ulster, 25th June; Ballymena Observer, 2nd July, 1859.
  4. *ibid.* 28th June; and *ibid.*
  5. Belfast Newsletter, 25th June, 1859.
  6. Reid, *op. cit.* p. 57.

always a man mighty in prayer - minister of Redrock, County Armagh, when well over eighty years of age, was said to have "poured forth a torrent of importunate supplication for a whole hour."<sup>1</sup> Zeal in the newly converted was sometimes the result of anguish and despair at the former life. There was the unreserved confession, not in any proud or pompous manner but in true humility felt by the penitent before the Throne of Majesty and Mercy. It was even suggested that this very fervency thawed many an icy heart of the bystander, and it "breaks up the motive-proof searedness of conscience"<sup>2</sup> of many a listener, driving him in turn to prayer. Many have noted the great fluency in prayer characteristic of Revival converts, some of whom have the gift of pithy succinctness, while others have a "sweet, reverential familiarity, a poetry, a suitability, a sublimity, altogether inconceivable by parties who have not heard them."<sup>3</sup> Some have been amazed at the elegant and appropriate poetic expressions of unlearned converts on certain occasions when "the productions are quite beyond the powers of the human mind, whether renewed or unrenewed, in its ordinary state; and the parties themselves are capable of such supplications only once, or, perhaps, on a few occasions, if they be thrown back into fearful convictions and brought up to glorious triumphs."<sup>4</sup> It was said of a prostrated woman "she had never been taught to read or pray, and was unable to distinguish one letter of the alphabet from another; yet she prayed with intense fervency, and exhorted the people to repentance with the most astonishing fluency and accuracy of speech,"<sup>5</sup> while a clerical friend, writing from the scene of the Revival, said: "The reality of the 'conversion' is supposed to be tested by the 'gift of prayer'. The converts cannot be restrained from trying their newly-found power, and I have been sometimes

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1. Weir, op. cit. p. 147.

2. Moore, op. cit. p. 17.

3. *ibid.* p. 18.

4. *ibid.* p. 18. For other illustrations see Gibson, Year of Grace, pp. 354-356; and Reid, op. cit. pp. 106-107.

5. Londonderry Standard, 2nd June, 1859.



surprised by the appropriateness of their language."<sup>1</sup> At the Carryduff Prayer Meeting, when between six hundred and eight hundred were present, and without the help of visiting converts, the Spirit worked and many came forward spontaneously to lead the prayer meeting who were otherwise too shy or shameful to do it before.<sup>2</sup> As time went on, after such initial experiences, these new converts settled down to a quiet, steady confidence in Christ, and their prayers were not very remarkable.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, some converts for a time literally prayed always, whether at home or abroad, alone or in company, and some awakened in the night in urgent prayer. In one place, a husband and wife prayed the whole day and night till next morning, literally without ceasing, and both found Christ at the same time.<sup>4</sup> "In some of the mills there have been as many as ten different prayer meetings ... during the intervals allowed them for breakfast and dinner. These meetings are resumed in the evening on a larger scale, generally conducted (i.e. presided over) by a minister of some denomination. They not unfrequently continue till twelve o'clock at night, and when the people disperse they go home in groups, singing psalms and hymns."<sup>5</sup> Even in the public services of the sanctuary the spoken prayers were frequently punctuated by fervent exclamations, and on some occasions these services were brought to a finish altogether because of the fervency of the people. In Ahoghill on a warm summer day, after the morning service was over and the people were waiting in the graveyard for the second service to begin, some young men began to pray, with the result that the people were with difficulty brought inside for the second service. Hardly had Adams "ascended the pulpit and announced the Psalm than a young man rose on the ground floor and began to speak about "the Blood". He was followed by others all over the house and great excitement prevailed for a time."<sup>6</sup>

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1. Salmon, The Evidences of the Work of the Holy Spirit, p. 47

2. Ballymena Observer, 9th July, 1859.

3. Moore, op. cit. p. 18.

4. Banner of Ulster, 2nd July, 1859.

5. Salmon, op. cit. p. 48. (his italics).

6. McMeekin, op. cit. p. 23.



The minister had to dismiss the congregation, and outside in the neighbourhood of the church "nothing was heard for some time but the sound of prayer and praise and eshortations to the people to come to Jesus." In the same church on Monday, 14th March, James Bankhead could not be restrained from praying aloud in a very excited manner.<sup>1</sup>

The expansion of these meetings for prayer is seen in the city of Belfast, where every evangelical Protestant church (the Arians or Unitarians took no part<sup>2</sup>) conducted prayer meetings, with the one notable exception of Donegall Street Presbyterian Church, whose minister, the Rev. Isaac Nelson, conducted a Tuesday night Young Men's Society, and typical of the subjects was "Intellectual and Religious Culture in the Presbyterian Church."<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, Nelson's church was not without a prayer meeting, for he allowed the Rev. John Bagley, minister of the Independent Church in Donegall Street, to conduct Revival meetings in the Presbyterian Church during the rebuilding of the Congregational Church.<sup>4</sup> While thousands attended prayer meetings, not everyone found it easy to engage in fluent prayer or exercise great faith - for many there was the desperate conviction of sin, not restricted to any sex or age, society or denomination, when the soul was felt to be guilty and lost. Unutterable horror overwhelmed the heart, and some have even cried out as if they were being dragged to perdition. In Derry, the Rev. Richard Smyth told of a merchant in the city, a man

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1. See above, Chapter III, p. 121.

2. A great contrast with the U.S.A. where "in the revivals of America last year, the Unitarians had their share as well as those whose doctrines agree with ours," (Salmon, op. cit. p. 21,) or England, where "The Unitarians discussed the Revivals at the London quarterly meeting held recently at Radley's Hotel, and the tone of almost all the speakers was remarkable. The Revival movement was treated with respect... (A speaker said) he did not think the question had anything to do with orthodoxy at all; but involved faith in the action of the Spirit of God on humanity; and where that faith did not exist, a religious Revival was absolutely impossible." Presbyterian Magazine, February, 1860.

3. Belfast Newsletter, 21st Octbber, 1859.

4. ibid. 7th June, 1859.



of good education and high intelligence, who testified of his experience:- "he thought he saw hell opened before his eyes, and that there was an irresistible power forcing him into it. He looked round and said to himself 'I know where I am; this is the church where I usually worship; I am under a delusion.' But still he looked down and there was hell. He rose from his seat, and convulsively seized hold of the back of the pew; but hell was sending forth its smoke in his very face. A shudder went over him, and his heart sighed the awful words 'My sins! I am lost'."<sup>1</sup> Leaving the church he went home and soon came to know Christ as Saviour. Immediately in the dead of night he went to his business partner who, thanks to his witness, found Christ three days later. The Rev. S. M. Dill related that on May 12th he called upon a woman in his congregation of First Ballymena. "I'm rather surprised to find you in this state, as I remember admitting you to the Lord's Table in the strong hope that you were in Christ. Have I been wrong in this opinion, and were you deceiving yourself all along?" "Aye" she exclaimed, raising her voice, and speaking with the utmost vehemence and rapidity of utterance, "we can keep a fair face, and say our questions, and profess to be Christians, when the root of the matter is not in us, and we can even go to the Communion, but it's all form ... Blessed Saviour, pardon," and crying "Mercy, my sins" she burst into a flood of tears. Dill said that she came into the enjoyment of peace and he hoped hers was a real conversion.<sup>2</sup> Moore, of Wellington Street Presbyterian Church, Ballymena, told of one woman who thought she was pulled out of the horrible pit, as she called it "that she was still on the very edge of it, held out of it only by the hand of Jesus."<sup>3</sup> The same writer testified that for a time some could not even pray, darkness and horror surrounded them, and their agony could not be conceived "I am lost! I cannot pray, I resisted Him, I wouldn't come. Oh, I

1. Weir, op. cit. pp. 134-5; Reid, op. cit. more fully pp. 366-8.

2. S. M. Dill, Revival in Ballymena, p. 6.

3. Moore, op. cit. p. 10.

am lost," and when prayer is attained it is a cry "God be merciful to me, a sinner."<sup>1</sup> One notedly wicked youth came to a meeting at Newtownlimavady, having his pocket full of stones to throw at his praying companions. He was suddenly stricken with conviction of his guilt, and after hours of literally agonizing prayer, when he found peace, a stone was still clenched in his hand. He became, in the language of Scripture, a new creature in Christ Jesus.<sup>2</sup> A labouring man, William G..., who in his own eyes was a very good sort of person, who had never attended any Revival meetings, or shown any interest in the Revival, was convicted of sin in his own cottage, and "a light struck me in the forehead, and went down into my heart; I fell down ... as if dead ... Oh! the horrors I endured for four hours; the period during which I was unable to move, and during which I was unconscious of all that was transpiring around me ... I thought I was lost! lost! lost! ... I tell you, I was lying all that time over the very mouth of hell itself, screaming for mercy!"<sup>3</sup> A further instance occurred at the Maze, near Lisburn, on 12th July, when some ten thousand people were present and when the Rev. Silas Henn spoke on "For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"<sup>4</sup> During this address, a man from Ballymacarrett, Belfast, as he was beating a drum for some Orangemen, was smitten down. His cries for mercy were heart-rending, but after a lengthened conflict, he was enabled to rejoice in the Saviour.<sup>5</sup>

Even mockers were strikingly convicted, as on the 22nd May, 1859, at First Ahoghill Presbyterian Church, a mimicking lad of eighteen was "prostrated on the very scene of his iniquity. Some supposed he was dead ... his agony reminded us of the torments of hell ... then slowly came awakening hope, and cries

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1. Moore, op. cit. p. 17.

2. The Revival, October 29, 1859, p. 107.

3. Revival Anecdotes in Ireland, printed by Isaac Evening, Cockermonth, 1859, pp. 19-22.

4. Mark VIII, 36.

5. Ballymena Observer, 16th July, 1859.



of "Lord, save me, I perish." ... This soul-smitten sinner limped to every prayer meeting in the neighbourhood, spelled a little every day in the New Testament, which he kept often under his pillow, and is now regularly attending our Sabbath-school and church."<sup>1</sup> At Limavady, a fifteen year old youth "... disobedient, reckless, and unprincipled in the extreme - the pest of his neighbourhood ... when he was almost in the act of mocking at God's worship, the Lord had mercy on him ... Since then he has frequently led our devotions in the prayer meeting ... he is now one of the most regular and attentive (Sabbath school) scholars."<sup>2</sup> Another instance of a somewhat different kind took place in Donegall Place Methodist Church, when one evening a young man left the pew, where he had been seated with two companions, and went to the penitent form. His companions followed and knelt beside him, where they began to mock him. The minister rebuked them, and one of the mockers was converted.<sup>3</sup> At an open-air meeting in the Jail Square, Armagh, conducted by the Rev. J. R. McAlister, a drunk man, named Cullen, protested at such things as open-air meetings and mimicked the penitent. For this offence he was sentenced to forty-eight hours imprisonment.<sup>4</sup> This was not the only disturbance in Armagh, for in July there was a riot in the city, over street preaching at the tree opposite the Savings Bank. It was a quiet meeting till towards the end when it was interrupted by a drunk man named Moore and another man who proved to be a Romanist; windows were broken and a pitched battle ensued in Barrack Hill. Extra police were required for a time to keep order.<sup>5</sup> In Belfast, the Rev. Mr. Prentice, town missionary of the Independent Church, was pelted with stones in Mustard Street on Saturday, 18th June.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Adams, op. cit. p. 12.

2. Reid, op. cit. p. 342.

3. Belfast Newsletter, 11th June, 1859.

4. ibid. 5th September, 1859.

5. Portadown News, 23rd July, 1859.

6. Belfast Newsletter, 20th June, 1859.

Men who lived through the days of the Revival remarked that while other revivals stemmed from great preaching or even some great evangelist, as the Wesleys, Whitfield, Finney, etc., this Awakening arose from a genuine love for prayer. "In other revivals preaching was the great instrument. In this, prayer has been the prominent feature. Everywhere a belief in the reality of prayer has arisen. In every place, meetings for prayer are frequent. Our great gatherings of 20,000 people meet for prayer. Our parochial meetings are for prayer. From many a family altar, formerly cold, now the sacrifice of prayer proceeds. Many a one who never bent the knee, now regularly pours out his heart in supplication to his God; and I will be borne out by my brethren, in the assertion that the prayers are no longer cold, and dead, and formal, but the homage of the Spirit, the outpourings of full hearts."<sup>1</sup> Support for Seaver's contention that prayer meetings were frequent is found in the Presbytery and Synod Minutes: "Prayer meetings everywhere throughout the bounds of the Presbytery on every night of the week,"<sup>2</sup> "numerous prayer meetings,"<sup>3</sup> "established prayer meetings well attended, and many new ones also well attended,"<sup>4</sup> "many prayer meetings,"<sup>5</sup> "upwards of 120 prayer meetings weekly,"<sup>6</sup> "every congregation now has a weekly prayer meeting, plus many district prayer meetings,"<sup>7</sup> "prayer meetings everywhere abound,"<sup>8</sup> and "prayer meetings greatly multiplied in both town and country;"<sup>9</sup> while it must be remembered that the great gatherings that Seaver mentions as taking place for prayer occurred in more places than in the Botanic Gardens, Belfast. Large meetings gathered at Caledon, Armagh, Broughshane, Ballymena, Limavady, Derry, Strabane, and other places.

1. Charles Seaver, The Ulster Revival, p. 8, (his italics).
2. Down Presbytery Minutes, State of Religion Report, 1860. Belfast
3. Ards Presbytery Minutes, *ibid.* (Synod Mins. 1860.)
4. Carrickfergus Presbytery Minutes, *ibid.*
5. Comber Presbytery Minutes, *ibid.*
6. Dromore Presbytery Minutes, *ibid.*
7. Rathfriland Presbytery Minutes, *ibid.*
8. Templepatrick Presbytery Minutes, *ibid.*
9. Belfast Presbytery Minutes, *ibid.*



With prayer went its close associate, the desire for singing praises to God, and in many a village street, and over the country-side, as well as in the towns, the song of praise could be heard continually, for it was stated "I have seen a group of about fifty persons gathered round a lamp-post at one o'clock in the morning, singing psalms, and it is quite a common occurrence to meet parties in the public roads singing in the same way."<sup>1</sup> The Rev. John Weir visited Ireland in 1859, and spent some time near Coleraine. One evening, in company with the Rev. Joseph McDonnell, of Terrace Row Presbyterian Church, when making their way to the manse "there suddenly fell on my ear the sound of singing at a distance ... Just as we reached the cross roads we came upon a column of about thirty young men marching four or five deep... (singing) the high praises of Jehovah."<sup>2</sup> On another occasion at the hour of midnight about the end of June, a crowd of young women, with two men, met some abandoned women and so impressed them that they were likely to be influenced for good.<sup>3</sup> Strict Presbyterians sang their psalms with a new-found zeal, and a fresh manner; their old custom was to sit singing,<sup>4</sup> and stand for prayer with their backs to the minister. The singing of psalms had once been the great glory of Presbyterianism, as when at the reception of John Durie,<sup>5</sup> one of the Edinburgh ministers who had been banished by the capricious authorities of his day, on being brought back in 1582, "as he was coming from Leith to Edinburgh," said Calderwood, in his history, "there met him at the Gallowgreen two hundred men of the inhabitants. Their numbers still increased till he came within the Netherbow. There they began to sing the 124th psalm 'Now Israel may say, etc.' and sang in four parts, known to the most part of the people. They came up the street, till they

1. Salmon, op. cit. p. 48.

2. Weir, op. cit. p. 111; also Salmon, op. cit. p. 48.

3. Belfast Newsletter, 1st July, 1859.

4. Ballymena Presbytery Minutes, 1st August, 1854.

5. The 124th Psalm was known in Scotland as Durie's Psalm, see J. Ker, The Psalms in History and Biography, p. 151.

came to the Great Kirk, singing this all the way, to the number of two thousand."<sup>1</sup> Not only were psalms sung in parts, but hymns, though few and far between, were also used in those Reformation days.<sup>2</sup> However, because English people were unable to read or not furnished with copies of the psalter, the Long Parliament passed an Act obliging all precentors to read out the psalm line by line, and the Scottish people, accustomed to sing their old psalter from memory, were compelled to sit and hear the new version of Francis Rouse drawled out by a precentor.<sup>3</sup> This absurd custom of 'lining' the psalms made it impossible to develop church praise. In 1745 the paraphrases were added to the psalter, and the next year the Assembly summoned up courage enough to allow the discontinuance of the 'lining' of psalms in family worship.

Such is the background to Presbyterian psalm singing, and at the numerous prayer meetings in Ulster, where hymns as well as psalms and paraphrases were used, Presbyterians found that hymns used by the Methodist and Established churches also expressed the aspirations and desires of their hearts. In the Union Prayer Meeting,<sup>4</sup> held in the Music Hall, Belfast, the scholarly and saintly Dr. J. G. Murphy, of the Presbyterian College, announced the hymn 'Christ we own a perfect Saviour.'<sup>5</sup> One visitor to Ulster, attending Berry Street, Church, remarked "I observed that very many of the people turned round and fell on their knees, instead of standing at prayer, as has been usual in Presbyterian Churches in Ulster,"<sup>6</sup> while another person reported "It is a peculiarity at these services that, contrary to the Presbyterian custom, almost all the auditory go to their knees.

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1. R. M. Edgar, Progressive Presbyterianism, 1894, p. 141 (his italics).
  2. McCrie's, Public Worship of Presbyterian Scotland, p. 161.
  3. Edgar, op. cit. p. 143.
  4. Of the first Union Prayer Meeting held in the Belfast Music Hall on June 15th, 1859, it was said that a building three times as large would have been filled. (Belfast Newsletter, 17th June, 1859.
  5. Belfast Newsletter, 21st July, 1859.
  6. Weir, op. cit. p. 155.



During the prayer they kneel, and also, what is more unusual, while the hymns are being sung."<sup>1</sup>

Besides the usual praise books of the various churches, no less than four revival hymn books were in use. First there was "Revival Hymns" by William McComb, author of "Hymns for the Blind," and compiler of "McComb's Presbyterian Almanack." He was a prominent Presbyterian, and it showed the trend of the times when no less an official paper than the Presbyterian Magazine said: "Delight in the sacred songs is one of the characteristics of the present awakening; and these effusions of a poetic mind form a fit vehicle for the harmonise of a new-born soul."<sup>2</sup> "Revival Hymns" contained fifteen hymns<sup>3</sup> and was published at 1½d. per copy or 10/- per hundred. Many of the hymns contained in this publication had been printed separately in leaflet form and extensively circulated amongst the awakened ones. This little book was published on October 15th, 1859. Another hymn book widely used was "The Ulster Revival Hymn Book"<sup>4</sup> published at 2d. containing sixty-four pages, by George Phillips and Sons, Belfast. Before the end of the year 1859 no less than twenty thousand copies were sold.<sup>5</sup> A third song book "The Revival Hymn Book"<sup>6</sup> containing thirty-nine hymns, price ½d. published by the Dublin Tract Repository, 10 D'Olier Street, Dublin, was extensively used. A fourth hymn book was published by A.P.C.K. of Dublin.<sup>7</sup>

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1. Derry Standard, 9th June, 1859.

2. Presbyterian Magazine, review, October, 1859, p. 236.

3. The Revival, October 15th, 1859. The hymns were: I, The Day-light is Breaking; II, Come to Jesus; III, The Blood of Jesus; IV, Now in Christ; V, Go and Sin no More; VI, Abide in Me; VII, The Word; VIII, Prayer; IX, Praise; X, Christ is All; XI, The Master is Come and calleth for thee; XII, Not of Works; XIII, The Garden of Spices; XIV, The Still Small Voice; XV, We Hail a New Creation.

4. Belfast Newsletter, 17th August, 1859.

5. The Revival, December 3rd, 1859.

6. ibid.

7. "A selection of Hymns for Public Worship, which has received the warm approval of the Prelates of the Church of Ireland and sold at the following very reduced price in order to facilitate its general adoption; 4d. per copy, 3/6d. per doz., £1-5-0 per 100." - Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette, 15th May, 1861, p. 186.

The coming of primary education enabled many to read, and thus the necessity to 'line' the psalms disappeared, with the result that it was possible to sing, instead of line by line, verse by verse. Many of the converts who hitherto could not read strove to learn, and were therefore able to use the various hymn books. The influence of the praise of God in hymns and psalms is seen in the fact that many were awakened in this way. A man from Ahoghill was converted through singing

"O greatly blessed the people are  
The joyful sound that know;  
In brightness of thy face,<sup>1</sup> O Lord,  
They ever on shall go."<sup>1</sup>

His wife was converted in a similar way, by part of the 132nd Psalm. A young man heard the beautiful and appropriate 42nd Psalm:-

"As pants the hart for water brooks,  
My soul pants, Lord, for thee ..."

and as he prepared to yoke his horses for the plough while he whistled the tune to which the psalm was sung and recalled its hallowed associations, he was compelled to kneel down in the stable alone and call upon God with tears.<sup>2</sup>

Other favourite hymns were "What's the News?" and "Will ye go?" The first of these was said to be American and written in 1858. This appears to be a mistake, as it was not written in America, but in England many years ago. It is found amongst five hundred others in "The Christian's Spiritual Song Book" intended for revivals and edited by the Rev. John Stamp, editor of the "Old Methodist Revivalist." It was republished in 1845 by Mr. Brittain, Paternoster Row. Both these hymns are found in the same volume, and the author was the Rev. R. Jukes, a Primitive Methodist minister.<sup>3</sup> A further popular hymn was "Lord, to thee I trembling fly," written by the Rev. Henry Henderson, of Holywood, and called "the Prayer of the Penitent," sung to the tune "Playell's German Hymn." Another hymn which made a

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1. Psalm 89, v. 15, (metrical version).

2. Adams, op. cit. p. 18.

3. Belfast Newsletter, 23rd June, 1859.



profound impression in the Revival days and has stayed with us since was "Stand up stand up for Jesus," found now in hymnbooks of all denominations. Perhaps the reason for its popularity<sup>1</sup> was the tragic accident behind its composition. In Philadelphia, in 1858, a young clergyman, Dudley Atkins Tyng, was forced to resign his church for his denunciation of slavery, and continued preaching in the famous Jaynes Hall, an enormous building, seating five thousand people. Tyng preached to a full hall, and one Sunday it is believed that no less than one thousand were converted. During the following week, on Wednesday, he left his study and went to a barn where a mule was working a piece of farm machinery. Going to pat the animal, his sleeve got caught in the cog-wheel and his arm being dragged into the machine was torn off. As he was dying, his friend, the Rev. Dr. George Duffield, asked him for a message for the congregation. Tyng replied "Tell them to stand up for Jesus." Duffield preached the memorial sermon, concluding it with the militant words now known so well over the world.<sup>2</sup> Two other popular hymns were "Christian Brothers, rise and pray" written by a 'young man in Belfast much interested in the Revival movement;' and "There shall be no night there" written by J. G. T., of Crossgar, County Down.<sup>3</sup>

At the commencement of the Revival the matter of praise among Presbyterians was largely confined to Psalms and Paraphrases. Of the Psalms, the 23rd, 'The Lord's my Shepherd'; the 40th - 'The Convert's Song'<sup>4</sup> - 'I waited for the Lord, my God'; the 103rd 'O thou, my soul, bless God, the Lord'; and the 116th 'I love the Lord, because my voice and prayers He did hear'; were favourite,<sup>5</sup> while among the paraphrases most often sung were the 2nd 'O God of Bethel;' the 45th 'Ungrateful sinners;' the 54th 'I'm not ashamed;' the 61st 'Blessed be the everlasting God;' and the 64th 'To Him that loved the souls of men.' Further hymns

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1. Richey, op. cit. p. 107.

2. Sunday School Chronicle, 18th June, 1959.

3. Presbyterian Magazine, July, 1859, p. 161.

4. Weir, op. cit. p. 92, (footnote).

5. *ibid.* p. 33, (footnote).

that were much used were: "There is a fountain filled with blood" by William Cowper; "And can it be, that I should gain an interest in the Saviour's blood?" by Charles Wesley; "I have a Father in Promised Land,"<sup>1</sup> "Here o'er the earth as a stranger I roam,"<sup>1</sup> "We sing of the realms of the blest."

The introduction of hymns into Presbyterian worship seems first to have been attempted through the Ulster Evangelical Society, one of whose members was the Rev. John Lowry, of Clenanees, who published a pamphlet entitled 'Halleluia'<sup>2</sup> in which he justified the singing of hymns in public worship. The matter was challenged in the Burgher Synod of 1801, and Lowry denied that he had ever introduced hymns into his own congregation. At the same time petitions from Ballygoney and Boardmills congregations requested the Synod to prevent hymns being introduced in the public worship of God. Lowry eventually declared "... As the Synod disapprove of the introduction of hymns, ... so do I likewise."<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, "Some congregations in the Synod of Ulster had used the scriptural paraphrases and hymns prior to the Union with the Secession Synod in 1840, but to facilitate the Union the Church's praise was limited to 'the metrical version of the Psalms used by the Church of Scotland'."<sup>4</sup> The next attempt to introduce hymns was in Fermoy when on May 24th, 1842, two hymns were sung, and in 1851 the Presbytery of Munster recommended the congregation of Fethard "to substitute the Psalms of David instead of the hymns at present in use."<sup>5</sup> It was not until the Revival that hymn singing really came into its own among Psalm-singing Presbyterians, when it was introduced by means of the numerous prayer-meetings and the continual singing of the people on all possible occasions.

Another feature of the Revival was the influence of the Westminster Shorter Catechism, so long the strength of Presby-

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1. Service of Praise in Millisle Presbyterian Church, August 17<sup>1941</sup>.
  2. Stewart, op. cit. p. 190. See above Chapter I, p. 34.
  3. *ibid.* p. 192.
  4. J.M. Barkley, A Short History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, p. 114.
  5. Minutes of the Munster Presbytery, 1851. Also quoted by C. H. Irwin, A History of Presbyterianism, pp. 208-209.



terianism, and its stay in the dark hours of Arianism. This catechism had much to do with the preparation of many for revival through the work of Sabbath schools, and Bible classes. Very often, the proofs and explanations of the catechism were required to be learned in Sabbath school; "this circumstance explains why many ... are so fluent, full, and felicitous in exhortation and Scripturally expressed extemporary prayer."<sup>1</sup>

Knowledge of the Catechism was coupled with a great love for the Bible, which was soon manifested among the converts, and it was stated that on the Twelfth of July Orange Celebrations some Lodges carried Bibles in their hands rather than their huge banners over their heads - "we saw thousands of Bibles with Orange ribbon markers."<sup>2</sup> The Hibernian Bible Society issued to Ulster alone, from 1st April till 1st September, 1859, 20,423 copies of the Scriptures, about double the quantity issued in the same period for 1858; while the society which issued the version with Scottish Psalms attached also sent forth large numbers. About three hundred thousand tracts and religious books were issued in that period.<sup>3</sup> As confirmation of this it was reported at the Downpatrick Bible Meeting that some 14,000 additional Bibles were sold in Ulster in June, July, August and September, making about 20,000 altogether.<sup>4</sup> The Edinburgh Bible Society increased fourfold their supply,<sup>5</sup> while a Belfast book-seller recorded an eight-fold increase from 1858 till 1859.<sup>6</sup> The

1. Adams, op. cit. p. 20.

2. Ballymena Observer, 16th July, 1859.

3. Seaver, op. cit. p. 9.

4. Belfast Newsletter, 15th October, 1859.

5. The Revival, 22nd October, 1859, p. 100:

The Depository of the Edinburgh Bible Society stated that they sent			
1858 - June	1482 copies.	1859 - June	2575 copies
July	1673	July	6133
August	1003	August	5485
September	1171	September	5448
Total	5329	Total	19641

6. The Revival, 22nd October, 1859, p. 100:

Bibles:	1858 - 500;	1859 - 3,500
New Testaments:	1858 - 100;	1859 - 1,000
Psalm books:	1858 - 200;	1859 - 1,800.



Bible and Colportage Society for Ireland, founded January 1859, sold in its first year over 14,000 separate publications,<sup>1</sup> while such magazines as the British Messenger, Gospel Trumpet, British Workman, and Band of Hope were circulated.<sup>2</sup> Much of this work was done by the societies' colporteurs who worked in Belfast, Portadown, Banbridge, Lurgan, Glenarm and in the bounds of the Ards Presbytery.<sup>3</sup> In the Session Minutes of Myroe Presbyterian Church, in the Presbytery of Limavady, is this reference: "It was thought necessary to procure copies of the Word of God to have them gratuitously, or for a nominal sum, distributed to the poor. A sum of £5-6-6½d. was collected for this purpose."<sup>4</sup> In North Antrim the Derrykeighan Parochial Church Association was founded for the spread of the Scriptures among the people,<sup>5</sup> while at Kellistown, County Carlow, the one hundred and twelve members subscribed £8-0-6d. per the Rev. James P. Garrett, "... as a small thankoffering to the Almighty for the great Spiritual Revival He has so mercifully vouchsafed; to be expended in the giving and teaching of the Holy Scriptures, for which there is at present a most unprecedented demand in Ireland."<sup>6</sup>

Great efforts were made by the new converts to learn to read; a number, of course, could read already, before the Revival came, and they were used in reading to the others and teaching them their letters. "Under the present Revival, many of all classes have manifested a strong desire for improvement in religious knowledge and have become prayerful students of the Word of God."<sup>7</sup>

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1. First Annual Report of Bible & Colportage Society 1859: p. 3:

"During the year ending 31st December last, there have been sold by the Agent of the Society, 5,112 Bibles, 3373 Testaments, 1594 Psalm Books, and 4,526 Religious Books, in all 14,605 separate publications. None of these have been sold but for cash, none at less than cost price, and only one trifling grant was made for the use of emigrants." (his italics).

2. *ibid.* p. 5.

3. *ibid.* pp. 4 and 6.

4. Session Minutes, Myroe Presbyterian Church, 1859.

5. Thomas Hincks' MSS., in the custody of the Rural Dean, the Rev. D. F. Moore, B.A., The Rectory, Derrykeighan, Dervock.

6. The Revival, November 19th, 1859, p. 133.

7. Carrickfergus Presbytery State of Religion Report, Belfast Synod Minutes, 1860.



So eager were many to learn to read that a "female convert" appealed in the press for "night schools to educate newly converted women."<sup>1</sup> In one instance a dying daughter taught her mother to read in three months, while private and public classes for reading were well attended.<sup>2</sup> "Education is now become the principal object of concern amongst the uneducated class in this neighbourhood, both of old and young."<sup>3</sup> Some who attended these classes made astonishing progress, being able to read fluently in a period of eight brief months. Many had so great a desire to own a Bible that they were purchased at almost sacrificial cost. A poor man paid the Rev. D. Adams one shilling - the price of a load of turf in his donkey cart - for a Bible with Psalms.<sup>4</sup> Adams wrote: "Since April last, I have circulated upwards of 600 Bibles and Testaments, and of these about one-half had this greatly desired version of the (metrical) Psalms, most of which I procured at a cheap rate, through the liberality of the Derry Auxiliary of the Edinburgh Bible Society, though some of them were a kind, unsolicited donation from Wm. McComb, Esq., Belfast. The others were supplied by the Sunday-School Society for Ireland, to which we owe a great debt of gratitude, especially for its liberality in these revival times."<sup>5</sup> Adams distributed these freely: "today the driver of a bread-cart, formerly very careless about his soul, wished to purchase a New Testament with large type, that he might be able to read it as the horse trotted along the road, and when I bestowed him the much desired treasure, he was delighted and most thankful."<sup>6</sup>

Church attendance increased in large measure; "the difficulty used to be to get people into the Church, now the difficulty is to get them out of it,"<sup>7</sup> and the Rev. Franklin Bewley, curate of

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1. Belfast Newsletter, 3rd September, 1859

2. Moore, op. cit. p. 13.

3. The Revival, August, 27th, 1859, p. 33.

4. Adams, op. cit. p. 18.

5. *ibid.* p. 17.

6. *ibid.* p. 27, his italics.

7. Moore, op. cit. p. 15.

Tullylish Parish Church wrote "Hitherto ministers had considerable difficulty in persuading the people to attend public worship; now the difficulty is to find room for the multitude who press forward both on Sundays and weekdays. The badness of the weather had absolutely no effect in diminishing their numbers."<sup>1</sup> "Persons whom I have never before been able to induce to listen to any religious conversation, or to attend church, are most anxious to hear the Scriptures read and explained, and to join in prayer, and come to church."<sup>2</sup> In Belfast the Rev. Hugh Hanna, of Berry Street, said "... It is impossible to get them to retire from the churches,"<sup>3</sup> while the Belfast Presbytery stated "... multitudes now give evidence of having a real thirst for the preaching of the Word,"<sup>4</sup> "... the attendance of our people on the house of God is more earnest and devout. Many appear to drink in the Word as it falls from the lips of the Gospel messenger."<sup>5</sup> "There is scarcely a vacant sitting in any of their churches, and in some with regard to church accommodation the demand is greater than the supply."<sup>6</sup> "The increase of the congregation in church is very satisfactory. In Summer, the church which holds 550 was full in the morning, but in the evening had only 250. This Summer, 850 in morning and 600 in the evening is the average. There is not standing-room in the aisles."<sup>7</sup> In Carland Presbyterian Church, near Dungannon, on Tuesday, 21st June, a service was held at 7 p.m. when one Church of Ireland and three Presbyterian ministers took part, along with three converts from Ballymena. The church was crowded and upwards of one hundred stood outside at open windows. The meeting ended at 3 o'clock next morning;<sup>8</sup> while at an open air meeting in Ballymena, at Galgorm Road, Moore presided over a vast audience "more than the churches could hold" and when he

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1. Weir, op. cit. p. 94.

2. Salmon, op. cit. p. 48.

3. R. M. Sibbett, Story of a Mission, p. 137.

4. Belfast Presbytery State of Religion Report, Belfast Synod Minutes, 1860.

5. Templepatrick Pres. S.R. Report, Belfast Synod Minutes, 1861.

6. Carrickfergus Pres. S.R. Report, Belfast Synod Minutes, 1860.

7. Seaver, op. cit. p. 19.

8. Belfast Newsletter, 25th June, 1859.



pronounced the Benediction "the audience did not separate."<sup>1</sup> At Ahoghill, Communion Services were "protracted to the unusual hour of 7 o'clock p.m."<sup>2</sup> at the autumn Sacrament Sabbath, yet after this late hour hundreds remained contentedly till past 9 o'clock on a cool evening at an open-air meeting. In Derry, in the East Wall Wesleyan Church, the 7 o'clock evening service lasted till 10 p.m.<sup>3</sup> In Boveva, on Sabbath, 12th June, when the usual service hour arrived, the church was so crowded that "we were obliged to retire to the churchyard, and continue the service in the open air." When the Benediction was pronounced a few retired "but the great majority lingered, stood in fact as if held in a vice, or bound with a chain ... For hours these ... souls remained ..." <sup>4</sup> A further instance on the same Whit Sunday, June 12th, began in Drumachose Parish Church at the morning service, when the Rector, the Rev. Mr. Stewart, preached on the Holy Spirit, when many were concerned and four cried out for mercy. In the evening, interest had so increased that the Presbyterian Meeting House proved too small (it seated 700<sup>5</sup>) for the three thousand who attended, and the service was held in the churchyard. By eight p.m. this meeting "adjourned to Mr. Steen's church, and went on till morning." That this was not an isolated instance is seen in the fact that the previous evening at Major Lancey's gate, in the open street in Limavady, where ministers sat up all night with people seeking pardon and mercy; while on the Monday - the Fair Day - a prayer meeting commencing that evening continued till sunrise next day in Second Limavady Meeting House.<sup>6</sup> It was no wonder that the Down Presbytery could say that the people "seem to have an errand to the Sanctuary, and they wait expecting a blessing."<sup>7</sup>

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1. Belfast Newsletter, 23rd June, 1859 (newspaper's italics).
  2. Adams, op. cit. p. 20.
  3. Londonderry Standard, 16th June, 1859.
  4. William Reid, Authentic Records of Revival, pp. 24-25; quoted by Rev. T. Simpson, The 1859 Revival in the Roe Valley, p.15.
  5. General Assembly Minutes, 1864 (Statistics)
  6. Londonderry Standard, 16th June, 1859.
  7. Down Presbytery State of Religion Report, 1860; Belfast Synod Minutes, 1860.



The Rev. Robert Sewell, minister of the Independent Church in Derry, and afterwards one of the revival leaders in the Maiden City, had an abrupt introduction to revival. Requested to preach anniversary services at Straid Congregational Church, County Antrim, where he had preached the opening service a twelve-month before,<sup>1</sup> Sewell was surprised, when, at 9 o'clock, after the usual evening service, and when he had spoken at an open-air meeting to three thousand people, he pronounced the Benediction, "the vast multitude still waited and would not depart." Instead they returned to Straid Independent Church and remained till morning.<sup>2</sup> A few days later Sewell addressed an open-air meeting at Coleraine, which also adjourned, this time to the Town Hall, where the people remained till 5 o'clock next morning.<sup>3</sup> In his own church in Derry, at the evening service, several conversions took place, and at nearly midnight the people finally left.<sup>4</sup> Sewell also had anxious enquirers' meetings every morning.<sup>5</sup> At Crossgar, County Down, at Lissara Presbyterian Church, on Thursday evening 30th June, many were converted and the meeting lasted to a late hour. Still "they would not go home, but stayed within the church grounds."<sup>6</sup> In all centres of the Revival numerous services were held in almost all the churches, and not only so, but it is seen that these services were prolonged to a late hour, often to the early hours of the next day.<sup>7</sup> These services were crowded with attentive hearers, who had become most punctilious in their Sabbath observance, which "of late seems to be exhumed out of the rubbish of contempt and neglect."<sup>8</sup> All unnecessary work was omitted as is recorded by a minister travelling late on a Saturday night on a country road, when he was joined by a young

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1. The foundation stone of the new Congregational Church was laid on July 16, 1857 - Belfast Newsletter, 20th July, 1857.

2. Massie, op. cit. p. 24.

3. Londonderry Standard, 23rd June, 1859.

4. *ibid.*

5. *ibid.* Also Weir, op. cit. p. 130.

6. Banner of Ulster, 2nd July, 1859.

7. For further illustration see Adams, op. cit. p. 8.

8. Down Presbytery State of Religion Report, Belfast Synod Minutes, 1860.



convert. "This is not your way?" "No, sir, but I am going for a clean shirt for tomorrow. I used to go on Sabbath morning, now I would not do that, for I spend that time in reading the Bible and prayer."<sup>1</sup> "The Sabbath is now honoured and observed as it never was in the memory of living men."<sup>2</sup> As a consequence of this Sabbath observance it could be said that most churches had an eager multitude of most attentive listeners, taking heed how and what they heard, indeed, as one forceful descriptive writer put it 'gaping' to hear the gospel.<sup>3</sup> "There is a feeling of awe pervading all classes, which renders them most anxious to listen to every word which the ministers may say ..."<sup>4</sup>

Great numbers availed themselves of the opportunity, now that they were new creatures in Christ Jesus, to come to the Lord's Table. In the Ballymena district, no less than five hundred new communicants are recorded in the autumn of 1859.<sup>5</sup> The Presbytery of Dromore reported "At the Autumn Communion of 1859 more than five hundred (new communicants) sought admission for the first time."<sup>6</sup> Bishop Knox, of Down, Connor and Dromore, confirmed almost three times the usual number, in his diocese.<sup>7</sup> At a special communion service in Ballykelly on the 24th July, 1859, fifty-one new communicants partook for the first time.<sup>8</sup> "A special Communion was held on the occasion of the Lord's glorious outpouring of His Spirit, which was first manifested to us on Sabbath, 12th June. By the arrangement of the Limavady Presbytery it was agreed to hold a special Communion as the most fitting mode of expressing our thankfulness to Almighty God for the gracious outpouring of His Spirit with which He has been pleased to visit and bless us, the manifestations of which were first apparent in Newtownlimavady on June 8th, and in Largy on June

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1. Adams, op. cit. p. 19.

2. Belfast Synod State of Religion Report, 1860 (Synod Minutes.)

3. Adams, op. cit. p. 19.

4. Salmon, op. cit. p. 48.

5. Belfast Newsletter, 18th November, 1859.

6. Dromore Presbytery State of Religion Report, Synod of Belfast Minutes, 1860.

7. 250 usual; 705, 1859. Gibson, op. cit. p. 169.

8. Reid, op. cit. p. 76.



12th. The Lord's Supper was observed by us on the above date (July 24th), when there sat down to the Lord's Table 256 persons, being the largest number of communicants, by far, we have ever had. The duties of the day were performed by Mr. Kennedy alone."<sup>1</sup> First Garvagh Kirk Session Minutes claimed "the largest gain in communicants in living memory." First Ahoghill welcomed 145 for the first time,<sup>2</sup> while Trinity Episcopal Church, Belfast, had 161 confirmed, with the average in former years at twenty.<sup>3</sup> Ballycarry Presbyterian Church received 170 new communicants,<sup>4</sup> a goodly number for a small country church of three hundred families,<sup>5</sup> and in Armagh city the Rev. J. R. McAlister stated "Fully ten for one of the former average came forward for the first time" to communion.<sup>6</sup> A clergyman commented "On Sundays our attendance is large, and on Sunday last we had almost treble the ordinary number at communion."<sup>7</sup> At Carrickfergus, in Joymount Presbyterian Church, 137 prepared to go forward to the Lord's Table in October.<sup>8</sup> The average number of new communicants each time was twenty-four before the Revival.<sup>9</sup> "One clergyman, the minister of a large town, writes to me that all his congregation have been aroused to spiritual concern. Another states that his morning congregation has increased from 550 to 850, and his evening from 250 to 600. Another, that his congregation has been doubled; and another, increased one-third; and in every parish where the work has gone on, the same results have followed, while the number of communicants has in many cases doubled. In one district in Belfast, where the average number of young persons confirmed in former years was about 20, in this year it reached above 120; and, in my own district, the number was five times as great as in the

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1. Session Minutes, Largy Presbyterian Church, 24th July, 1859.

2. Adams, op. cit. p. 16.

3. Reid, op. cit. p. 76.

4. Banner of Ulster, June 16th, 1859: 100 June  
Reid, op. cit. p. 19: 70 October.

5. Carrickfergus Presbytery Minutes, 4th August, 1857.

6. Reid, op. cit. p. 36.

7. Salmon, op. cit. p. 50.

8. Reid, op. cit. p. 262.

9. Session Report at Visitation, Carrickfergus Presbytery Minutes, August 3rd, 1858.



four preceding years, while a feeling of intense and increasing earnestness pervades all classes and ranks in society," thus wrote the Rector of St. John's, Laganbank, Belfast.<sup>1</sup>

Communion seasons seemed favourable to revival, and the willingness of the converts - whether they were converted Papist, Arian, or orthodox - to speak of Jesus, their Lord and Saviour, in rapturous terms, such as "My Lord and my God" led to more conversions. In this respect it was said "Our revival is distinguished from the revival in America, where the object of faith is in danger of being too much neglected for the subject of faith."<sup>2</sup> Few, if any, in Ulster were ashamed of their Lord and Master; indeed, some went into such a state of continuous rapture that they could be on their knees, looking heavenward, with hands clasped, often smiling, for upwards of an hour, never speaking a word, so absorbed were they in the Object of their devotion.<sup>3</sup> Love to Christ was the predominant passion of the soul. Preaching in Killyleagh Church the Rev. Dr. Edward Hincks, rector, said "... I am sure that there are many dear children of God here, who are walking as His children should walk; and that the number of these has greatly increased within the past year. They have been exposed to temptations and persecutions, and have withstood them both; they have been taught of God to love one another ..." <sup>4</sup> No matter to what religious community the individual adhered, or even if there had been no connection with any church previously, there was a unanimous testimony to the validity of the doctrines of the Cross and of 'those things which are most surely believed among us.' "... It cannot be denied that during the present summer a great number of persons, both within and without the pale of our church, have been reclaimed from worldliness, or formalism, or gross sin, and led to walk in newness of life, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>5</sup> Not only was there

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1. Seaver, op. cit. pp. 11, 12; fuller detail Weir, op. cit. p. 205.

2. Adams, op. cit. p. 16.

3. Moore, op. cit. p. 11

4. E. Hincks, D.D. Sermon preached in Killyleagh, 31st July, 1859, pp. 4, 5.

5. *ibid.* p. 4.



a readiness to admit the sinner's sinfulness and the acknowledging of the path of peace, but the Holy Spirit seemed to open the eyes of the understanding by unfolding the truth which the Scriptures contain, and by enlightening the mind in the knowledge of Christ. "... Not only are the very same truths regarding sin, Satan, and the sinner, or hell, heaven and happiness formerly neglected, now seen in a clearer light, but the powers of the mind are enlarged, so that the memory remembers long forgotten facts; and the judgment, even of the uneducated, judges rightly, and almost intuitively, with regard to the most important doctrines."<sup>1</sup>

A few seemingly imagined that they were already perfect<sup>2</sup> in their Christian life, but experience and the Scripture taught some of them that they must "give all diligence to add to their faith, virtue (moral courage) and to virtue, knowledge" - duties which they owed to God - "and to knowledge, temperance, and to temperance, patience, and to patience, godliness" - duties which they owed to themselves - "and to godliness, brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, charity" - duties which they owed to their fellow-creatures. Some of the deepest sinners, upon their conversion became completely changed and endeavoured to practise holiness with so great a desire to be like Christ that it was with difficulty that worldly thoughts entered their minds, and they were almost unfitted for common worldly business. They even had to be reminded that if they were 'fervent in spirit, serving the Lord', they were 'not to be slothful in business,' and that true religion never required its followers to give up any legitimate business, but demands that we should be religious in that business. "That we should aim at freedom from sin is a settled point. But we know very well that many a worldly man believes himself without sin; and we have learned so much of the deceitfulness of the heart, that we can conceive spiritual pride

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1. Adams, op. cit. p. 15.

2. *ibid.* p. 26 - but there was no teaching on sinless perfection or 'holiness' for over twenty years. See R. M. Sibbett, Faith of a Worker, Chapter 13, 'Thoughts on Holiness', especially p. 104.



whispering even to the child of God that he has attained unto perfection. But pride is before a fall; and the sooner it comes the better, lest the deluded soul perish in its unknown and unacknowledged sin."<sup>1</sup>

In the American revival it was noticable that a great deal of the work of visitation and conversation about conversion, as well as prayer, was carried out by laymen. In former revivals in Britain and America ministers played a very prominent part. Edwards, Wesley, Whitfield, Livingstone, Welsh, McCheyne, Burns, and Finney, to name but a few, were all regular ministers. In the Ulster Revival of 1859 the awakening was not associated with any one particular prominent name. In other places, Charles Seaver could tell the Evangelical Alliance in September, 1859, when it met in Belfast, "large numbers have been gathered to hear Spurgeon, Guinness, North and others - why has there been none of this work there? Stirring and powerful appeals to the feelings, as striking and as powerful, at least, as we are in the habit of making, have been addressed; yet no such results ensued. In truth there is less of man in this work than in any others we have known."<sup>2</sup> Instead of prominent leaders, a host of dedicated ministers struggled long hours and weary nights, often to the detriment of their health, to satisfy the spiritual requirements of their own people and their neighbours round about. Apparently ministers were 'haled' to speak to all and sundry under conviction.<sup>3</sup> "When I am walking along the streets, I am sometimes brought from house to house to see cases of 'conviction' and to give them consolation."<sup>4</sup> "There the clergy, Episcopal as well as Dissenting, are worn off their feet with the new, interesting, and multiplied forms of duty and Christian labour devolved upon them by the unprecedented and extraordinary position

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1. The Presbyterian Magazine, August, 1960, p. 186.

2. Seaver, op. cit. p. 12.

3. Belfast Newsletter, 7th June, 1859.

4. Salmon, op. cit. p. 48.

in which they are placed."<sup>1</sup> "The pastor in many cases has to perform duties as laborious as those of a physician in first class practice - sleepless - seldom without a call, even on the road or at the bedside."<sup>2</sup> At least eight ministers took ill and had to retire from work. Richard Smyth, minister of First Derry, suffered a breakdown in health;<sup>3</sup> Robert Sewell, of the same city, had to leave and recuperate in Portrush;<sup>4</sup> William Richey,<sup>5</sup> of First Coleraine, and George Davies, curate of Dervock, had to sail to Australia for their health's sake, where they both died after a short time;<sup>6</sup> while John Stuart,<sup>7</sup> of Ballycarry, had to go to the Continent to recuperate. It must not be forgotten that Alexander Pollock, minister of Second Ballyeaston Presbyterian Church, died in the summer of 1859, as the result of his strenuous labours. "It is well known that Mr. Pollock's life was cut short by his extraordinary exertions in the present Revival movement;"<sup>8</sup> and Robert Park, of Ballymoney, was smitten with paralysis in 1861.<sup>9</sup> James Millar, minister of First Garvagh, died on 19th November, 1859,<sup>10</sup> "as the result of strenuous labours."<sup>11</sup> Two others much used in the Revival were David Hamilton, of York Street, Belfast, who died on 13th January, 1860,<sup>12</sup> and Marshall Moore, minister of Glendermott, who died on 5th January, 1860, at his mother's residence, Glenbrooke, Rasharkin.<sup>13</sup> The measure of their labours is seen in the fact that Sewell "narrowly escaped congestion of the brain"<sup>14</sup> for he seldom got home from his church

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1. The Revival, 1st October, 1859, p. 78.
  2. Banner of Ulster, 13th August; The Revival, 27th August, 1859.
  3. Weir, op. cit. p. 132.
  4. *ibid.* p. 127.
  5. General Assembly Minutes, 1860, p. 883; and Londonderry Standard (July 14, 1859).
  6. Hincks' MSS. op. cit.
  7. Weir, op. cit. p. 125.
  8. Northern Whig, 18th July, 1859.
  9. Dill, Armour, Boyle and Ramsay, op. cit. p. 38.
  10. General Assembly Minutes, 1860, p. 853.
  11. Garvagh Kirk Session Minutes.
  12. Presbyterian Magazine, February, 1860.
  13. *ibid.*
  14. Sewell's letter to Massie, dated 20th August, 1859, op. cit. p. 40.



before midnight. "For seven weeks I had to work at least sixteen hours a day - in addressing meetings in the open air, town-hall, and my own chapel - in conversing with and meeting the difficulties of the anxious, who were flocking to the vestry every day, and in visiting the sick and some of the anxious in their own houses."<sup>1</sup> James Bain, minister of Straid Independent Church, was busy from 9 a.m. till 10 p.m., on the Sabbath "many young people remained the whole day in the chapel."<sup>2</sup> The Rev. R. Gamble, of Castledawson, was known to have met with one hundred people at a time for instruction in counselling meetings.<sup>3</sup> The Rev. Hugh Hunter, minister of Bellaghy Presbyterian Church, never left the meeting house for five successive nights 'before three or four o'clock a.m.', and saw some thirty to forty people converted each night.<sup>4</sup> "The ministers of the Gospel have been called to exercise their office in a way unprecedented in our times," was the testimony of the 'model pastor';<sup>5</sup> while Seaver witnessed, "ministers everywhere sank under the exhaustion of their blessed duties."<sup>6</sup>

The gracious work of many of these men did not go unrewarded; the Rev. J. B. Rentoul, minister of Second Garvagh, received a presentation of £42;<sup>7</sup> Thomas Hincks, rector of Derrykeighan Parish Church, got a gold watch;<sup>8</sup> Daniel Mooney, upon his leaving Ballymena to become rector of Clondevaddock, near Raphoe, County Donegal, where he was instituted on 20th January, 1860, received a silver coffee service<sup>9</sup> and an address from the parishoners of Kilconriola which stated inter alia, we cannot "pass over in

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1. Sewell's letter to Massie, August 30, 1859, Massie, op. cit. p.97.
  2. Cairns, op. cit. p. 334.
  3. Ballymena Observer, July 9th, 1859.
  4. Belfast Newsletter, 7th June, 1859.
  5. Morgan, op. cit. p. 9. The Rev. Dr. James Morgan, minister of Fisherwick Presbyterian Church, was known as the model pastor.
  6. Seaver, op. cit. p. 8.
  7. Belfast Newsletter, 29th December, 1859.
  8. Hincks' MSS. op. cit.
  9. Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette, April 15th, 1860.

7. Ballymena Observer, 25th June, 1859.

8. ibid. 18th June, 1859; banner of Ulster, 16th June, 1859.



silence the active part you took in the Revival ... in the conversion of sinners ... co-operating with the ministers of other evangelical churches ..."<sup>1</sup> Bain, of Straid, reported "... I was presented with a horse, harness and car, as a token of their appreciation of my labours during this soul saving and God-glorifying season in the church and neighbourhood,"<sup>2</sup> and Thomas W. Roe, rector of Ballymacarrett, whose congregation doubled, received a study clock, silver pocket communion set, gold watch, and a suit of canonicals from his parishoners as a token of their respect.<sup>3</sup> Archibald Robinson, of Broughshane, was also honoured by his congregation.<sup>4</sup>

Valiant though their efforts were, these faithful ministers could not do all that was required of them, and it was truly said "the clergy of the church are not equal to the work which is cast upon them."<sup>5</sup> In which case they were almost all glad to avail themselves of the help of consecrated laymen, who whether they were merchant princes like Thomas Sinclair,<sup>6</sup> or stonebreakers, were generally members of the church in full communion. They conducted many prayer meetings. Sinclair spoke at Portrush Presbyterian Church on Wednesday, 15th June. At the close of the service a poor servant boy was stricken, and the press noted the contrast between the two men - "one of the first merchants in Belfast, largest ship owner in Ireland, knelt by a poor servant boy."<sup>7</sup> About one hundred souls were impressed in the district about this time. At Ballycarry, the Rev. John Stuart, and the Rev. G. T. Payne, vicar of Templecorran, were associated in the work, and "young converts and elders of the church are busily engaged day and night in visiting and comforting the brethren and sisters under conviction."<sup>8</sup> Elders took care of no less than

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1. Belfast Newsletter, 6th March, 1860.

2. Cairns, op. cit. p. 334.

3. Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette, 15th May, 1861, p. 200.

4. See above p. 207.

5. Salmon, op. cit. p. 49.

6. Belfast Newsletter, August 24th, 1859. Sinclair addressed 600 people at Carryduff, on 'Now is the accepted time', and he was asked to return.

7. Ballymena Observer, 25th June, 1859.

8. ibid. 18th June, 1859; Banner of Ulster, 16th June, 1859.



eight prayer meetings in the bounds of Boveva;<sup>1</sup> James Clow, of Caledon, organized a large open-air meeting in Water Park, Caledon, on Thursday, 4th August, when some 1,500 people attended to hear the speakers, the Rev. John Bleckley of First Monaghan, the Rev. J. R. McAlister, Armagh, with Messrs. Shillington and Montgomery, laymen of Portadown.<sup>2</sup> Shillington, a Methodist, reported on the Ahoghill affairs to no less than three meetings held in one day in the Town Hall, Portadown, at 6 a.m., 12 noon, and 8 p.m. on Monday, 6th June.<sup>3</sup> A letter in the press told of the founding at Connor of a society, apparently to support lay workers in their preaching efforts, and recording the fact that there were six missionaries in connection with the society who received £10 each per annum as salary.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, Connor Presbyterian Church engaged James McQuilkin as their church missionary in June, 1859, according to a correspondent from Castlegore, Connor,<sup>5</sup> and in First Derry a meeting was held on Monday, 22nd August, to inaugurate a general "lay agency" by means of which to carry the Gospel of Christ to the streets and lanes of the city.<sup>6</sup>

Other laymen who helped were McAfee, who spoke at the open-air meeting at Ballyboggy, near Ballyrashane, to some 1,500 people;<sup>7</sup> Capt. Orr, of the Royal Artillery, who travelled from the Coleraine district, conducted religious exercises before the prison in Enniskillen,<sup>8</sup> and addressed meetings in Derry; in Berry Street Presbyterian Church, Belfast, the Rev. Prof. William Gibson was assisted by Peter Drummond, of Stirling, Mr. Dickson and Mr. Campbell, Ahoghill, in the conduct of worship.<sup>9</sup> In Newtownards, William McIlwrath, of Glarryford, was appointed Town Missionary.<sup>10</sup> He and his wife built Greenwell Street Presbyterian

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1. Reid, op. cit. p. 23.
  2. Belfast Newsletter, 8th August, 1859.
  3. Portadown News, 11th June, 1859.
  4. ibid. 23rd July, 1859.
  5. Banner of Ulster, 14th June; and Ballymena Observer, 18th June, 1859.
  6. Londonderry Standard, 25th August, 1859.
  7. Belfast Newsletter, 20th June, 1859.
  8. Enniskillen Reporter and Belfast Newsletter, 20th June, 1859.
  9. Belfast Newsletter, 23rd June, 1859.
  10. ibid. 24th June, 1859.



Church, and eventually he became its first minister when he was ordained. J. M. Lynn, M.D., presided at the monster Revival meeting held in Armagh city on Wednesday, 14th September, when 'not less than 20 thousand' gathered in Mr. Stanley's field near the old railway station, and it was said that between three and four thousand travelled in one train, many sitting on the train carriage roofs, forcing the train to slow down, as they lay down to pass under bridges!<sup>1</sup> Members of Ballycraigie Independent Church were often ministered to by Mr. David Quern,<sup>2</sup> who worked for a time as a scripture reader and assistant to the Rev. James Bain of Straid, with whose congregation Ballycraigie was united. Quern was "a pious, comparatively unlettered, but most assiduous and devoted servant of God." Massie further declared that the people have "been so moved by the evangelistic tenor of Mr. Quern's preaching that they have adopted his ministry for themselves and their families."<sup>3</sup> We are assured that this good man spent almost fifty years ministering over a wide area in the district.<sup>4</sup> These are but a few of the many laymen who entered wholeheartedly into the running of the numerous prayer meetings at which they often delivered a brief word of exhortation or testimony, and on occasion the gospel invitation. This in turn led to public addresses in little schoolhouses or in the open air, occasionally even in private houses, and sometimes in church services when sufficient experience had been gained. The Synod of Belfast was assured by the Presbyteries of Comber and Ards, testifying that the prayer meetings were conducted chiefly by laity, elders and laymen principally.<sup>5</sup> Many were very popular with the people, as in the above-mentioned case of Mr. Quern and Ballycraigie. Some laymen "who have either been ordained ruling elders in our church, or who have received the sanction of its office bearers"<sup>6</sup> were much

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1. Belfast Newsletter, 16th September, and Portadown News, 17th (September, 1859.

2. Cairns, op. cit. p. 491.

3. Massie, op. cit. p. 35.

4. Cairns, op. cit. p. 491.

5. Belfast Presbytery State of Religion Report to Belfast Synod 1861.

6. Adams, op. cit. p. 23, his italics.



used in Antrim, Derry, Down, Monaghan, Tyrone and Belfast. A Sabbath school teacher from Ahoghill went out by faith through Antrim, Derry, and Donegal, preaching for six weeks about mid-summer. By mid-July this only child left his father to manage the harvest and went, at the earnest request of friends, back to Derry and Donegal where he had the joy, to mention but one place, of seeing fifty souls brought to Christ. Two other Ahoghill laymen, Messrs. Fullerton and Hogg, first fruits of the Revival, held eighteen meetings in connection with thirteen congregations in County Monaghan, and gave "the utmost satisfaction."<sup>1</sup> Another two Ahoghill lay evangelists visited County Tyrone where they were highly commended by a minister, and requested to return soon.

The Synod of Ballymena and Coleraine heard that "the work has been carried forward in many districts by the agency of the converts themselves. As many as have been brought to know Christ have taken delight in telling to all around them what a precious Saviour they have found. The fear of men is completely taken away; and uneducated persons, of humble station, are heard to offer up prayer to God, with fluency, propriety, and fervour, in the presence of the multitudes, and without embarrassment or trepidation, to call on their assembled fellow-sinners to repent, and believe the Gospel."<sup>2</sup> From Lisburn it was stated that "... witnesses of Jesus are daily ... being sent from the east to the west and from the north to the south, and they are nobly fulfilling the mission on which their Divine Master is now regularly sending them."<sup>3</sup> A minister of the Church of Ireland testified "We do not suppose it to be consistent with the principles of the Church (of Ireland), even though it were expedient, to give laymen the same functions which they readily obtain in the dissenting bodies. It has become an ordinary part of the public worship, in some Presbyterian and Methodist houses, to allow the 'converts' to address the congregation, and tell what a change has passed over them. Some of

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1. Adams, op. cit. p. 23, his italics.

2. Missionary Herald, 1st September, 1859; Report of the Synod of Ballymena and Coleraine.

3. Alexander McCann, Revival Movement in Lisburn, p. 33.



these addresses are very solemn and affecting. I have heard instances of persons who had been avowed sceptics, profligates, and drunkards, standing up to tell that they had resolved to amend their lives. One man, who had actually taken an interest in circulating sceptical publications, told the congregation of his conversion, and went round the several persons whom he thought he had injured by his conversation, to try to undo the evil which he had done, as well as he could."<sup>1</sup> No less a person than Arch-deacon Stopford, who spent the latter half of July, 1859, in Belfast adjudging the situation, stated that the best sermon he heard in Belfast, was by a working man during a dinner-hour service, addressing a very interested one hundred and fifty men and lads.<sup>2</sup> A letter, written by Charles Seaver, offered suggestions as to how the laity might assist the clergy, not only by prayer and visitation, but by Bible and tract distribution, "buy such and place them in men's hands" he said.<sup>3</sup> Parallel thoughts emanated from a group of Presbyterian ministers at Stewartstown who sought to expend the Revival movement and guide it wisely, suggesting that supplications be multiplied and vigilant care extended to 'new-born babes' by the lay agency. It was urged that laymen watch carefully for Satan's obstructions.<sup>4</sup>

Unfortunately, being human, these converts were not all blessed with equal tact and discretion; many certainly were sagacious and careful, but there were some who needed restraint, as where a man stated that Christ was a sinner like himself, or another prayed that all ministers' mouths might be stopped until they had adopted his views, which were most unscriptural.<sup>5</sup> The Rev. John Williams, a Baptist minister from Glasgow, wrote to Dr. Massie, on 26th July, 1859, "... When I was at Coleraine, I was requested to go into the country to address a meeting in the open-air. About one hundred and fifty persons assembled. A Christian

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1. Salmon, op. cit. pp. 49, 50.

2. E. A. Stopford, The Religious Revival in Belfast, p. 6.

3. Belfast Newsletter, 22nd June, 1859.

4. *ibid.* 23rd June, 1859.

5. Adams, op. cit. pp. 24, 25.



minister presided. Three converts addressed the meeting, and at such length that no opportunity was given to me to speak a word for Christ. I could have borne with the length of the converts' speeches, but I do declare that for want of common sense such speeches I never heard in my life... I maintain that such exhibitions ... mar and dishonour the glorious work of God, and should at once and for ever be put down."<sup>1</sup> An illustration of the length of the foolishness of a few of the converts - "I was told by one woman to whom the doctor of this town, a most kind man, whose heart is altogether with the work, led me, that although she could neither read nor write, and although she had not known any thing before, yet now no man or minister could teach her any thing, as she had been one of the 'cases',"<sup>2</sup> while "in a large town, where the drinking of spirits has decreased in a remarkable manner, and where, of course, much less is spent on them than was spent before, I was informed by a clergyman in the neighbourhood that the inhabitants were reduced to such poverty by the idleness of the converts, that it had been found necessary to raise a subscription for their relief. More was lost by the increase of idleness than was saved by the increase of sobriety."<sup>3</sup> "Many of these (ignorant laymen) have actually been paid at the rate of twenty shillings a week, others have not returned to their ordinary labour for a week or a fortnight, conceiving that they had received a commission to tell what happiness they had derived from the Gospel. They are brought from place to place, and some of their addresses on these occasions are affecting; some are very little short of blasphemous."<sup>4</sup> 'Clericus' writing in the Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette thought that "It seems strange that the most difficult and delicate part of public instruction, namely open air preaching should be left in such unqualified hands ..."<sup>5</sup> and a clergyman familiar with the situation, and

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1. Massie, op. cit. p. 89, his italics.

2. Salmon, op. cit. p. 37, footnote.

3. Hincks, op. cit. p. 12.

4. Salmon, op. cit. p. 49; (postscript).

5. Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette, 15th August, 1861.

of sound judgment, wrote "A good deal of what would appear to us very indecent, and well-nigh blasphemous, is simply in their case, want of taste. It is surprising that the extravagant familiarity with the most awful subjects does not destroy all their feelings of reverence. It does not produce in the minds of the poor what would be the inevitable effect with more cultivated minds."<sup>1</sup> However, despite these stiff strictures, most of these laymen were amenable to reason, had received the sanction of the officebearers of their church, being willing to be guided by their ministers at monthly conferences,<sup>2</sup> and although some injudicious persons were occasionally employed who sometimes spoke unwisely, yet on the whole "the testimony of sober-minded men, lay and clerical, has been borne to the soundness of their (the laymen's) views, the discretion and wisdom with which they acted, and in many instances, the unction and power that accompanied their services ..."<sup>3</sup>

Another feature of the Revival was the 'striking down', which occurred in the first half year of the work of grace. Apparently one of the earliest occurrences of such phenomena was in Ahoghill about February, 1858, 'but, as his case was not at the time rightly understood, or known, it produced no appreciable result.'<sup>4</sup> Bishop Charles P. McIlwaine,<sup>5</sup> of Ohio, writing to the Bishop of Down and Connor, quotes a settler's grandchild in America remarking, as he heard of the 'striking down' in Ireland, "Why, that is exactly what occurred among the Scotch-Irish in Kentucky, in 1804!" Bishop McIlwaine continued "The character of the people was precisely that from which you would least expect mere excitement. They are the very ones to suspect and resist all attempts to produce excitement. But among those Scotch-Irish strangely appeared precisely such cases of striking

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1. Salmon, op. cit. p. 51.

2. See below, Chapter IX 'Results' p. 411

3. Seaver, op. cit. p. 9.

4. Adams, op. cit. p. 7.

5. Sometimes written 'McIlwaine' e.g. Gibson, op. cit. p. 327.

6. Gibson, op. cit. p. 73.



as the same sort of people in the very region whence their fathers came, have now been exhibiting."<sup>1</sup> Another letter from McIlwaine stated "The effects mentioned as being seen often in bodily manifestations ... are not new entirely ... It is very conceivable that such powerful disclosures of a sinner's state under God's condemnation may be made all at once, as by the flash of the Sword of the Spirit - or, to say better, by its instant opening of the whole evil heart - as that the body shall deeply sympathise in the overpowering impression - naturally, reasonably - just as the body might give way at a sudden announcement of some terrible calamity impending over our physical life ..."<sup>2</sup>

About the same time as the occurrence in Ahoghill, a child in one of the Sunday School classes in Kells and Connor "was so overpowered that its body was prostrated, and it suffered greatly in consequence. This astonished them (McQuilkin, Meneely, etc.) as it was the first they had ever seen or heard of."<sup>3</sup> Four months later they could count in the district of Connor, "sixteen or seventeen who had experienced the blessed change."<sup>4</sup> This mysterious influence not only occurred in Connor and Ahoghill about the same time, but was the means in some measure of increasing interest around Ahoghill on the 14th March, 1859, when the flames of revival burst from the smouldering embers.<sup>5</sup> In a service in Wellington Street, Ballymena, when the Rev. S. J. Moore was speaking, the audience did not separate, and the 'mysterious influence' as it was described<sup>6</sup> was at work, and suddenly twenty were 'struck'. One stretched, arch-like, on heels and head for several minutes. While many ministers, including the Bishop of Down, the Rev. S. J. Moore, Dr. Cooke<sup>7</sup>, and the Rev. J. M. Killen,<sup>8</sup> to name a few, and many laymen, warned congregations not to think

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1. Gibson, op. cit. p. 328.

2. The Revival, October 8th, 1859, p. 86.

3. Massie, op. cit. p. 3.

4. *ibid.*

5. See above, Chapter III, p. 122.

6. Belfast Newsletter, 20th June, 1859.

7. Weir, op. cit. pp. 60, 61.

8. Gibson, op. cit. p. 73.

that only the prostrated were the converted,<sup>1</sup> while the Rev. Prof. McCosh, addressing the Evangelical Alliance in Belfast in September, 1859, said "No bodily state is an evidence of an operation of the Spirit of God."<sup>2</sup> Some others declared that while not all who were stricken were really converted, a large majority of them, ninety per cent., were,<sup>3</sup> and it was "notorious that hundreds of mill girls in Belfast have prayed, and are praying, to be 'struck'."<sup>4</sup> The Rev. Dr. Spence - a London visitor to the scenes of the Revival - stated "I conversed with several (converts), professedly rejoicing in Christ, who had never been 'struck'; yet, so common had the physical manifestations been, that I found a tendency on the part of those who had not experienced them to fear lest they could not be right without them."<sup>5</sup> This mysterious influence often worked at the end of a meeting, as, e.g., a very large open-air gathering in Ballymena, after the Benediction, one, two, three fell in quick succession, so that by 10.30 p.m. nine circles of the 'stricken', eleven in one such, were noted.<sup>6</sup> However, sometimes the mysterious influence exerted its presence even at the very beginning of meetings before many had gathered, as in Derry "one woman struck before the ministers arrived" at a prayer meeting on Wednesday, 22nd June.<sup>7</sup> A strange phenomenon was the fact that it was claimed that those who were stricken down could "after the first time" say when "they are invariably informed as to the day, the hour and the very place, when and where they will next be stricken, and that information is communicated to them just a few minutes before the time has arrived for their coming out of their previous vision."<sup>8</sup> The same writer claimed "Neither is it in the power of any mortal to prevent those persons from going to and returning from those visions at the very minute which had

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1. Ballymena Observer, 9th July; Belfast Newsletter, 11th July, 1859.

2. McCosh, The Ulster Revival, p. 10.

3. McCann, op. cit. p. 15.

4. Stopford, op. cit. p. 37.

5. Londonderry Standard, 18th August, 1859.

6. Belfast Newsletter, 23rd June, 1859.

7. ibid. 25th June, 1859.

8. McCann, op. cit. p. 34.



been previously appointed."<sup>1</sup> This strange influence sometimes caused temporary blindness and dumbness, and indeed a loss of consciousness. But that it was not impossible to control, as McCann claimed, can be seen from Hodge, "in Northampton, where Edwards rejoiced over them, they were abundant; in Boston, where they were regarded as 'blemishes' they had nothing of them."<sup>2</sup> The Rev. Dr. A. Field, of Dervock Presbyterian Church, had two instances in his district. One woman predicted that she "was to be in the same condition three times more, and on the following evening at a certain hour." Field witnessed that though there was no clock in the house, at the appointed time she became strangely ill. He took her outside, and talked to her, but at last she signified her inability to speak. Field reminded her then of Jesus "when on earth, always opening the mouth, never making people dumb ... that it was her duty to glorify God ..." This had the desired effect, and she spoke and continued to speak during the remainder of the evening. The second woman intimated she was going into a trance to last seventeen hours. Field, entering the house, found her lying on a bed apparently unconscious and deaf, dumb and blind. He prayed, and then told her to open her eyes, saying he believed she could if she would. As this had no effect, he opened her clenched hands and lifted her eyelids. Then he got her mouth opened, and by means of water and the friction of her own finger unloosed her tongue, whereupon "the low voice of prayer announced that her power of speech was regained." It is interesting to notice that for eight weeks previously the latter case had been seldom out of these trances, but now she was completely recovered.<sup>3</sup> Another young minister was the Rev. Todd Martin who, at one meeting, feeling the growth of hysteria, and the danger of morbid emotional crisis, averted it and swung the meeting back to sanity by rising and repeating quietly the Shorter

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1. McCann, op. cit. p. 34.

2. Charles Hodge, Constitutional History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, 1840, p. 78.

3. Gibson, op. cit. pp. 347, 348.

Catechism definitions of faith in Jesus Christ and repentance unto life.<sup>1</sup> The Rev. J. G. McVicker, then of Cullybackey Reformed Presbyterian Church, testified to the Scottish people "In answer to believing prayer for the removal of an evil spirit working in such persons he (McVicker) has again and again seen immediate deliverance granted."<sup>2</sup> The Rev. Theophilus Campbell told of meeting two young people - a man and a woman - who had been afflicted. "Quietly I spoke to them of the way of salvation, and proposed a few questions. They were very ignorant of the Scriptures, and almost even of the work of our Lord on the cross. After about half an hour's conversation, they themselves perceived their ignorance." Their excitement abated, instead an anxious expression marked their faces, and after prayer the woman "requested me to specify some portions of the Scriptures for her to read in private, remarking that 'others had visited her, but had not spoken to her as I had done'." Thereafter she attended Campbell's classes for scriptural instruction.<sup>3</sup> Spence, testing every case he met, found different responses:- "sometimes I could find no solid scriptural basis for the transition from sadness to joy ... in not a few cases, feeling alone had to do with the change."<sup>4</sup> Stopford averred "I heard no cry in Belfast which I could not have immediately subdued,"<sup>5</sup> though he afterwards modified his claim,<sup>6</sup> while Salmon bluntly said "Let it be once well known that they are not permitted, and they will not take place."<sup>7</sup>

That some of these 'stricken' ones had a remarkable experience was demonstrated in the instance of 'Mary',<sup>8</sup> a rough, uneducated servant girl prostrated at Ballycloughan prayer meeting, and was

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1. J. E. Davey, The Story of a Hundred Years, p. 43.
  2. Reformed Presbyterian Magazine, September, 1859, p. 295.
  3. Gibson, *op. cit.* p. 342 (footnote).
  4. Londonderry Standard, 18th August, 1859.
  5. Stopford, *op. cit.* p. 73.
  6. *ibid.* p. 98.
  7. Salmon, *op. cit.* p. 35 (his italics).
  8. Ballymena Observer (Editorial) 9th July, 1859. Other instances Belfast Newsletter, 27th June, 1859, 'Agnes' and 'Rachael' who opened eyelids yet could not see, and were speechless two days. The brilliance of the eyes was noted.



unable to speak. After stamping her feet on the ground as she stood transfixed, and looking imploringly to heaven, she reclined, and eagerly snatched a New Testament offered to her. Remembering that she could not read, it is surprising to be assured that she searched the scriptures and traced twenty-three portions of the Book, pointing out with her finger the very words she wanted noted. This lasted five hours. This New Testament was before the editor of the Ballymena Observer as he wrote the leading article, and he testified that all the passages referred "with pointed accuracy to the gospel plan for the redemption of our fallen race."<sup>1</sup> Another instance was that of a good and pious thirteen year old girl who told her parents "I will regain my speech on Tuesday at 4 o'clock, and lose it again on Wednesday at 5 o'clock. An angel told me so today (Saturday, 2nd July, 1859."<sup>2</sup> The editor testified that at four o'clock precisely she awakened, and at 11.30 went totally blind. At 9.30 next morning she opened her eyes, but at 10 a.m. she was speechless the second time, and remained so till 2 p.m. the same day. The editor avowed that he visited her, and testified to the truth of these facts. An explanation offered in the days of the Revival for the blindness and dumbness was that they came in a vast number of cases, not in persons struck for the first time, but in persons struck a number of times, and the hint is given that bodily excitement was being carried too far.<sup>3</sup> Archdeacon A.W. Edwards, of Dunboe, said plainly that the selection of Scripture passages in the many cases in his district "was quite random and fortuitous, occasionally appropriate and more often completely otherwise."<sup>4</sup>

The Rev. Richard Smyth, minister of First Derry, said: "We have no examples of dumbness, or blindness, or supernatural marks, or prophetic or clairvoyant gifts to record ... in the city of Londonderry,"<sup>5</sup> though he records that "throughout the

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1. Ballymena Observer, 9th July, 1859.

2. *ibid.*

3. McCosh, *op. cit.* p. 13.

4. Personal letter of Archdeacon Edwards, 15th August, 1859;  
Stopford, *op. cit.* p. 85.

5. Reid, *op. cit.* p. 376.

church there were groups gathered round individuals who had been 'stricken'."<sup>1</sup> It would appear that in Derry the extravagances of 'strickenness' were not encouraged, and it was said that "Revival did not paralyse the hand of industry."<sup>2</sup> By the 11th August, while it was recorded that the Revival was progressing, it was stated also that there were few, if any, physical manifestations now.<sup>3</sup> Spence wrote "... Men are apt to run before God; forced processes of excitement are here and there resorted to; and many seem to wait for the physical power to come upon them that they may be converted; striking cases of conversion are, if I may use the term, 'lionised' to the great injury of the converts; and thus the Wicked One sows the tares where the good seed of the Kingdom has taken root. Much depends, under God, on the holy wisdom of the ministers of the Gospel, who are in the midst of this work."<sup>4</sup> These public prostrations which had developed so openly at Ahoghill in mid-March, 1859, began to be less numerous around Ballymena in the last week of July<sup>5</sup> and "occurrence of physical phenomena now, for the most part, limited to cases wherein the parties had been previously affected ... These recurrences appear as the result of renewed mental excitement, and its action in persons of peculiar temperament."

In north Derry where the Revival was manifested in the second week of June<sup>6</sup> the press reported that six weeks later<sup>7</sup> the bodily prostrations had almost disappeared, though it was said by one who lived in the midst of it all that "up till the end of August the excitement continued with little if any abatement."<sup>8</sup> In Strabane no great excitement took place among the population,<sup>9</sup>

1. Reid, op. cit. p. 368.

2. Derry Standard, 28th July, 1859.

3. ibid. 11th August, 1859.

4. ibid. 18th August, 1859.

5. Ballymena Observer, 23rd July, 1859.

6. Reid, op. cit. p. 337.

7. Derry Standard, 24th July, 1859.

8. Reid, op. cit. p. 338.

9. Gibson, op. cit. p. 249.



and the newspapers recorded 'no bodily prostrations.'<sup>1</sup> Mr. J. G. Clarke, a licentiate of the Presbyterian Church, wrote "Except on two occasions near the commencement of the revival, the services of converts were not in requisition. The meetings were in every case presided over by ministers, elders, or other experienced Christian laymen ..."<sup>2</sup> Of Derry city it was said "There is an absence of all undue excitement and the public mind seems quietly and seriously drinking in the Word."<sup>3</sup> In Lisburn, and in the North Down area of Boardmills there were cases of prostration or 'striking down' which the Rev. G. H. Shanks, of Boardmills, writing on the abuses of the Revival, admitted might be of the Spirit, but he doubted if the 'sleeps', 'trances', 'marks' and pointing to texts were the Spirit's work.<sup>4</sup> These 'marks' got public notoriety in September when it was attested<sup>5</sup> that a woman had a Red Indian tattooed on her body, and on one breast a fiery cross with the word 'JEASUS', and on the other the word 'Christ'. As if this were not enough, upon her arm was inscribed the words 'Seek ye the Lord', but these words were alleged to fade away at times. These marks appeared on Sunday, 4th September, and had been there about nine days when they were reported in the newspapers, which also stated that on one day a sum of eleven shillings was raised from spectators who came to view.

Making reference to these peculiarities and in particular to the stigmata of the girl with the cross mark upon her breast which it was alleged no amount of washing could obliterate, a local clergyman said "There has been an enormous influx of visitors from all parts of the world, who have sometimes shown

1. Londonderry Standard, 14th July, 1859.
2. Gibson, op. cit. p. 250. Names of ministers and elders: the Revs. Russell, Chancellor, Geddes, Patterson, and Messrs. George McCarter, Clarke and Stevenson, with occasional assistance of the Revs. Chambers and McConaghy. (Londonderry Standard, 14th July, 1859.
3. Coleraine Chronicle, 1st October; also Revival, October 15, 1859.
4. Belfast Newsletter, 22nd September, 1859.
5. Northern Whig, 13th September; Belfast Newsletter, 14th September, 1859.

even less prudence than the wildest of our native celebrities. They have come to see some strange thing, and are not satisfied to go away with their wishes ungratified. So there is a constant demand for every form of extravagance, and in such a population as ours, with a large number of poor, uneducated workers, there is no difficulty in keeping up the supply. Because the visitors, coming with the feelings natural to persons bent on sight-seeing, are very willing to pay for the value which they receive. A tale of distress, very often real, very often fictitious, appeals strongly to their feelings, and they are expected to contribute towards its relief."<sup>1</sup> In Lisburn a 'bluebag' case of Mary Saunders, of Knockmore, Lisburn, was investigated by the Revs. William Breakey and J. S. Hall. It would appear that on Friday, 9th September, 1859, about eight o'clock in the evening, Mary was sewing in the kitchen of her home, when she was stricken, and was found to have the word 'Lord' marked on her left arm.<sup>2</sup> The two ministers alleged that the marks were made with a 'bluebag' or some such similar article.<sup>3</sup> On the 4th October, a layman - Alexander McCann - replied on behalf of the 'marks' to the Rev. William Breakey in a sixty-four page pamphlet: 'The Revival Movement in Lisburn.' McCann alleged that the Revival movement, including the 'striking down', visions and marks were the work of God.<sup>4</sup> He stated that some ten weeks before in the house of Mr. McGalister, in Lisburn, where he resided, a young woman had on seven different occasions named, unasked, the hour of the day and night, to the very minute, and this when her eyes were sealed up for hours.<sup>5</sup> Next McCann claimed that ninety per cent. of the stricken ones were really converted,<sup>6</sup> mentioning the case of one who was treated medically by a doctor, who was unable to do anything for her, leaving her to the bystanders.<sup>7</sup> However, after a length of time the patient is

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1. Salmon, op. cit. pp. 52 and 62. (his italics).

2. McCann, The Revival Movement in Lisburn, p. 39.

3. Belfast Newsletter, 14th September, 1859. Breakey was minister of the Presbyterian Church; Hall was curate to Dean Stannus of Lisburn Cathedral.

4. McCann, op. cit. p. 13.

5. *ibid.* p. 14.

6. *ibid.* p. 15.

7. *ibid.* p. 16.



restored again, due to Divine aid, McCann claims.<sup>1</sup> Of the marks, McCann denied that he ever said that there may not have been imposters, but he did affirm that so far he had not seen any.<sup>2</sup> He further asserted that "neither is it in the power of any mortal to prevent those persons from going to and returning from these visions ..."<sup>3</sup> Of the marks on Mary Saunders' arm McCann declared that when Breakey and Hall entered the house two hours after the mark 'Lord' had appeared, the appointed time of the removal of the mark had come, and he stated that "the letters were on the decline for some time previously; they had thus grown dim, compared with their brightness in their finished state, and were passing slowly and by degrees away" so that Breakey and Hall were able to wipe them off with a damp cloth.<sup>4</sup>

On this matter May Street Presbyterian Church, Belfast, heard the Rev. Dr. Cooke thunder forth on revivals on 12th June, when he stated that there was "no question that the grace of God was there. Reformation was there, penitence was there, and humiliation was there." "He was thankful that in that church in which they were than assembled, there had been no manifestations, yet he thought that in more than one instance, there had been many wonderful workings of the hand of God upon the soul." Cooke grieved over people running to houses where there were those under solemn impressions - "... spend no more time on the satisfying of this idle curiosity."<sup>5</sup> In a similar strain the Evangelical Alliance heard S. J. Moore, of Ballymena, state "... Consider a poor family that have to live by their industry, visited by twelve or fifteen parties every week... 'If these people would only go home' ... said a converted woman ... But these visits have also the effect of keeping up an unhappy excitement and vanity among the people; for I recollect the

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1. McCann, op. cit. p. 16.

2. *ibid.* p. 31.

3. *ibid.* p. 35.

4. *ibid.* p. 40.

5. Londonderry Standard, 15th June, 1859.

case of a little child who came to me and said, 'O sir, there has just been seven gentlemen visiting me and they said I was the best case they ever saw.' Observe the vanity of the child. Besides, are not the cases of marking, of which we have heard in Belfast and Lisburn, the result of visiting and of money? Oh, the injury that may fall upon the cause of Christ by the constant visiting among these poor people of the ladies and gentlemen of Edinburgh and Glasgow! ..."<sup>1</sup> Lest it should be thought that these 'marks' were common among the converts, it should be emphasised that it was their very novelty which attracted attention, and even prostrations only affected a small fraction of the vast number of those influenced. "Of all the awakened not more than one in seven have suffered anything like the bodily prostration, trance, or convulsion which the small minority have experienced, but all have felt deep emotion in agonising prayer to the Lord Jesus for pardon and peace, the obtaining of which, by the great majority, has produced within them joy unspeakable."<sup>2</sup> In the month of May the converts were narrowly watched with critical eye, and "not a single act of their's has been pointed out as contrary to their Christian professions."<sup>3</sup> Six months later it was stated "The strictest scrutiny could not produce a dozen backsliders."<sup>4</sup>

The bodily manifestations slowly passed away from the scenes of the Revival after only a few months, while the beneficial characteristics remain, some of them,—regular Sabbath observance, church attendance, temperance, a strong sense of Protestantism, a keen interest in spiritual things — being most notable even to this day, a century later.

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1. The Revival, 15th October, 1859, p. 94.

2. Adams, op. cit. p. 10.

3. Belfast Newsletter, 25th May, 1859.

4. ibid. 18th November, 1859. pp. 327-328.



CHAPTER VII

THE NATURE OF THE RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place."<sup>1</sup> The Awakening of 1859 in the North of Ireland was the direct outcome of groups of dedicated men and women at prayer in very many places in the Province of Ulster. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in 1844, spoke of coming revival with a strong conviction that it would take place. A nine section omnibus resolution was unanimously adopted which stated, inter alia, "... that a portion of time be set apart for special devotional exercises, at the various meetings of our several courts, whether Assembly, presbyteries or sessions; that prayer meetings be established and increased in every congregation, to be conducted by the minister, elders, or pious members thereof; that ministers urge on their flocks increased attention to family and closet devotion; and that our people generally be exhorted to wrestle with God more perseveringly in secret, for the outpouring of His Spirit on the Church and the world."<sup>2</sup> In the reference to the Assembly, Presbytery and Session, can be seen the idea of a complete group spirit, a psychological unity of the whole church. This unity was to show itself in the efforts of 1855 to build manses - one of the first united efforts of the now united church. But far more so was it to be seen in the cumulative effect of numerous little prayer meetings growing into the great united prayer meetings that took place in Belfast's Botanic Gardens, the Music Hall, and numerous other places, where the manifest likemindedness of the people of almost all Protestant churches gathered for prayer and worship was a pre-requisite of the suggestibility, emotional excitement, and absence of inhibition, which constitute

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1. Acts II, 1.

2. Minutes of the General Assembly, 1844, pp. 327-328.

a psychological crowd. It was as at the day of Pentecost, when "... the clouds somehow burst, the old inhibitions which may have bound them to their old lives were gone, everything was surrendered to the will of God, and a tide of emotion and devoted loyalty swept over them which they had never known before, the results of which will only end with human history."<sup>1</sup>

Little prayer meetings sprang up here and there over the countryside, and in succession to the General Assembly's wish, they joined in prayer. Many others had Methodist background and urge, following the ideas of the now familiar policy of John Wesley and his 'bands' - little groups who gathered for prayer and mutual improvement in Spiritual things, a Moravian idea absorbed in Wesleyanism. Earnest rectors like Seaver and Campbell in Belfast, and Mooney in Ballymena, noted the zeal in their own parishes as the spirit of prayer spread abroad among them. These led to the necessary conditions for successful revival - the state of tension, expectancy and excitement, sometimes subdued sometimes explosive, which transformed groups of individuals into a psychological crowd. The Rev. John Macnaughtan related to his own congregation of Rosemary Street, Belfast, that he had visited Ballymena to see the Revival. He called on the Rev. S. M. Dill, who took him to Barrack Street area, to Talbot Street, which was completely empty of people. Dill told Macnaughtan to begin to preach, to which he replied 'There is nobody here,' but as soon as he started to speak, every door opened and a crowd gathered, and Macnaughtan told his own congregation in Belfast that he - and he was used to the Disruption scenes in Scotland in 1843 and afterwards - "never preached to a more listening congregation in his life."<sup>2</sup> Here is evidence of that curiosity and wonder which indicate the state of induced expectation and excitement which prepared the hearts and minds of the people for the unquestioning accept-

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1. J. B. Pratt, The Religious Consciousness, p. 175.

2. Belfast Newsletter, 30th May; Ballymena Observer, 4th June, 1859.



ance of the preachers' messages and for belief in the mysterious power of God. It would appear to be the aim of the revivalist preacher to create an atmosphere of contagious emotion and suggestibility, indeed an actual relative primitive credulity, when worldly reason, selfish prudence, and even material welfare are inhibited. "Make the individual want to believe with all his heart, make him feel that he ought to believe, and also that others around him are believing, and he will believe."<sup>1</sup> This is evidenced in the Ballyclare and Ballynure area where not only were there "prayer meetings in every second house, groups in the street interested in the topic of conversation, but even public work stopped due to the serious interest."<sup>2</sup> In Cookstown the market day was so orderly and quiet that "it was more like a Sabbath than a market-day."<sup>3</sup> Where this inhibition of critical reasoning was not achieved, temporary failure was recorded, as at the town of Ballymena, which most peculiarly in the early days of the Revival was skirted all round by the movement, but the town itself was passed over for some two months' time.<sup>4</sup> Similar incidents transpired, it would appear, at Armagh,<sup>5</sup> and Newtownards.<sup>6</sup> This would seem to be evidence of a situation where "in the phrase of evangelical theology, the heart is not awakened and there is no overmastering sense of sin and no 'conversions'; in psychological terms there is no increased suggestibility and loss of inhibition."<sup>7</sup>

From the psychological view, Dr. William Sargant, in his *Battle for the Mind*, has shown the similarity, so far as mental processes are concerned, between religious conversion, psycho-

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1. Pratt, op. cit. p. 190.

2. Ballymena Observer, 11th June, 1859.

3. ibid. 18th June, 1859.

4. See Chapter III, above, p. 129.

5. At Armagh "for at least two months it had been anxiously anticipated." (Gibson, op. cit. p. 260.) "There was an impression abroad that God was not going to visit Armagh." (Gibson, op. cit. p. 262.)

6. Reid, op. cit. pp. 287-288: "What if Newtownards should be passed over?" See above, p. 171.

7. Pratt, op. cit. p. 174.



analysis, and political brain washing.<sup>1</sup> None the less, what Dr. Sargant has scientifically expressed has been well known down the years to students of revival. As Dr. K. S. Latourette has demonstrated, Christianity "like the tide ... has moved forward in waves, each major wave has been followed by a major recession, but each major wave has set a new high water mark, and each major recession has been less pronounced than its predecessor."<sup>2</sup> This shows plainly that "the waves of religious revival observable at different periods of time are really one movement in the ebb and flow of history, that between the seasons of revival the lamps of religious devotion have been kept burning in the hearts of an unbroken succession of faithful men and women, and that each movement of revival has begun with the faithful remnant," as Owen Brandon has so well said.<sup>3</sup> Brandon continues, "It is impossible to overstate the importance of the existence of the faithful remnant in the history of revival. Revival has always been the fruit of faithful sowing, and the sowing has been done by devout parents and pastors and teachers during the bleak periods in the Church's life."<sup>4</sup> Support for this contention comes from the Rev. Albert Barnes, of New York, who wrote: "The most powerful revivals of religion in this country (i.e., in America) have occurred in those places where the mass of people are best educated, and where they are most sober in their lives, most virtuous and industrious, and regular in their attendance on the house of God ... They have been the fruits of sound instruction, and of careful training in common schools and in Sabbath schools; they have occurred where the Gospel has been long and faithfully preached, and those who have been converted have been usually those whose minds have been most sedulously taught by the labours of the ministry; they have occurred eminently in our colleges and higher female seminaries - places far removed from mere enthusiasm, and

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1. W. Sargant, Battle for the Mind, Chapter VII (Pan Books).

2. K. S. Latourette, The Unquenchable Light, p. X.

3. Owen Brandon, The Battle for the Soul, pp. 51, 52.

4. *ibid.* p. 52.

5. *Halfway Revivalist*, 9th August, 1895.

6. See above Chapter VI, p. 234.



places where God has made intellectual culture contribute to the purity and power of revivals."<sup>1</sup>

The formative influences of music, with its infusion of theological and ritual content of institutional religion, can be shown to be most potent factors in conversion. The effect of music on crowds as well as individuals always helps to assist psychological inhibitions; in the Reformation Luther used the German hymns to spread the ideas of reform, Knox in Scotland urged singing in congregations, Wesley made the hymns of Methodism a vehicle of evangelism, and no less so was song the motivating force in the Ulster Revival in many cases. In both Episcopal and Presbyterian churches it is important to remember that the Tate and Brady Psalms were used till 1812 in the Church of Ireland, and the metrical psalms are still in use in the Presbyterian Church. In the Church of Ireland the 'Melodia Sacra' was published in 1812, its sequel 'The Choralist' in 1842, and 'Hymns for Public Worship' in 1856. Directly as an outcome of the Revival singing it would appear, there was published in Belfast in 1863 an "important collection of four hundred and fourteen hymns,"<sup>2</sup> and during the following year the Association for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge issued the 'Church Hymnal'.<sup>3</sup> Apart from the Methodists with their fervent love of song, there had been comparatively little hymn singing among the common people, and the Revival put the song of praise - apart from the psalms - into the hands and hearts of the people.<sup>4</sup> It was a great novelty in many ways. The cheaply published revival hymn books<sup>5</sup> stimulated curiosity and helped to create an attitude of wonder when they were heard. Since song is one of emotion's most adequate expressions, as well as its quickener and inspirer, it is to be expected that sacred music should be rich in religious feeling. The test of its quality

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1. Albert Barnes, quoted O. Brandon, op. cit. pp. 52, 53.

2. Johnston, Robinson, Jackson, A History of the Church of Ireland, p. 279.

3. *ibid.*

4. Belfast Newsletter, 9th August, 1859.

5. See above Chapter VI, p. 234.

will be its ability to express the varied chords of Christian experience. The temptation is always to lean to one side more than another, and so the constant expression of a few traits of religious sentiment, usually betrays either over-emphasis on these experiences, or that there is a lack of other Christian experience, which has not been sufficiently cultivated to secure such expression. Coe has written "... emotion has a scale as large and as varied as human life itself. When we speak of emotional temperament, emotional novels, emotional religious meetings, and the like, what we really have in mind is not merely the abundance of emotion, but also the quality... In any attempt at a psychological analysis of hymnology, therefore, it is necessary to note what emotion, rather than the degree of emotion, comes to expression."<sup>1</sup>

The hymns of the Revival were sometimes caustically criticized, as when it was written of them 'What is intended for thought is a mere jumble of pious ideas.'<sup>2</sup> That there is some justification for such strictures is seen in the fact that some revival hymns of different awakenings, have quickly faded out of use. The most popular hymn of the Ulster Awakening, entitled "What's the News?', is rarely heard nowadays, though some of the verses can be found in modern hymnbooks,<sup>3</sup> but the old tune of the days of 1859 is not found in any modern hymnbook. Yet all was not ephemeral, for the ageless Psalms are still used, and hymns like Duffield's 'Stand up, stand up for Jesus', Charlotte Elliott's 'Just as I am', and William Pennefather's 'Jesus stand among us' were much used and have grown into the stream of evangelical hymns of the Christian church. Somehow they have the majestic motion and the profound emotion of the great hymns of the church universal. In these hymns there is a solemn stately movement into the Lord's presence. The hymns that dropped out of use were usually light in thought, shallow in expression, and merely mechanical in metre. Not only so but the autobiographical element in some hymns

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1. Coe, The Spiritual Life, p. 221.

2. ibid. p. 229.

3. Redemption Songs, and Salvation Army Song Book.



increased the attitude of wonder and holy awe as is seen in the hymn written in the days of the Revival by the Rev. Henry Henderson, of Holywood, especially in the stanza

"Blessed Jesus, hear my cry,  
Ah, behold my agony!  
Lord of Glory! can it be  
There's no hope, no heaven for me?"<sup>1</sup>

Because the whole congregation took part in singing a hymn, such hymns became the expression of the violent emotions aroused by the revival experiences. As well, this very emotion was intensified by its expression, for not only was each singer having a suggestion planted in his own mind, but he helped to plant it in his neighbours' minds. Frequent singing of spiritual songs gave definition to the various phrases of religious experience, and their constant repetition provided new converts with a range of religious ideas which formed a basis for theological construction, and the heightening of emotion by means of the music was one of the most effective means and agencies in creating the atmosphere in which conversions were to be expected. As Davenport wrote "religious movements of magnitude have often assumed a mode which sociologists call sympathetic likemindedness ... it is at least doubtful whether there are people so low in the scale of mental development that they are not to some extent conscious of feeling, thinking, and acting together."<sup>2</sup> The rhythmic cadences of the music may be unconscious and unnoticed by the congregation, but they play their part since "rhythm is the line of least resistance for high emotion ... when the emotion is violent, muscle contraction becomes abnormal and we have the phenomenon of 'falling out',"<sup>3</sup> or 'falling down' as it was called in Ulster. Many have criticised this phenomenon as it occurred in Ulster in 1859, but it must be remembered that negro people look on this falling or strickenness as the clearest evidence of divine grace and conversion, and a necessary attestation of the 'call to preach'. "Usually the

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1. Belfast Newsletter, 23rd June, 1859.

2. F. M. Davenport, Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals, p. 1.

3. ibid. p. 55.

'call' came when the individual was sitting in church. Without warning the one called would fall upon the floor as if struck by a bullet, and would lie there for hours, speechless and motionless. Then the news would spread all through the neighbourhood that this individual had received a 'call'. If he were inclined to resist the summons, he would fall or be made to fall a second or third time. In the end he always yielded to the call."<sup>1</sup> Of the Scotch-Irish Revival in Kentucky in 1800, one of the most careful observers, the Rev. Mr. Lyle, who kept a diary and journal through this whole period of the Cane Ridge awakening, described the crowd as swarming round any 'fallen' person. "If the assembly were languid a few shrieks and one or two instances of falling would quickly arouse them, and as far in every direction as the people could see or hear, others would be caught in the contagion and would likewise fall."<sup>2</sup>

Of the Ulster Revival of 1859 Davenport recommended it as an excellent example of the normal working of the laws of impulsive social action.<sup>3</sup> "... in many sections, such preaching as there was, shocked whole communities into a sense of frightful personal danger, and pictured as vividly as did the old pioneers the fiery hell yawning at the feet of the impenitent. It was the crushing sense of sin, the awful apprehension of impending doom, and the looking forward to judgment, the fierce wrestling with the Evil One, which were everywhere the exciting conditions of the paroxysms."<sup>4</sup> Comparing the two awakenings in Kentucky and Ulster, Davenport concluded that "in Kentucky the motor automatisms, the voluntary muscles in violent action, were the prevailing type, although there were many of the sensory. On the other hand, in Ulster the sensory automatisms, trance vision, the physical disability and the sinking of muscular energy, were

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1. B. T. Washington, Up From Slavery, pp. 106, 107.

2. Davenport, op. cit. p. 76.

3. ibid. p. 87.

4. ibid. pp. 90, 91.



the prevailing type, although there were many of the motor."<sup>1</sup>

Nelson, that stern critic of the Revival in Ulster, wrote: "It must be manifest to ... readers, that, had there been no falling down, no convulsion, no fainting, there would have been no Revival."<sup>2</sup> From this statement is seen some of the peculiarities of the Revival. These phenomena and others are common stock in trade of almost all revivals in religion, for as well as these we read of the unexpected and bizarre manifestations called 'exercises' which occurred in Kentucky in 1800. Here were noted 'falling', 'jerks', 'dancing', 'running', and 'singing'.<sup>3</sup> Further reference to such and to glossolalia or ecstatic utterance found in other revivals<sup>4</sup> need only be made to say that what was found in Ulster - for "prostrations were common in Ulster, less common in Scotland, rare in Wales, and almost non-existent in England"<sup>5</sup> - was a manifestation of the milder sorts of the phenomena. There is no known occasion of barking, singing in the chest, jerks or speaking with tongues recorded. "I must remind you that in the revival which took place some fifty years ago in America, the very same nervous affections were experienced as are now (the name given to them was 'the falling exercise'); and the final result was found to be prejudicial to the cause of true religion. The Newlights, Shakers, and other extravagant and fanatical sects, were their natural offspring. The Americans had some other strange and grotesque nervous affections among them, from which we are ... exempt; particularly the 'jerking exercise'."<sup>6</sup> "So far as I know there is no person running mad on account of religion ..." wrote Adams to the press in April,<sup>7</sup> but by the first Sabbath of July "it has been stated in the news-

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1. Davenport, op. cit. p. 92.

2. Nelson, op. cit. p. 51.

3. Garrison and DeGroot, op. cit. pp. 99-102; also Davenport, Chapter VI; and R. A. Knox, Enthusiasm, pp. 560, 561; and compare with the Jansenist convulsions, Knox, pp. 377-381.

4. Davenport, op. cit. pp. 77, 80.

5. Orr, op. cit. p. 172.

6. Thomas Macneece, Words of Caution and Counsel, p. 14.

7. Ballymena Observer, 9th April, 1859.



papers, that several cases of mental derangement have occurred, including the case of one minister who took an active part in the movement."<sup>1</sup> By September the incumbent of St. George's, Belfast, the Rev. W. McIlwaine, could assert "that numerous cases of it (insanity) have come under my own observation,"<sup>2</sup> showing that the continued prostrations in individual cases had begun to take toll. It cannot be denied that there were prostrations, sometimes with attendant loss of speech, or blindness, or dumbness, and with these the famous or infamous 'marks'. But we do not find any parallels to the jumping and leaping recorded in the great Cornish work of Billy Bray,<sup>3</sup> while the nearest approach to the 'rolling exercise' - it "consisted in doubling the head and feet together and rolling over and over like a hoop"<sup>4</sup> - was in Moore's church, Ballymena, where one stricken person was 'stretched arch like on head and heels for several minutes.'<sup>5</sup>

Peculiarly these very same phenomena which occurred in Ulster, had also appeared in the preaching response of John Wesley, especially in the early years 1739-1742,<sup>6</sup> but not in Charles' preaching, for apparently he pre-emptorily ordered such interrupters to be carried out.<sup>7</sup> Many of these occurrences in John's experience occurred in the Bristol area of Kingswood,<sup>8</sup> one of the roughest places in Britain at the time. However by 1743 John Wesley had changed his opinion of these phenomena or prostrations, and from then on they seldom occurred at his preaching.<sup>9</sup> This was parallel to the Ulster Awakening, which, we hold, blazed forth most strongly at Ahoghill in March, 1859, when such prostrations became evident, and that they continued strongly till August the same year, afterwards slowly fading out

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1. Salmon, op. cit. p. 31.

2. William McIlwaine, Revivalism Reviewed, p. 15.

3. F. W. Bourne, The King's Son (Memoir of Billy Bray), p. 30.

4. Knox, op. cit. p. 560.

5. Belfast Newsletter, 20th June, 1859.

6. John Wesley, Journal, Vol. ii, pp. 331, 379, 385, 459, 460.

7. Charles Wesley, Journal, 4th June, 1743.

8. John Wesley, op. cit. Vol. iii, pp. 60-69.

9. *ibid.* p. 63.



of the picture. "What, then, shall we say of the conduct of the Revivalists who not only admitted and approved, but fostered and promoted these physical affections? - who, night after night, week after week, month after month, collected into over-heated rooms the poor factory-girls of Belfast - preached over them the horrors of a lost eternity - introduced raw and ignorant youths, and peasants, and even females, into their pulpits and assemblies, to declaim and gesticulate and grimace about Satan, and point to him as visibly present, until their victims swooned and screamed and fell, to be conveyed into still more heated apartments, whence all air was excluded, and a drop of water denied - there to be subjected to a process of being sun to and prayed over - as unreasonable as it was unscriptural? It is true that just now this state of things is checked."<sup>1</sup> In these prostrations some appeared as if shot, even when they were not paying much heed to revival preaching around them, as is illustrated by the episode of a man stricken while beating a drum at the Orange Celebrations on July 12th. For a while such prostrations became so much the expected way of being awakened that "they were told, and they believed - many have declared to myself and others their belief - that their salvation depended on their 'receiving the revival', and 'being struck'. A most awful panic was the consequence."<sup>2</sup> To counteract this state of affairs, many warnings had to be given, even by no less a person than the Bishop of Down, Connor and Dromore, Dr. Knox, a firm friend of the Revival. This he did in both Belfast and Ballymena. In Derry city like warning was uttered by Richard Smyth in First Derry Church, while Field of Dervock strove to avert prostrations in his district. "There is a very interesting story told of Professor Todd Martin of the Belfast College, who was a young man at the time of the Revival. At one meeting, feeling the growth of hysteria and the danger of

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1. William McIlwaine, *op. cit.* p. 7.

2. *ibid.* p. 10.

a morbid emotional crisis, he averted it and swung the meeting back to sanity by rising and repeating quietly the Shorter Catechism definitions of faith in Jesus Christ and repentance unto life."<sup>1</sup> Dr. Salmon said "Let it be once well known that they are not permitted, and they will not take place"<sup>2</sup> and in support of this quoted a tract of "a Presbyterian account of the Revivals in America at the beginning of this century, to which the present Irish Revivals have a far greater resemblance than to the American Revivals of last year. From it I extract the following fact, which confirms the statement in the text:- 'Persons always attacked by this affection in churches where it is encouraged, will be perfectly calm in other churches where it is discouraged, however affecting may be the service, and however great the mental excitement."<sup>3</sup>

There are many shades of behaviour between conscious acting and perfect honesty, and no doubt in some instances the motive behind the stricken ones' actions was self display, yet in most cases the imitation, if we may call it such, followed on the absorbed fixed attention or mesmerism on others stricken too. "Most persons are acquainted with the mesmeric ... influence ... this had widely prevailed of late in Ulster."<sup>4</sup> But not even conscious imitation was in every case the ultimate factor in the psychology of these people. It would rather seem probable that the tendency of any mental content upon which attention was concentrated, was to gain control of the motor centres, apart from the will, and thus to work itself out into the muscular system. James C. L. Carson, M.D., of Coleraine, the son of the Rev. Alexander Carson, LL.D., founder of Tubbermore Baptist Church, in writing to the Rev. H. G. Guinness in September, 1859, testified "I have seen and known of an immense number of instances in which

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1. Davey, op. cit. p. 43.

2. Salmon, op. cit. p. 25. (his italics) See Bodily Effects of Religious Excitement, p. 22.

3. *ibid.* p. 35 footnote.

4. McIlwaine, op. cit. p. 9.



the strongest, stoutest, most vigorous, healthy, and lion-hearted men in the country have been struck down like children ..."<sup>1</sup> As was said at the time of the Revival "... It is constitutionally impossible for human nature to exist long in a state of high excitement ... either the system will give way or the emotion will exhaust itself ..."<sup>2</sup> The simplest explanation of what transpired on such occasions was that under pressure of the religious excitement there occurred a case of motor automatism, or auto hypnotism, or hallucination, which took the form of catalepsy, trance or vision; for in the unconscious there is the social suggestion of a certain number of converts yielding to the mass suggestion of the crowd, some to the rhythm of the singing, and some to the gifts of the various speakers, some of whom were rustic orators like McQuilkin, Meneely and McIlwrath, while others showed a passionate devotion like Campbell of Ahoghill, and Magill of Dundrod, to name but a very few. It would almost appear as if there was a definite hypnotic power in the address of every orator and revival preacher, which together with a crowd's unconscious suggestibility secured the required response. Social repression was seen in emotional conversions where in adolescence there was an exaggerated horror of sin, or pleasure seeking on the Sabbath. Disregard of continuous promptings caused an agonizing emotional tension to build up, which continued till conversion took place, and this conversion marked the sudden release of unconscious repressions by means of emotional experience, the result of which was seen in literally a more abundant life. A singular occurrence of smitten strickenness caused others who were onlookers to fear lest this mysterious power should attack themselves. This fear acted as a suggestion; the more suggestible soon realized their expectation, and in accordance with the law of suggestion, since every new case added to the real cause, presently the conditions were ripe for an outburst of such attacks.

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1. The Revival, October 22nd, 1859, p. 103.

2. Londonderry Standard, Leader, 23rd June, 1859.

experiences. At Portadown it was stated "The influence was irresistible. Few desired, most dreaded, and some were of those who mocked at it. Yet they had to yield and frequently in places and amongst persons whom they would wish to have shunned."<sup>1</sup> Again the abnormal phenomena of herd or crowd mentality, where the sense of corporate power and the corresponding loss of individual independence took place, together with the diminished consciousness of responsibility thus created in some degree the revival conditions. "It is a notorious fact that, when a number of men think and feel and act together, the mental operations and the actions of each member of the group are apt to be very different from those he would achieve if he faced the situation as an isolated individual ... Not every mass of human beings gathered together in one place within sight and sound of one another constitutes a crowd in the psychological sense of the word ... The essential conditions of collective mental action are ... a common mode of feeling in regard to it (the same object), and some degree of reciprocal influence between the members of the group ... All gatherings of men that are not purely fortuitous are apt to have a considerable degree of mental homogeneity; ... and a still higher degree of homogeneity prevails when a number of persons of the same religious persuasion are gathered together at a great revival meeting."<sup>2</sup> Thus crowd conditions break down ordinary inhibitions or emotion, action and belief.

There is the factor of suggestibility, the tendency of the mind to accept as true every uncontradicted idea which stands before it, a kind of 'primitive credulity', though not all such ideas gain an equally powerful hold over the attention. Man is a social being and so made that suggestions coming to him from his fellows tend to master his beliefs and actions. In the more developed natures dominance of a single idea is harder to attain, "for within an educated mind no one idea or motor impulse is long

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1. Portadown News, 23rd July; The Revival, 6th August, 1859.

2. William McDougall, The Group Mind, pp. 21-24.



without rivals for the control of attention."<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Robert Wallace, Methodist minister in Derry, witnessed to this when he wrote "I found the subjects of this awakening to comprise all ages, and to some extent, all ranks; except that, so far as my experience goes, few of the upper, or even middle classes became subjects of bodily prostration."<sup>2</sup> This inhibitive power, largely lacking in uneducated and primitive minds, usually gives time for due consideration of all relevant issues before any decision is come to. In the crowd, however, the reactions are more primitive than individuals as such would experience, for the higher and more complex faculties are temporarily weakened by the influence of like-minded people, and simple reactions dominate them more so. Gustave Le Bon, in his book 'The Crowd', showed that as men are most different in intellect, ideas, and morality, and most alike in animal impulses and emotions, when men meet in a crowd they resemble each other, for emotion has become prominent and the critical judgment is weak.<sup>3</sup>

Lest it should be thought that emotion has no constructive part to play in the lives of men "it must not be forgotten that, though reason is necessary to guide the ship of life, feeling is the steam that propels it,"<sup>4</sup> or as the Rev. Richard Smyth wrote "Religion has assumed a new aspect, there appeared to be in it work for the heart of man, and multitudes felt that hitherto they had misunderstood its nature;"<sup>5</sup> while the editor of the Episcopal newspaper, the Londonderry Sentinel, wrote in a leading article "... The evidences of emotion may not be everything, but they are not to be despised. With judicious scriptural instruction they may be made the beginning of a religious life ... If love be the fulfilling of the Law, feelings have much to do with religion ..." <sup>6</sup> Judged by the changed lives of the converts

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1. Pratt, op. cit. p. 170.

2. Gibson, op. cit. p. 217. See also above, p. 169.

3. Gustave Le Bon, The Crowd, pp. 155-166.

4. Coe, op. cit. p. 93.

5. Gibson, op. cit. p. 218.

6. Londonderry Sentinel, 22nd July, 1859.

it is evident that the emotional disturbance experiences in conversion - not necessarily the prostrated only - made some contribution as a decisive force in the formation of a higher type of character, for onetime drunkards were now sober men, prostitutes became morally good, and swearers controlled their language. The moral and volitional problem of the drunkard arose many times. "On Wednesday evening (14th) a young man, of dissipated habits, whose deserted wife and children were left, on more than one occasion, to the cold cares of the world, was suddenly arrested, in the midst of a drunken orgie, and forced to cry out in strong agony and remorse for sin. Almost insensible with drink, he was staggering with a drunken companion in a race for more of 'the accursed thing,' when he was prostrated. In an instant, sobriety of thought, followed by the usual symptoms of an awakened conscience, visited him, and, after long hours of wrestling prayer, he professed to have found peace."<sup>1</sup> In Coleraine a young man, once a Protestant, but for five years past a zealous Roman Catholic, became drunk one Saturday night. He was about to call for more money for drink from his old mother, when he was 'struck' ere he reached his own door. "He is now a zealous attender of prayer meetings."<sup>2</sup> How was the desire taken away instantly at the moment of conversion? The explanation from a psychological point of view, would appear to be that any habitual vice, being abnormal, required the repression into silence and even unconsciousness of all the larger and nobler qualities of human character. In the case of the profligate nailer of Broughshane it appears evident that a perverted appetite dominated his life - 'I defy the town land of Broughshane to produce my equal in profligacy ... I brought my wife and family to beggary fifty years ago' - but the witness both of life and word of the converts aroused the stifled higher nature, and after an acute conflict - "But ...

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1. The Revival, 1st October, 1859.

2. Londonderry Standard, 30th June, 1859.



I have seen Jesus ... my heavy and enormous sin is all gone, the Lord Jesus took it away ...",<sup>1</sup> so that with almost explosive force the sentiment of love supplanted the lower and narrower instinct, and a buried 'complex' was exhibited.

In conversion our human nature advances a stage in that integration or unification which is a key process in mental development, for conversion often brings enhanced vitality, physical, mental and spiritual. Many of the converts became students of God's Word in great detail. Some became ministers of religion in the various churches; a few, leaders of the Brethren movement; while others again became missionaries at home or overseas. But what is most noticable was the accelerated alertness of these converts, for it must be remembered that most of them were poor farmers' sons, or the children of working-class homes, and instead of being ordinary uneducated men, they strove and sacrificed much to obtain a good education, to follow their calling as leaders - clerical and lay - of the Church of Christ. This is seen in the increased number of students for the Christian ministry who presented themselves in the years following the Revival, and in those who served the Church in general as elders, deacons, members of committees, Sunday School teachers, lay preachers, lay readers, and members of diocesan boards. The general influence of this was the strengthening of the Puritan outlook in Ulster to such an extent that strict observance of the Sabbath and the arousing of a Christian conscience in the community as a whole became the spine of the Ulster character. This was not as easily accomplished as perhaps it appears from the viewpoint of a century's distance. There were conflicting claims and opposing loyalties in the shift over from, say, the background of Romanism or Unitarianism, to the evangelical church life. Among the poorer classes of the Protestants in Ulster, some were largely unstable emotionally, and some were not much used to the practice of attending religious meetings. Such people

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1. The Revival, July 30th, 1859, p. 5.

were flung headlong into a sudden appreciation of their souls' welfare, and saw only the way of sudden conversion as the answer to their needs. Many were literally, and some were metaphorically, children in their experiences - a not unheard-of thing<sup>1</sup> - and the Revival was, for them, the alerting of belated adolescent experiences. Coe has said of mental adolescence "that it is as if we were born over again, not from an unremembered past into which the new life can bring no surprises, but from one conscious life into another that cannot be understood by anything in our previous experience."<sup>2</sup> "The quickened conscience, with its thirst for absolute righteousness; the quickened intellect, with its thirst for absolute truth; the quickened aesthetic sense, with its intuitions of a beauty that eye hath not seen and ear hath not heard; the quickened social sense, with its longing for perfect and eternal companionship - in short, the new meaningfulness and mystery of life - all this tends to bring in a new and distinct epoch in religious experience. If one has not been religious in childhood, now is the supremely favourable time for conversion; and if one has been religious, there is still need, in most cases, for a personal decision and personal acceptance that shall supersede the more external habits of childhood."<sup>3</sup> Adolescence then is the time when a young person becomes competent to make a deeply personal life choice, because of the incitements to a religious life that have to be responded to - a mental burden, a sense of unrest, dissatisfaction with oneself, a vague lack, a general discontent, or a feeling of wanting something and wanting to be something that is not clear to oneself. In seeking so to analyse conversion experience, it will be noted that religion is not dishonoured by the discovery of its primitive psychological makeup, and the hypnotic and mesmeric processes, as such, have nothing essentially bad or good about them, for everything depended upon their content and the use made of them.

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1. Brandon, op. cit, p. 57.

2. Coe, op. cit. p. 33.

3. ibid. p. 40.



Further consideration of the conversion experience itself reminds us of the Rev. Dr. W. L. Northridge's words "Conversion ought to be a healing process. It always is when it is genuine... it is necessary to point out that no true conversion experience can be adequately explained on the basis of psychology. This science helps us to understand what happens in conversion. It can describe what takes place fairly well but it cannot explain it."<sup>1</sup> Professor William James has described conversion as "the process, gradual or sudden, by which a self hitherto divided, and consciously wrong, inferior and unhappy, becomes unified and consciously right, superior and happy, in consequence of its firmer hold upon religious realities."<sup>2</sup> Pratt has described it as "a natural human phenomenon, independent alike of supernatural interference and of theological prepossession."<sup>3</sup> Generally speaking, then, it may be said that the experience of conversion results in a total change of mental outlook, with a corresponding rearrangement of the entire personal complex, and this especially so in the Protestant Christian faith, where the most "striking changes occur chiefly among the denominations that definitely aim to secure them."<sup>4</sup>

That conversion is an adolescent phenomenon is largely the teaching of Pratt and Starbuck, where it is pointed out that the majority of conversions take place in adolescence, say between the years of twelve and twenty, when "... the will of the adolescent is less developed than the feelings and the intellect."<sup>5</sup> That is not to say that many religious leaders were not converted in later life; examples of such are Paul, Augustine, the Wesleys, Luther and Tolstoy. In the Ulster Revival, as in all others, there were people of all ages converted - from childhood to old age - at Carryduff prayer meetings it was said 'Strangely, nearly

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1. W. L. Northridge, Psychology and Pastoral Practice, p.116.
  2. William James, Varieties of Religious Experience, p. 189.
  3. Pratt, op. cit. p.128.
  4. Coe, op. cit. p. 111.
  5. *ibid.* p. 88.

all converts were well advanced in life - some very old"<sup>1</sup> - but the majority were in their earlier years. It need occasion no surprise that many were middle-aged, for it will be remembered that at Connor alone some two hundred heads of families had no 'sittings' in the church before the Revival, and it was stated that afterwards there were about six hundred anxious for church accommodation.<sup>2</sup> As some sixty<sup>3</sup> churches were either built or extended to hold the people after the Awakening, some conception of the number of the conversions can be assessed.

The moment of conversion may occur at any time in the life of an individual who is accessible to the influences which produce it. In the Ulster Awakening the whole process of conversion was often exceedingly rapid in action, as in every revival. Especially was this so in the crowded meetings. The conversion change was preceded by the state of uneasiness due to an awareness of sin which in turn produced a climax of agonizing despair. At this point, remembering that there were large numbers of poor people converted in Ulster, many of whom lacked the inhibitory action of a well-disciplined mind, whose ordinary mental activities were of a limited range, and who enjoyed little faculty of expression, it is not to be wondered at that some of these were 'stricken'. What is remarkable is the strange phenomenon of people who were manifestly illiterate in the most rudimentary way, discoursing with a fluency and accuracy which was quite surprising, and it was noted that one woman in Ballymena uttered poetry practically instantaneously that was judged to be not inferior in its kind.<sup>4</sup> Where the process of conversion occurred in the higher intellectual types - Rosemary Street, Fisherwick and May Street type of churches (contrasted with Berry Street and Great George's Street churches where the poor worshipped) - it was not usually marked by a phase of acute crisis or by violent

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1. Banner of Ulster, 2nd July, 1859.

2. Ballymena Presbytery Minutes, February 5th, 1861.

3. See Chapter IX, 'Results', p. 364.

4. Belfast Newsletter, 25th May, 1859. See also above p. 225.

1. W. W. Gray, The Psychology of Religion, p. 77.



physical symptoms, as Nelson remarked in derision, for he failed to note that the difference might not be so much in the results or the process, as in the form of individual reaction.

Revival brings to the nominal church member, and to the non-religious a challenge and a threat to such peace of mind as he has been able to achieve. Often the result is this agonizing despair, mentioned above, but the dramatic element, be it quiet or exciting, has little to do with the real worth of the experience. There are probably far more people who have reached the same goal of an integrated religious disposition by a gradual and apparently uneventful progress. "In such people there is undoubtedly always an element of conflict, but the conflicts are resolved without distress and without obvious crisis, and the periods of emotional tension are but lightly marked. There is nothing corresponding to the sudden uprush of a new and apparently fully formed personality. Nevertheless in principle these slow-moving conversions are of precisely the same fundamental type as those which take a more dramatic form. The difference ... lies in the different psychological characteristics of different people, which determines the outward pattern of the process but not its essential nature."<sup>1</sup>

In the north of Ireland in 1859 many passed quickly through such experiences as led up to the actual act of conversion. For quite a large number this meant a resolution of the conflict without open distress, but not all were so fortunate as those who were able to resolve their conflict almost wholly below the level of consciousness, without circuitous reasoning of alternations of emotion. Sometimes the underlying conflict grew too violent for resolution, and they became neurotic. This might take the form of dissociated physical symptoms - a splitting off from consciousness of certain ideas and their accompanying emotions - an hysteria. An illustration of this would be the story of the little eight-years-old girl in Ballymena Parish Church who, when the Rev. D. Mooney was preaching, was said to have fallen

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1. L. W. Grensted, The Psychology of Religion, p. 77.

"... 'into a trance', her face was natural, eyes firmly closed, apart from a mere twitching of the lips and the noticeable eye-ball movement under the lids, she was asleep."<sup>1</sup> Another was Anne Devlin, of Hunter's Row, off Pinkerton's Row, Crumlin Road, Belfast "who fell into a trance, at eight p.m. saying she would come out of it at eleven o'clock. Apparently deaf and speechless, she pointed out appropriate passages in the Bible and hymnbook; i.e., she signed with her hands the crowning of Christ with thorns, and quick as thought she turned over the Bible's pages and marked the passage 'they platted a crown of thorns and put it on his head.' Invariably she chose a hymn to suit."<sup>2</sup> About 11 p.m. she began to come out of her trance, so that by 11.30 p.m. she was quite recovered. "On recovery this poor girl prayed that she would be of use to Christ and not be a castaway." It would appear that in cases such as these there is a common factor of a state of conflict to be resolved with spasmodic violence either at the level of consciousness, or in such hysterical cases below that level. An illustration of this latter is 'Mary', a healthy, uneducated - "unacquainted with even the alphabet" - servant in a pious elder's home in the neighbourhood of Ballymena. On Sabbath, the 5th June, she was severely rebuked for swearing, and in jeering reply said she would attend a local prayer meeting and 'get the revival.' The editor of the Ballymena Observer in a leading article said that she went to mock, but stayed to pray, for conviction fell like a thunderbolt, and she loudly called for mercy. Though she returned to her master's house in penitence, conviction was not followed by 'newness of life' and she had no consciousness of peace with God, or pardon. Anxiety continued till the 23rd June - eighteen days - when she was attending the Ballycloughan prayer meeting. She was prostrated and during a period of five hours she pointed out some twenty-three passages of Scripture,

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1. Belfast Newsletter, 4th July, also Ballymena Observer, 25th June, 1859.

2. Belfast Newsletter, 5th September, 1859.



"all," said the editor, "of which refer with pointed accuracy to the Gospel plan for the redemption of our fallen race." Upon regaining consciousness she had no distinct recollection of anything that had occurred from prostration at the prayer meeting, except that she was strongly tempted by the Evil One to unbelief.<sup>1</sup> Her state was one of long continued stress and indecision.

The extreme severity of these seizures is seen in an account by Archdeacon A. W. Edwards, of Dunboe, near Coleraine, who related in a personal letter to Stopford the story of "a girl who had had seventy seizures, sometimes seven in one day, lost her speech and the use of her limbs".<sup>2</sup> Further evidence of this severity is seen in the many cases of insanity that resulted - Stopford saw twenty, no less than three in one family.

What explanation can be offered for those who lapsed from their profession? We realise that there was a high emotional atmosphere, too high indeed that some were led to believe that if they were not stricken they could never be converted, and crowd psychology played its part. Sometimes a decision was made without due thought, timely consideration or the full assent of the will - something less than the whole personality was engaged in the matter, - and in time it might be that the decision was regretted. At other times converts may have been forced to a premature decision. As Salmon wrote: "Religious excitement - strong emotion, is a thing, which, from its nature, cannot be lasting. It is like the corn of wheat cast into the ground, whose nature it is to decay and die; but it may live in its permanent effects, by producing the fruits of changed habits, and new principles of action. Religious excitement may be, and often is, a good thing. The tendency to worldliness is so strong with us all; we are so prone to fix our whole thoughts on things below, and to lose all power of realising the existence of anything higher, that it does us good to be brought into contact with others who are strongly impressed with the reality

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1. Ballymena Observer, Editorial, 9th July, 1859; see also Salmon, op. cit. pp. 56, 57.

2. E. A. Stopford, The Work and Counterwork, p. 85.

of eternal things, and so to have our own feelings stirred up, and to be made capable, in this way, of forming resolutions and commencing plans from which, in cooler moments, indolence and indifference might have kept us back."<sup>1</sup> Salmon continued, however, "... A clerical friend of mine told me ... of a woman who had been 'stricken down' in his neighbourhood, and who was pointed out by the Methodist preacher as a case of signal conversion. And when my friend came to converse with her he found to his amazement that she was ignorant of the most elementary truths of the Gospel, and had merely an idea that the physical sufferings she experienced during her 'conversion' were in some way to atone for her sins."<sup>2</sup> Campbell interviewed a young man and woman who had been affected<sup>3</sup> and claimed to have found peace. Speaking further with them revealed a gross ignorance of Scripture and Calvary, a brief explanation of which produced anxious expressions and the remark 'others had visited her, but had not spoken to her as I had done.' On such 'conversions' Stopford commented "... I am far from thinking that real sorrow and mourning for sin does not sometimes exist in the paroxysm of hysteria. I fully believe that it does. But I do say that the words used while in that state, especially when those words express only a vague, indefinite sense of distress on account of sin, without compunction for particular sins ... afford no proof that such feeling is genuine or real, however sincerely it may be believed in by the patient at the time. The existence of such real feelings can only be believed on evidence of previous feeling or subsequent conduct."<sup>4</sup> Stopford concluded that, generally speaking, the persons 'struck' "without any previous sense of sin and cry for mercy appeared to be unconverted on recovery."<sup>5</sup> Some of these converts were fortunately led and guided into the way of the truth, but others must have blundered on in ignorance.

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1. Salmon, op. cit. p. 18.

2. *ibid.* pp. 22, 23.

3. Gibson, op. cit. p. 342.

4. Stopford, op. cit. p. 26.

5. *ibid.* p. 65.



There were occasional meetings not conducted as they should have been. "A steady observer of the movement, who has been to nearly all the nightly meetings (in a large town in the north of Ireland) says he never saw the Bible opened, or heard one word read out of it, except once in a Methodist meeting, when a Presbyterian minister tried to read the parable of the Prodigal Son, but was put down by cries of 'you are spoiling our meeting.'"<sup>1</sup> Such was the story of one particular set of meetings, whose influence was obviously away from both the Scriptures and sound doctrine. A further explanation of some of the failures of the converts was the overburdened workers - ministers and laymen alike - who had too much to do in the limited time at their disposal. Hence some converts lacked pastoral care. Personal problems, that an experienced Christian might have easily helped to solve, arose and stifled the new-born faith.

By the beginning of August the strenuous public convictions began to be less numerous, and it was noticed that 'the occurrence of these phenomena was for the most part, limited to cases wherein the parties had been previously affected.'<sup>2</sup> This analysis of the nature of the religious experience of the Revival shows that it followed, generally speaking, the pattern of all enthusiasm in religious awakenings, but not all the extreme tendencies were experienced, due to the strong, rugged Scotch-Irish character of the people; and today, a hundred years later, the religious outlook and Christian background of the Revival are still in large measure present.

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1. Stopford, op. cit. p. 102.

2. Ballymena Observer, July 23rd, 1859.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MESSAGE OF THE REVIVAL

"Spiritual life in Ulster prior to the Revival was at a low ebb. The Presbyterian Church re-established and consolidated on the broad basis of orthodox Christianity had a name to live but was dead."<sup>1</sup> Such is the popular conception of the spiritual message before 1859, and it is only fair to examine the conditions prevailing, to see if this is a true assessment of the situation. With this in mind we look first at the preaching background, and we must revert briefly to the Reformation, whose leaders in England and Scotland, and through them, in Ireland were much influenced by the affairs on the Continent, both political and ecclesiastical. Some of the most formative elements in these were the various Synods of Dort, where the Dutch Reformed Church adopted and later confirmed a Presbyterian government, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Belgic Confession. After a fierce political struggle had ended in the Low Countries, an even fiercer theological dispute began in the Dutch Reformed Church, over what in modern ears may seem a matter of petty argument, but what in a hair-splitting age of theology assumed vast proportions - Supralapsarianism<sup>2</sup> and infralapsarianism<sup>3</sup>. Not all, however blindly lined themselves behind these two names, and many who could not accept either view were known as Remonstrants. Their chief figure was Jacob Hermensen, Latinized as Arminius - onetime pupil of Beza and Professor of Theology at Leiden - who set out to refute the Remonstrants, but was himself refuted and became their leader. Accordingly the Remonstrant system became popularly known as Arminianism, which can be summed up as the rejection of the 'horrible decrees' of Calvinism, i.e., the

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1. Paisley, op. cit. p. 11.

2. Supralapsarianism - before creation God decreed who should be saved and who should be damned. Calvin alone of the Reformers held this.

3. Infralapsarianism - After Adam's sin God made these decrees. (Schaff-Herzog, Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge, Vol. I, p. 366.



rejection of supralapsarianism and infralapsarianism, limited atonement (i.e., that Christ died only for the elect), irresistible grace, and the perseverance of the elect. In 1610 Five Remonstrant or "Arminian" Articles were drawn up, which taught that Christ died for all men, that salvation is by faith alone, that those who believe are saved while those who reject God's grace are lost, and that God does not elect individuals to either outcome.<sup>1</sup> Matters came to a head in Dort (Dordrecht) in 1618, when the Synod, which may be described as a Pan Calvinistic Assembly, strongly condemned Arminianism, re-affirmed the Belgic Confession and re-asserted the Heidleberg Catechism to its place.

Calvinism travelled to Scotland by Knox and "nowhere did the spirit of Calvin more thoroughly permeate the national life, and the present Church of Scotland may well be regarded as the purest lineal descendant of Geneva in existence."<sup>2</sup> The real work of Protestantism began in Scotland in 1557 when the Lords of the Congregation promised "Befoir the Majestie of God and His Congregatioun, that we (by His grace) shall with all diligence continually apply our hole power, substance, and our verray lyves, to manteane, sett fordward, and establish the most blessed word of God and His Congregatioun; and shall laubour at our possibilitie to have faythfull ministeris purely and trewlie to minister Christis Evangell and Sacramentes to His people."<sup>3</sup> In due time, with the Plantation of Ulster by the Scots in the reign of James VI and I, in fulfilment of this promise, Presbyterianism was introduced and Calvinism was taught fervently, both in pulpit and pew; and by means of the Shorter Catechism, it became firmly rooted in the lives of the people of Presbyterian persuasion.

Calvinism came to England from the Continent, and it is not seriously disputed that the first generation of Anglican Reformers were Calvinistic both in doctrine and in sympathy. The XXXIX

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1. K. S. Latourette, A History of Christianity, p. 765. For further details see A. W. Harrison, Arminianism.

2. A. Dakin, Calvinism, p. 160.

3. T. M. Lindsay, History of the Reformation, Vol. II, p. 289 (1907)

an introduction of the 39 Articles, p. 407 (3rd edition, 1945)  
2. Cf. Challise, op. cit. Vol. II, p. 360.  
3. Harrison, op. cit. p. 138.

Articles evolved from the earlier Henrican, Edwardian and Elizabethan Articles, mirroring the various shades of Reformation doctrine through which the Church of England passed. Queen Elizabeth was ex-communicated "as a partaker of the heresy of Calvin" by the Holy See, and afterwards the anti-Lutheran Article XXIX, which the Queen herself had previously suppressed, was now published to make up the full thirty-nine. "It is significant that the Anglican Articles have no place in the List of Lutheran Symbolics,"<sup>1</sup> showing that England was strongly committed to Calvinism. The unity of the Reformed (Calvinistic) Church in Britain and Ireland is seen in the set of Canons, drawn up about the time of the Hampton Court Conference. In the Bidding Prayer of Canon 55, it is urged "ye shall pray for Christ's holy Catholic Church, that is, for the whole congregation of Christian people dispersed throughout the whole world, and especially for the Churches of England, Scotland, and Ireland." This Calvinistic outlook prevailed till Laud's Primacy.

Among the members of the Established Protestant (Anglican) Church in Ireland Calvin's theology dominated, and "at this time (1567), in fact, those who had the greatest influence were most eager in suggesting the names of advanced Calvinists for the primacy. For instance, Archbishop Loftus earnestly recommended Thomas Cartwright, the very man whom the University of Cambridge had to expel in 1570 for nonconformity. But Loftus himself was strongly imbued with the same spirit, and had occasion to defend himself from charges of innovation. Probably, it was the prevalence and effect of such Calvinistic ideas that caused a most extraordinary occurrence in connexion with the advancement of Thomas Lancaster to the archbishopric of Armagh. This was no less than his re-consecration,"<sup>2</sup> - a sure proof that Calvinism was as strongly entrenched in Irish Protestantism as it was in the Church of England, where "the doctrine of the Church was after the pattern of Geneva..."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Schaff, quoted in Griffith Thomas, The Principles of Theology; an introduction of the 39 Articles, p. 407 (3rd edition, 1945)

2. Cf. Phillips, *op. cit.* Vol. II, p. 360.

3. Harrison, *op. cit.* p. 138.



Ireland was thus strongly Calvinistic at a time when England was slowly beginning to turn away from it, so that Arminianism, when it came to England, found the ground prepared for it. For though Calvinism, as Reformation theology, displaced the "Summa" of Aquinas and Peter Lombard's "Sentences"; and though the "Institutes" along with Bullinger's "Decades" and Beza's works were the standard textbooks; yet by 1595 the beginnings of revolt against Calvinism were seen at Cambridge, when William Barrett, of Caius College, preached a 'piece of trial' for the Degree of Bachelor of Divinity against it. "It is very difficult to say whether the Laudian movement in the direction of medieval Church practices or the challenge to the Calvinist theology caused the greater alarm. Both were regarded as betrayals of the national Protestantism."<sup>1</sup> But Protestantism was strongly entrenched, for with the coming of the Caroline theologians, we find men like the erudite Sanderson skilled in Aquinas, inveighing against the Tridentine and post Tridentine theology as their main objective. "Indeed, it was their delight to set the one against the other"<sup>2</sup> and comparatively little mention was made of Arminianism. Sanderson, Hammond and others were men of the moderate High Church group, not to be confused with Laud, Neale and Montagu as Arminian innovators, but despite this Arminianism was making inroads, not only in the Church of England, but also in the more extreme sections of Puritanism. Many Baptists were exponents of a teaching that denied predestination and original sin; while among the Independents John Goodwin challenged Calvin's doctrines and was definitely Arminian in his interpretation of the Gospel.<sup>3</sup>

Under the later Stuarts, Puritanism had declined, and along with it to a lesser extent Calvinism, while with the coming of the Dutch King William III, the High Church party faded, and with its going Calvinism was further supplanted by stronger tendencies towards Arminianism, which really came into its own in the days

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1. Harrison, op. cit. p. 140.

2. H. R. McAdoo, The Structure of Caroline Moral Theology, p. 31.

3. op. Harrison, op. cit. p. 142.

of the Evangelical Revival and the Wesleys. It is not easy to dispute the Elder Pitt's classical statement in the House of Lords on May 19, 1772, that "we have a Calvinistic Creed, a Popish Liturgy, and an Arminian clergy," if 'Popish' be equated with 'Catholic' and 'Arminian' with 'High Church'. For until Tract XC the Calvinism of the Articles was unchallenged by Churchmen or Dissenter. The background of the Wesleys was Puritan-Calvinistic, but antagonism to the rigid doctrines of predestination and reprobation made the Wesley parents turn to Arminianism, and the conversion experience of John on 24th May, 1738, saw "the gospel of redeeming grace become the dominant theme of life consecrated to that gospel."<sup>1</sup>

Nearly two centuries of Calvinism, albeit at times frigid, dominated Irish Protestantism, when in the middle of the eighteenth century a change of outlook spread to Ireland by means of the Methodists, and in the latter half of the century by the founding in Dublin of the General Evangelical Society, by whose agency many of the foremost English preachers came to Ireland, with the result that the remnant (for it was decimated by eighteenth century deism) of evangelical truth that remained in the Established Church and also among the Presbyterians in the capital city was increased, and grew into a powerful force of great magnitude. As mentioned above<sup>2</sup> the outcome of the visits of these English preachers was the founding of the "General Evangelical Society" in Dublin in 1792, and the "Ulster Evangelical Society" in Armagh in 1798. Nonconformist influence towards the same end was seen in men like Rowland Hill - an itinerant evangelist greatly influenced by Whitfield.<sup>3</sup> Hill was financed by two wealthy Scotsmen - the Haldane brothers - who were both financial promoters and preachers among the Independents in Scotland. They preached in Ireland, too, in County Armagh in the neighbourhood of Richhill, where the Secession Church became Congregational, and in County

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1. Harrison, op. cit. p. 191.

2. See above Chapter I, p. 32.

3. L. G. McAllister, Thomas Campbell, p. 47.



Antrim they were the means of building Ballycraigy Congregational Church.<sup>1</sup> Besides these there was the great influence of the Secession Church planted in Ireland in the middle of the eighteenth century, slightly before the coming of Methodism. Though split over the Burgher oath - which had no relevance in Ireland - both sections of Secession were strongly evangelical in their preaching, and often restrained the more liberal ministers of the Synod of Ulster in their tendency to deistic thought. "The marvellous zeal of these old fathers in bearing witness to the Divinity and mission of Christ, and their amazing energy in the matter of Church extension, were largely instrumental in preserving religion in Ulster from the blight of heresy and spiritual deadness."<sup>2</sup>

"For almost a century the Seceders had prosecuted the work of the Lord in Ireland against the doctrinal errors and profound religious indifference which prevailed... Cold and deadening morality taught by many ministers of the Synod (of Ulster) had blunted the spiritual conceptions of the people, so that the sense of sin was almost lost ... The generation was fast growing self-complacent, indifferent to the influence of heresy upon true religion, and unconscious of the degeneracy that was taking place in vital godliness... The Seceding ministers had not to persuade the people to a belief in Christianity, for the Shorter Catechism had made it impossible for these to forget the plan of salvation, but they had to awaken them to a sense of religion as a thing not only to be known in the letter, but also to be felt in the heart and practised in the life. The searching discourse of the new evangelists roused a slumbering people to a sense of guilt and to a true conception of salvation. The doctrine of justification by faith was restored to its proper

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1. A. Cairns, Ph.D., unpublished thesis in MSS form, The Independents in Ireland, p. 491. This volume was kindly loaned to me by the writer's son, the Rev. D. J. Cairns, B.A., minister of Donegall Street Congregational Church, Belfast.
  2. D. Stewart, The Seceders in Ireland, preface.



place, spiritual fervour was revived, and a new phase of religious life was established."<sup>1</sup>

Testimony to the power of the Shorter Catechism is witnessed to by Henry Cooke - "I received my first instructions in theology at my mother's side. The Shorter Catechism was her text-book; the Confession of Faith was her Christian Institutes; the Bible was her final and sole standard of appeal."<sup>2</sup> In a word, new life was put into Protestantism, and it can be seen that in the years prior to the Revival the outlook in Ulster theologically was strongly Calvinistic and growing warmly evangelical in both the Established Church and all sections of Presbyterianism, with the Arminian influence gaining strength through the growth of Methodism. This latter filtered into the Established Church, where it had a certain influence.

Revival in religion was first seen shortly after the French Revolution, and from the abortive Rebellion of 1798 when "its tide rolled onwards with redoubled rapidity"<sup>3</sup> it could be said that a new religious seriousness crept over the face of the land; and as the Cooke-Montgomery struggle in Ulster (1821-29) led to a greater appreciation of the minutiae of the Gospel in the hearts of the people there was seen to be a new evangelical message growing up for at least thirty years, if not longer, before the Revival, in the pulpits of almost all the churches. Evidence of the growth of evangelical thought is seen in a lecture delivered to the newly founded Y.M.C.A. in Maghera, County Derry, by the Rev. Thomas Witherow.<sup>4</sup> Speaking on Alexander Carson, LL.D. one of the "Three Prophets", who was ordained minister of Tubbermore in 1798, Witherow said "... some fifty or sixty years ago, the Presbyterian Church in Ulster presented a very different religious aspect from what it presents in the year 1855... symptoms of spiritual life were then comparatively few and

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1. Stewart, op. cit. p. 227 (my italics).

2. J. L. Porter, Life and Times of Dr. Cooke, p. 13.

3. W. T. Latimer, A History of the Irish Presbyterians, p. 416.

4. Thomas Witherow, Three Prophets of Our Own, January 3, 1855, pp. 18, 19.



feeble ... There were no missions - no Sabbath schools - and evangelistic labours beyond the precincts of the meeting house were rare. The Westminster Confession had fallen into disrepute... ministers were ordained without subscription or with ... such explanations as made the subscription only a form ... Vague moral essays, destitute of the warm glow of the Gospel truth were preached for sermons; and the people wore the Christian name, while they were indifferent to the creed and character and spirit which Christianity enjoins. There was ice in the pulpit - there was snow in the pew." It will be noticed that in 1855, four full years before the Revival started, things were much changed for the better; missions, Sabbath schools, evangelistic labours, a signed Confession, pointed doctrinal sermons glowing with fervour were the order of the day. The Presbytery of Armagh at Visitation in First Markethill stated in their "Finding", "Religion on the whole is advancing," and resolved that each minister preach to his people on the Holy Spirit's work.<sup>1</sup>

One can see how this preaching developed in evangelical outlook as the years passed. Preaching in June, 1800, a prominent leader among the Seceders, the Rev. Thomas Campbell,<sup>2</sup> stated in a sermon entitled "Faith without works will by no means save a man": "The genuine effects of a true saving faith are (i) sorrow for sin; (ii) application to Divine mercy as revealed; (iii) reliance upon Divine love through the merits of Christ; (iv) conformity to the Divine will in all manner of conversation, viz., in piety, purity, justice, charity, and universal benevolence." Extending this idea the preacher said "why can not

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1. Minutes of Armagh Presbytery, 2nd January, 1855; See also 7th August, 6th November, 1855, and 2nd September, 1856.

2. Thomas Campbell was a member of the Committee of the Ulster Evangelical Society (the only Anti-Burgher Secession minister to be such); in 1803 he was chosen one of the three Anti-Burgher representatives to meet with the Burghers for the purpose of union of Synods, which took place fifteen years later in 1818; in 1805 he was Moderator of the Anti-Burgher Synod; in 1807 he emigrated to the U.S., founding a church called "The Disciples of Christ" which now numbers over two million members. He was therefore a man of leadership in thought and action. - McAllister, op. cit.



faith alone justify? Because (i) it cannot reconcile, (ii) it cannot sanctify, (iii) it cannot glorify God." And the injunction is added "N.B. - It has the direct contrary tendency."<sup>1</sup> The growth towards evangelism from this type of sermon of Campbell to that of the Revival message is seen in Cooke, the leader of the Trinitarians in the Synod of Ulster, who was reared in its even more frigid influence. Cooke was baptized by the Rev. John Glendy of Maghera, an avowed liberal in religion and politics, who for his part in the Rebellion of 1798 was forced to flee the country. In spite of this liberalism Cooke was apparently persuaded by his mother's teaching of the Shorter Catechism, the Confession of Faith and the Bible, to follow in the old ways - a sure proof of their power. In due time he preached his trial sermon on the text "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"<sup>2</sup> in the course of which Cooke said "Had an angel, or an inferior minister of God been the person commissioned to publish the news of our salvation, to give the offers of the gospel which Jesus gave, then there would have been some excuse for neglect. But the person commissioned is no angel, no inferior agent; He is the same to whom the Lord says 'Let all the angels of God worship Him.' Behold, then, what a glorious Personage holds forth to you the offer of salvation! He thought it no robbery to be counted equal with the Father. Him you may trust, for in Him there is no possibility of deception. Him you may trust, for He is able to save to the uttermost."<sup>3</sup> In his first charge<sup>4</sup> - Duneane near Randalstown - preaching on "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many ..." Cooke affirmed "No power short of omnipotence was able to accomplish the great work which Christ undertook; therefore in Him dwelt all the fulness of the God-head bodily. Christ undertook; He entered the lists alone; alone He triumphed, leading captivity captive, and receiving

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1. McAllister, op. cit. pp. 38, 39.

2. Hebrews II, 3.

3. Porter, op. cit. pp. 21, 22.

4. 'Charge' - a common Ulster expression for the ministerial responsibility of a church.



gifts for men."<sup>1</sup> Porter, his biographer, wrote that Cooke's "fervour was sneered at, and stigmatized as Methodism."<sup>2</sup> In a communion address Cooke said "when we contemplate Him, as exhibited in this memorial ordinance - in His sufferings and in His triumph, in His humiliation and in His glory - is it possible that our souls could remain insensible to His love, or our hearts should be untouched by His mercy?" No wonder it was said of Cooke that 'he was in earnest.'<sup>3</sup> Lest it be thought that Cooke was a lone preacher of this type, it should be mentioned that in 1809, as Cooke attended his first Synod<sup>4</sup> (in Cookstown) where the Rev. Josiah Ker, of Balloo, was suspended from the office of the ministry for affirming Unitarian principles,<sup>5</sup> some seventeen ministers<sup>6</sup> strongly opposed Ker's return to his congregation. These men, too, were deeply in earnest. Some years later, Cooke, preaching in his next sphere of service, Donegore, on the subject of 'National Infidelity' said, "Ministers ... now boldly disavow alike the nature and work of the Divine Saviour. Forgetting Him, they forget also Him that sent Him."<sup>7</sup> In 1813, preaching on the text 'Can these bones live?' Cooke made allusion to some of his own difficulties - "Can sinners dead in trespasses and sins be restored to spiritual life? Is it possible that a mind by nature at enmity with God ... can be regenerated? ... Fearless of the frowns of men ... I this day boldly avow ... that no sinner by his own unaided efforts, can ever regenerate himself; and consequently that every sinner who is converted from the error of his ways owes his conversion, and all the consequences of his conversion, to the sovereign, efficacious, almighty operation of the Spirit of God."<sup>8</sup> At his first Communion service in Donegore,

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1. Porter, op. cit. p. 22.

2. *ibid.* p. 23.

3. *ibid.* p. 26.

4. Records of the General Synod of Ulster, 1809, p. 336.

5. *ibid.* 1811, p. 369.

6. The protesting ministers were: James Brown, Richard Dill, Samuel Dill, John Hall, Solomon Brown, Charles Kennedy, William Wright, Thomas Greer, William D.H. McEwan, Richard Dill, Jun., James Marshall, James Gowdy, James Horner, Samuel Hanna, John Thompson, Joseph Harrison, James Elder "the Gun of the Gospel". See Records of General Synod, Vol. 3, pp. 360 and 370. Also, Latimer, op. cit. pp. 416, 432.

7. Porter, op. cit. p. 28.

8. *ibid.* p. 29.



Cooke said "... The minister of the Gospel is commanded to preach Christ; but he cannot convert one sinner; he cannot establish the Redeemer's kingdom in the heart of one man. This is the work, not of man, but of God. God, who at first breathed life into the form of clay, can alone breathe spiritual life into the sin-dead soul. All we need as lost sinners must come from God. Repentance is the gift of God. Faith is the gift of God. Pardon is the gift of God. New obedience is the gift of God. Peace of God is the gift of God. The spirit of prayer is the gift of God. Resignation to the Divine will is the gift of God. Victory over death is the gift of God. Eternal life is the gift of God. All these are His and His only. Our title to them is Emmanuel's blood; and the result of them is joy in life, triumph in death, and glory everlasting in heaven."<sup>1</sup>

Proof that a definite change in outlook had taken place in the Synod of Ulster and that the influence of Cooke was not singular, was the appointment of one of those seventeen opponents of Arianism to the Synod's Chair of Divinity and Church History in 1817.<sup>2</sup> The Rev. Samuel Hanna, minister of Rosemary Street, was an avowed Calvinist, largely imbued with an evangelical spirit, and long known in church courts as an asserter of orthodox principles. His election "demonstrates the ascendancy of the evangelical party ... thirty years before the Synod of Ulster could not have been induced to advance such a man to such a position."<sup>3</sup> The Arian struggle and the publication of the code of discipline in 1825 showed a vast change in the composition of the Synod, so that by 1827 it could be said "of two hundred ministers belonging to the Synod, about thirty-five were Arians,"<sup>4</sup> showing how well the common people had effectively purged the Synod of its heterodox beliefs. In 1836 it was required that all licentiates must sign the prescribed formula of belief. This

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1. Porter, op. cit. p. 30.

2. Records of the General Synod, Belfast, 1817, p. 464. Chair was in the Belfast Academical Institution.

3. Reid, op. cit. p. 433 (Vol. III).

4. *ibid.* p. 447.



brought the Synod of Ulster parallel in belief with the Secession and their union was effected in 1840, thus proving that the whole church was now orthodox and in large measure evangelical. While it was true that during the ascendancy of 'deism' and 'new light' in the Protestant and Presbyterian Churches, the light of the Gospel was dimmed, yet the coming of the Seceders and Methodists with the rise of evangelical teaching restored to the blunted spiritual conceptions of the people a sense of sin and guilt, and with these a true conception of the way of salvation, by faith in the work of Christ. The very union of the synods - proof enough that the Seceders were satisfied in their scruples -, the appointment of foreign missionaries, the establishment of the Belfast Town mission, are but a few of the outward signs of the vast spiritual change that had taken place in the first half of the century, and it was effected by strong preaching that emphasised man's desperate need and God's sovereign remedy. Looked back upon from the enthusiasm of the Revival itself, this earlier spiritual life may have appeared flat and zestless, but that is only because the revival is the crescendo of a spiritual wave - the breaking of the waters; it does not mean that 'spiritual life was at a low ebb.'

Moving now to the message itself we consider the following: the Sovereignty of God, Conviction of Sin, Repentance and Forgiveness, the Work of the Holy Spirit, Justification by Faith, Modified Calvinism, Methodist Preaching, the Independent's position, the battle of Assurance, and some irresponsible teaching.

"... The vast majority of those servants of God who have been honoured by Him in producing revivals on a national scale, from the English Wycliffe ... to ... the present, have been Augustinian or Calvinistic in their theological views ..." <sup>1</sup> so wrote the biographer of Brownlow North, and bearing in mind the teaching of the XXXIX Articles that "sin ... is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man ..." <sup>2</sup> and "Sin is any want of conformity

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1. K. M. Stuart, Records and Recollections of Brownlow North,  
(1810-1875) p. 258.

2. Article IX.

unto, or transgression of, the law of God,"<sup>1</sup> - both Calvinistic teaching - it is no wonder that a strong sense of sin manifested itself in the Revival message. The cause of this strong sense of sin was the preaching of the Seceders in the first instance, and their emphasis on the Catechism, and the forthright declaration of the Synod of Ulster preachers after the Cooke-Montgomery struggle and the rise of the evangelicals; both of which, united in the General Assembly roundly declared the Calvinistic sovereignty of God. In a sermon on "Spiritual life - its cause and its grandeur" the Rev. William Magill<sup>2</sup> said "... nothing is more repulsive to the pride of human depravity than the holy sovereignty of God in the distribution of His gift of grace. And nothing breaks down the rebellious will of sinful man so thoroughly as profound knowledge of the fact that all for time and eternity depends on God showing mercy. Of His mere goodwill He comes into and over a sinner for life and glory. It pleases Him."<sup>3</sup> The Rev. John Macnaughtan<sup>4</sup> said "Jesus must bring His people to Himself ... No conceivable obstruction can choke up the pathway He has opened to His chosen, and no concentration of power can smite from His embrace those who repose on the bosom of His love ... Of all those who are given unto Him, of them He can lose none."<sup>5</sup> The Rev. Alexander McCreery, of Killyleagh, County Down, spoke of the sovereignty of God in the origin of faith in a believer when he said "... Faith is not of the earth, nor of man; it is heavenly and divine. Jesus said 'No man can come to Me except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him' ... we have neither the inclination nor the ability to believe unto salvation. The desire and the strength must be granted... It may be asked, If faith be not of ourselves but the gift of God, why is the command given - 'believe

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1. Westminster Shorter Catechism, Question 14.
  2. Magill was successively minister of Dunboe, Coleraine and Cork.
  3. W. McMordie, Sermons by Irish Presbyterian Ministers, p. 57.
  4. Macnaughtan was minister of Rosemary Street, one of the largest Presbyterian Churches in Belfast.
  5. McMordie, op. cit. pp. 367-371.

6. Spurgeon preached in the Surrey Music Hall in 1859 when his church was under repair.



on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved'? The answer is God gives us the will and the power to obey. 'Unto you it is given to believe on Him' ..."<sup>1</sup> Cooke emphatically asserted "that no sinner, by his own unaided efforts, can ever regenerate himself; and, consequently, that every sinner, who is converted from the error of his ways, owes his conversion, and all the consequences of his conversion, to the sovereign ... spirit of God."<sup>2</sup> The Rev. S. G. Morrison preaching in January, 1857, said "... To make the sinner tremble as he learns his danger; to smite the strongest rebel down; to break the rocky heart; to draw tears of penitential sorrow from the eyes unused to weep for sin; to bring sighs of contrition from the spirit of pride ... To draw or drive to the cross; to put words of prayer into the prayerless lips, and extort a cry for mercy from the burdened soul; to ease the conscience by removing guilt; to allay the agitations of the heart by imparting peace; to bless with adopting grace, and teach the converted sinner to say, "My Father!" ... To snatch from the yawning gulf, and put into the arms of Jesus; to turn from the path of hell, and guide in the way of heaven - this is God's work."<sup>3</sup>

C. H. Spurgeon, who preached to a crowd of seven thousand<sup>4</sup> - "the largest audience which ever assembled (until the Revival) to hear a minister of the Gospel in Ulster"<sup>5</sup> - in the Botanic Gardens, Belfast, in August, 1858, said a few months later<sup>6</sup> when speaking on the subject of Predestination and Calling "... If God should choose this morning to call the hardest-hearted wretch within hearing of the gospel, he must obey. Let God call - a man may resist, but he cannot resist effectually. Down thou shalt come, sinner, if God cries down; there is no standing when He would have thee fall ... every man that is saved, is always saved

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1. McMordie, op. cit. pp. 119-121.

2. Porter, op. cit. p. 29.

3. Rev. S. G. Morrison, Sermon preached January 4, 1857, "Revivals and Revivalists" pp. 7, 8.

4. W. Y. Fullerton, C. H. Spurgeon, pp. 114-115.

5. Weir, op. cit. p. 47.

6. Spurgeon preached in the Surrey Music Hall in 1859 when his church was under repair.

by an overcoming call which he cannot withstand; ... he must yield when God speaks; ... when effectual calling comes into a house and singles out a man, that man will be compelled to go forth without the camp, bearing Christ's reproach."<sup>1</sup> Another Revival preacher who spoke in many places in Ulster was Brownlow North, whose "teaching was in all points pronouncedly Calvinistic. Indeed, so much was this the case that it seems marvellous that it obtained such a very wide popularity."<sup>2</sup> North "derived his theology mainly for himself from a study of the Holy Scriptures."<sup>3</sup> Preaching in Derry on 'Doth not wisdom cry?'<sup>4</sup> North thundered forth "... Man by his own wisdom knows not God... Without God there is no life, for God is life... Man is separated from God for ever... Man is eternally dead."<sup>5</sup> On the margin of his Bible North wrote "No man can ever know anything of God or of the things of God unless they are revealed to him by God's Spirit."<sup>6</sup> The Synod of Armagh and Monaghan emphasised the sovereignty of God, when it stated in its State of Religion Report "... men (preachers) are only instruments, and that without the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven nothing can be effectually accomplished."<sup>7</sup> Emphasis on this sovereignty of God led to an appreciation of the impotence of man and eventually to a realization and conviction of sin. That this was no mere generalization is seen in the words of many who wrote during the actual revival. Seaver, incumbent of St. John's, Belfast, in a paper read to the Evangelical Alliance on 22nd September, 1859, wrote of 'a deep and overwhelming sense of sin',<sup>8</sup> while Archdeacon of Meath, E. A. Stopford, who visited Belfast expressly to assess the Revival, stated "I acknowledge that the burden of sin is bemoaned ..."<sup>9</sup> S. J. Moore could support this

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1. C. H. Spurgeon, Revival Year Sermons, pp. 70, 72.
  2. K. M. Stuart, *op. cit.* p. 258.
  3. *ibid.* Brownlow North (Biography) p. 170.
  4. Proverbs VIII, 1.
  5. Londonderry Standard, 11th August, 1850.
  6. Stuart, Brownlow North, *op. cit.* p. 195.
  7. Minutes of the Synod of Armagh and Monaghan, 17th May, 1859.
  8. Charles Seaver, The Ulster Revival, p. 10.
  9. E. A. Stopford, The Work and Counterwork, p. 25.



contention by saying "The soul is felt to be guilty and lost,"<sup>1</sup> and David Adams testified to there being an 'agonising sense of sin',<sup>2</sup> showing us clearly that the doctrine of the total depravity of human nature was declared in such a fashion that a deep appreciation of sin was experienced. The urgency of this is witnessed to by the Rev. Dr. Salmon, preaching in St. Stephen's Church, Dublin, on 3rd July, 1859, when he said that men "... imagine that they may continue in sin until some future time, when it shall please the Spirit of God ... to make them, on a sudden, holy and pure... what they look for is contrary to Divine proceedings..."<sup>3</sup> The testimony of the converts, too, was of "the misery which they had suffered from the conviction of sin"<sup>4</sup>, and the profligate nailer of Broughshane witnessed "... I was an old man hardened in sin... I defy the townland to produce my equal in profligacy, or any sin whatever ..." <sup>5</sup>

The heinousness of man's sin is even proclaimed - strangely enough - as one of the most appreciated of the great doctrines of Christianity<sup>6</sup> for it suited the desperate need of the hour. Professor McCosh, of Queen's College, Belfast, substantiated that this was the teaching and that many appreciated it in their own lives when he said: "Everyone who has taken but a cursory glance at the work, has noticed the conviction of sin sharp, and penetrating and deep ..." <sup>7</sup> The depth of this is witnessed to by Moore when he wrote "Sins long forgotten are remembered with the freshness of yesterday,"<sup>8</sup> and by Salmon "convictions of sin (are) forced on you sometimes by the Word of God, read or preached ..." <sup>9</sup> A revivalist believer could say "I have witnessed in the believers ... conviction of sin",<sup>10</sup> and further on could

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1. S. J. Moore, History of the Present Revival (Ballymena) p. 7.
  2. D. Adams, The Revival at Ahoghill, p. 13.
  3. Salmon, op. cit. pp. 6, 7.
  4. *ibid.* p. 46.
  5. The Revival, 30th July, 1859.
  6. Salmon, op. cit. p. 49.
  7. James McCosh, The Ulster Revival, p. 6.
  8. Moore, op. cit. p. 9.
  9. Salmon, op. cit. p. 9.
  10. Revivals, by a Revivalist Believer, p. 3.

add "No self regeneration is to be expected. The total depravity of nature renders an entire spiritual change of absolute necessity. The whole race, and every individual man, is utterly depraved in heart; his will is averse from good; his conscience is defiled; his understanding is darkened; his affections are alienated from God, and set upon unworthy objects; his desires are corrupt, his appetite ungoverned, .. and he ... (is) an unfit subject for God's holy kingdom."<sup>1</sup> The Rev. James Morgan summed up this conviction of sin "What then have we found in the minds of those who have been exercised (about their souls)? We have found, universally, conviction of sin. Sin has been seen to be hateful to God, and destructive to man. Their own sinfulness has been clearly seen, deeply felt and freely confessed."<sup>2</sup> Further testimony to this state of mind was witnessed to by a convert named 'William' in First Ahoghill Monday Night Meeting for prayer when he said "I was a hell-deserving sinner, I was guilty of every sin except theft and murder, but I felt I was murdering my own precious soul."<sup>3</sup> Brownlow North, preaching in Derry said "Man is wholly satan's ... Man is separated from God for ever ... has become the habitation of devils ... so dead he cannot feel, so blind he cannot see (his position before God)."<sup>4</sup> Connecting this sense of sin with the cases of the 'struck', Stopford wrote "... in every exception (to the rule that generally every 'struck' one had mourned for sin for days and prayed for God's mercy) which I have been able to examine or inquire of, the person 'struck' without any previous sense of sin and cry for mercy appeared to be unconverted on recovery."<sup>5</sup> An English visitor, the Rev. John Baillie, of London, who visited Ireland in 1859, writing in the month of October, gave it as his opinion that "... the lesson graven on the forefront of the present revival (was) ... the conscience smitten with a poignant conviction of sin which had stirred

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1. Revivals, by a Revivalist Believer, p. 7.

2. James Morgan, The Revival of 1859, p. 10.

3. Adams, op. cit. p. 28.

4. Londonderry Standard, 11th August, 1859.

5. Stopford, op. cit. p. 65 (my italics).



up so deep an anxiety ..."<sup>1</sup> The poignancy of sin is described by Moore when he wrote "Sin is seen to be loathsome and deadly, and it is generally felt to be an intolerable burden, crushing the body and soul to hell. Horror unutterable overwhelms the heart, especially of those who feel that the devil is persuading or dragging them to perdition. With some this conviction has reference to particular easily besetting sins - with others, the greater number, to the general sinful state of the soul... The subjects of conviction are of all ages, from five to seventy years, but the great majority are young..."<sup>2</sup>

The sovereignty of God and the wretchedness of the deep conviction of sin drove men to see themselves in their true estate in God's sight and to turn to Him with repentance and seek forgiveness through Jesus Christ. A Methodist layman, Alexander McCann, of Lisburn, writing to some awakening from their sin, said "The first thing for you is to pray for genuine repentance; for think not that God will save you while you love sin, or that there is any atonement, any Saviour for you unless you hate your transgression."<sup>3</sup> Edward Hincks, preaching in Killyleagh Parish Church on 31st July, 1859, emphasised the fact that Jesus is the all sufficient Saviour,<sup>4</sup> while Moore testified "... By all who have found satisfactory peace in Christ He is dearly loved; by some intensely... No matter what the creed or character - Romanist, Arian or Infidel - the first cry of the deeply convinced soul is 'Lord Jesus, have mercy on my soul.'<sup>5</sup> Adams continued in the same strain: "Never was that Friend of sinners so much honoured, and never was He so near to them that called upon Him in truth, as able and willing to save to the very uttermost all that come unto the Father by Him. Hence, the converts commonly say, in full assurance, ' I am a wicked, wicked

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1. John Baillie, The Revival or What I Saw in Ireland, p. 93.

2. Moore, op. cit. p. 7.

3. Alexander McCann, Revival Movement in Lisburn, p. 55.

4. Edward Hincks, God's Work and Satan's Counter-Works, p.14.

5. Moore, op. cit. p. 11.

sinner, but I know my dear, dear Jesus saves me, for He came to save the lost.' The exclamation of every "saved one" is, 'I have found Him whom my soul loveth'.<sup>1</sup> Seaver reiterated this when he wrote: "... there is an earnest and a simple looking to Christ and Him alone for pardon. ... reliance on human merit, the trust in some vague idea of God's mercy, are all gone - nothing but Jesus. The Arian, the Romanist, the orthodox Christian, all declare the same faith."<sup>2</sup> Dr. Morgan, pastor of Fisherwick Presbyterian Church, found that many instances of conviction of sin were most painful and agonising, but "we have found that to all those so exercised no subject afforded hope and consolation but 'Jesus Christ and Him crucified'. The apostolic doctrine has appeared in all the freshness of its youth. To the awakened cry 'What must I do to be saved?' we know no answer but that of old, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.' This doctrine has proved to be effectual. It has been apprehended, received, and enjoyed. Strong consolation, proportioned to deep conviction, has been the rule."<sup>3</sup> Professor McCosh said, "... every one who has at all looked beneath the surface has seen how the persons thus impressed will hear of only ONE OBJECT. Talk to them of anything else, very possibly they will not understand you, certainly they will feel no interest in what you say; but speak of Christ, and their attention is gained and their heart is won."<sup>4</sup> "... They, and they only, who have found Christ have found true peace, and awakened sinners should be exhorted to be more anxious to secure a Saviour than to realise a pleasant sensation."<sup>5</sup> The depth of this repentance is seen in Guinness' preaching when he said of a "man in Coleraine who thought he had to call to mind all the sins he had ever committed, and repent severally one by one ..." <sup>6</sup> and a layman writer stated categorically

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1. Adams, op. cit. p. 16.

2. Seaver, op. cit. p. 10.

3. Morgan, op. cit. p. 10.

4. McCosh, op. cit. p. 67.

5. *ibid.* p. 11.

6. Londonderry Standard, 21st July, 1859.



"... Neither Archbishops nor Bishops - neither Popes nor Councils - neither Archdeacons nor Deans - neither Baptism nor the Lord's supper - neither forms nor ceremonies can save you. There is salvation in none but Jesus. None but Jesus can relieve your sin-sick soul, or ease your conscience of its burden of sin ..."<sup>1</sup>

One of the many young women converts of the revival, converted in Berry Street prayer meeting on the 29th June when she was prostrated, and who some six days later wrote a tract, in it addressed these words to the unconverted: "Will you leave your sins and take up the banner of Christ, or do you intend to keep your sins and go to hell? O poor perishing sinner, be persuaded to cast yourself at the feet of Jesus Christ and cry out 'Lord, save me'. If you perish there you will be the first who ever did."<sup>2</sup> A further proof of the depth of this repentance is witnessed by Adams, "The converts ... loathe their former sins. One who was guilty of the most heinous crime, and had offered to swear he was not guilty, was so distressed that he could get no peace, until he acknowledged it to the office-bearers of the church, and carefully sought the Lord for true repentance with bitter tears of deep regret and hell-gnawing remorse."<sup>3</sup> The opinion of an independent visitor was "... We saw that the only name which gave peace to those awakened souls was the name of Jesus. Nothing could be more simple than the converts' faith. It was just the dying sailor's over again -

"I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all;  
Jesus Christ is my all in all."

And it was not a mere sentiment, but a faith founded on solid Scripture. Such texts as - "Him that cometh unto me, I will in nowise cast out," or "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost," brought home by the Spirit to their hearts, gave them quiet peace."<sup>4</sup>

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1. McCann, op. cit. p. 56.

2. Tract, Another Stone in the Temple, p. 3.

3. Adams, op. cit. p. 27.

4. J. Baillie, op. cit. p. 10.

Members of the Reformed churches and of the Roman church had accepted the Divinity of Christ as part of their faith, with the exception of the Unitarians, or Arians as they were sometimes called, and it is interesting to note the response of such to the preaching of the gospel of the revival. A strong, brawny, athletic man, hitherto a harsh critic of revival, was awakened, and confessed of his past life "... it's been a failure, a miserable failure... a life of sin, and I feel there's nothing for me but eternal condemnation... I see now that He is God, and I have blasphemed Him by making Him a mere creature." On being assured that 'though your sins be like crimson, He will make you white as snow', gradually the light seemed to break upon his dark soul, and before many hours he acknowledged that 'the Lord Jesus Christ was his only Saviour, his only hope, and that he trusted Him with his whole soul.'<sup>1</sup> A mocking Unitarian woman, who had nothing to do with the Revival, was convicted of sin, refused to see her Unitarian minister, and was brought by her brother to Carryduff prayer meeting, where she found peace.<sup>2</sup> Realization of the sovereignty of God, the sinner's wretchedness before God as well as in his own sight caused many to be smitten with a terrible sense of their sin and as such they were brought to a realization of their need, not only in places of worship, but "... some ... upon the road, others in shops or market-places, whilst buying or selling, reckoning their money, or otherwise engaged in the transaction of their business ..."<sup>3</sup>, a barmaid was converted while "sitting behind her counter preparing to dispose of her spirits."<sup>4</sup> Even a police constable arrested a woman stricken in Donegall Street, thinking she was drunk, for she "spoke in a style he was not familiar with,"<sup>5</sup> and at the Maze,

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1. Baillie, op. cit. p. 76.

2. Ballymena Observer, July 9th, 1859.

3. ibid. 4th June, 1859; quoted by Francis King,  
Revival in Ireland, p. 14.

4. Weir, op. cit. p. 61.

5. Ballymena Observer, 2nd July, 1859.



during the Orange Celebrations, a man "beating a drum for some Orange men was smitten down."<sup>1</sup> These things had come about because their conscience was fearfully awakened, with a terrible sense of unpardoned sin that was only met in a "... deep felt and soul-pervading conviction that 'Christ is all' (and) a perfect faith in His divinity and in the efficiency of His atonement..."<sup>2</sup>

In the message of the Revival there was also much appreciation of the work of the Holy Spirit. One of the greatest scholars of the Established Church of that day was Edward Hincks, D.D., rector of Killyleagh, County Down, who in a sermon preached in his church during the Revival spoke of the Holy Ghost, "All that is good in any of you, you owe to Him. He taught you - so many of you as have been taught it - to see the preciousness of Jesus as Saviour; to love His Church and her holy ordinances; to love and to seek after holiness, and to hate and avoid sin. When you have wandered from the fold it is He who brought you back to it. When Satan tempts you to wander from it again, it is He who keeps you in it. It is His still, small voice that you hear saying within you, 'This is the way; walk ye in it'."<sup>3</sup> David Adams, stressing the awakening as a revival of true religion, described it as 'that outpouring of the Holy Spirit of God by which many souls are brought to Christ for their salvation, nearly and at the same time and place, in such a sudden and wonderful manner as to deeply and religiously impress the world and the church with a sense of their need, and the value of a living Christianity...' <sup>4</sup> Later on Adams enlarged not only on the external manifestations, but also "the internal work of the Spirit, His saving influences, which always convert, for thereby He imparts larger and clearer views of the Gospel, and enables sinners to behold 'the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ'."<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ballymena Observer, 16th July, 1859.

2. *ibid.* 4th June, 1859.

3. Hincks, *op. cit.* p. 14.

4. Adams, *op. cit.* p. 3.

5. *ibid.* p. 13.

A warning to the sinner is given by Dr. Salmon, in a sermon preached during the revival days<sup>1</sup>, when he said "... he who defers his repentance, in the expectation of receiving some future call from the Holy Ghost" may "be unconscious of the summons He has already given ... (by) the strivings with you of that Spirit ...". The outcome of the Spirit's work is done on the wills of His people. He is the source of all holy desires, all good counsels, all just works; "and yet it is not that He causes men, as senseless machines, to perform certain actions, but it is that He so shapes their wills that they, as rational voluntary agents, do those things that are pleasing in His sight..."<sup>2</sup> "The Spirit's work ... operates on our entire nature, and displays itself in the harmonious development of all the parts of our nature..."<sup>3</sup> Speaking of the prostrations attributed to the Holy Spirit, Salmon said "The excitement of emotion is neither the only, nor an infallible mark of grace."<sup>4</sup> The Rev. Dr. Robert Knox, the Bishop of Down, Connor and Dromore preached in Ballymena Parish Church, and said that people were not to rely on the outward signs merely as proof of conversion - 'they were neither reliable nor desirable.'<sup>5</sup> Bishop Knox had uttered much the same thoughts almost a month previously in Belfast.<sup>6</sup> Stressing this foremost place to be given to the Holy Spirit, a revivalist believer wrote "... unless the Holy Spirit work an entire change on the whole faculties of his (a sinner's) spiritual nature, by the power of the Gospel cleansing away his filthiness of spirit, as water cleanses away outward defilement, he must be an unfit subject for God's holy kingdom..."<sup>7</sup> Of the work of the Spirit in prayer Seaver avowed "... I will be borne out by my brethren, in the assertion that the prayers (of the people) are no longer cold, and dead and formal, but the homage of the Spirit, the outpourings of full hearts;"<sup>8</sup> and

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1. 3rd June, 1859.

2. Salmon, op. cit. p. 9.

3. *ibid.* p. 12.

4. *ibid.* p. 42.

5. Belfast Newsletter, 11th July, 1859.

6. *ibid.* 15th June, 1859.

7. Tract, Revivals and Millennial Advent, p. 7.

8. Seaver, op. cit. p. 8.



Adams, writing in November, 1859, testified that "in almost every one of these (seven hundred) families, there are some who, during the last eight months, have been waiting, praying for the Holy Spirit,"<sup>1</sup> and he continued "consequently it must be said of every soul that is saved, 'God hath chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.' Believing the truth to be the only, but all sufficient, ordinary means, while the Spirit alone is the Great Agent, of any true revival, I must say that it was earnestly and fully preached."<sup>2</sup> Dr. Morgan, preaching in the early days of the Revival, could state that not only were "the day, the house and the Word of God ... regarded beyond what was customary ... the value of the soul has been felt ... and the necessity for salvation ... the workings of the Spirit in the minds of many ... conviction ... agonizing ... and peace ... through Christ... The Holy Spirit's influence is best seen by writing on our character and conduct the indelible and unmistakable inscription 'holiness unto the Lord'."<sup>3</sup> Witness to this evidence of the Spirit's grace in the hearts of men and women is seen in a letter of a clerical friend of Dr. Salmon who wrote "... people have shown so wonderful an appreciation of the great doctrines of Christianity, of the heinousness of man's sin, and the value of the Atonement, and the work of the Holy Spirit as the Sanctifier of men's hearts..."<sup>4</sup> while from the very centre of the Revival came the testimony of a young man "I feel the effects of the Holy Spirit in my own mind and heart, although I have not been prostrated as I saw some men. I was doubtful and troubled for a length of time, but I found relief by constant prayer to God for more and more grace to strengthen my faith in Jesus Christ my Saviour; and I believe that is the way to continue praying for more and more grace to strengthen us against every temptation to sin, for we need that,

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1. Adams, op. cit. p. 9.

2. *ibid.* p. 13.

3. Morgan, op. cit. pp. 8-10.

4. Salmon, op. cit. p. 49.

as much and more so, as we need food to strengthen our bodies for our daily occupation."<sup>1</sup> Seaver bore witness to the effects of the work of the Spirit, "There seems a clearing of the spiritual vision, and in consequence a spiritual discernment more real than we are wont to witness; a perception of the agency of the great spirit of evil, producing indescribable suffering, and a perception of the nearness and reality of the Saviour's presence, shedding abroad in the soul 'joy unspeakable and full of glory', while the fruits of the Spirit, as given in Galatians V, 22-23 are manifested. It should be noticed that this deep spiritual anxiety is not confined to any class, but pervades all..."<sup>2</sup> Evangelical preaching produced an effect on the sinner, in the following manner, as related by the Rev. Isaac Ashe, of Barons-town Rectory, Dundalk, writing privately to the Primate Beresford of Armagh. Ashe saw first an earnest anxiety, in the sinner's heart, followed by deep conviction, which in turn led sometimes to an inward burden which might last some time. Then came a sense of penitence, and 'a sense of pardoning mercy through Christ', followed by a decided change of heart and life.<sup>3</sup> A further contribution to the appreciation of the revival message comes in a private letter, written at the end of 1862, which states that the doctrines preached are 'the low church doctrines', viz., "the all sufficiency of the sacrifice of Jesus, the free offer of salvation, the necessity of accepting it, the danger of self reliance, or of reliance on anything except the blood of the Lamb, the condemnation that awaits those that are under the Law, the glory that awaits those who believe in Jesus."<sup>4</sup>

The evangelical message of the Revival was largely the message of the Reformation - in a word 'justification by faith', as the decisive beginning and the persisting accompaniment of the new life. The evangelical order in the way of a good life was: first,

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1. Adams, op. cit. p. 22.

2. Seaver, op. cit. p. 10.

3. Primate Beresford's Private Correspondence, MSS. pp. 393-397.

4. Miss Curran, of Birr Castle, MSS Letters, October and November, 1862, MSS. Vol. II, pp 247-248, Primate's Library, Armagh.



forgiveness on the sole condition of a heart-felt trust in the mercy of God in Christ; and then a progressive work of sanctification by the Holy Spirit. A man was not justified because of any merit he had acquired by virtue of his own life and living; the merits of Christ were his imputed righteousness; at the same time it was insisted that a man was not justified without being radically changed, or converted. The Shorter Catechism taught "Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein He pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in His sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone."<sup>1</sup> Two strands of saving faith were distinguished: intellectual assent to the truths of Christianity, and the act of will by which the sinner throws himself on the Divine mercy and puts his trust in the Saviour. In the former, a man was taught that as he is under Law which requires perfect obedience, he stands condemned, through imperfect obedience. In the latter there is no true repentance until there is an apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ. This is exemplified in a tract written in the days of the Revival, wherein we read, "To believe then on the Lord Jesus Christ is not only to assent to the truth of the Gospel, but to trust on Christ for salvation; to trust not on our external duties; to trust not on the sincerity of our hearts; to trust not on the exercise of our faith, but to trust on Christ's blood and righteousness for the salvation of the soul.

Jesus Thy blood and righteousness,  
My beauty are, my glorious dress;  
'Midst flaming worlds, in these array'd,  
With joy shall I lift up my head.

Bold shall I stand in that great day,  
For who aught to my charge shall lay;  
Fully absolv'd through Thee I am,  
From sin and guilt, from fear and shame."<sup>2</sup>

The Presbytery of Derry, before they ordained a young licentiate, John Boyle, in the congregation of Second Raphoe, set him ' a

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1. Westminster Shorter Catechism, Question 33.  
2. Thomas Toye, Saving Faith, p. 4.

piece of trial' entitled "Is faith in Christ merely the exercise of the understanding?"<sup>1</sup>

In view of what has been written so far certain characteristics served to distinguish a genuine saving faith. First, the person in whom it is wrought must have a sincere conviction of sin - he must realize that in the eyes of a holy God he is fallen short of the requirements of the Law. Secondly, there must be a desire for reconciliation with God. Thirdly, the object of the sinner's faith must be nothing other than God in Christ holding Himself out to the sinner - "reliance on human merit, trust in some vague idea of God's mercy, are all gone - nothing but Jesus,"<sup>2</sup> as Seaver put it. "He must be the supreme desire of the soul, and no hope or happiness can be found apart from Him,"<sup>3</sup> as a modern writer has expressed it, or as that neglected saint of the Revival, Thomas Toye, said "We are to know nothing but Christ, and Him crucified. He has redeemed us to God by His blood, and therefore through Him is preached the forgiveness of sins, and by Him all that believe are justified from all things. But if there is no more than a bare assent of the mind, such a faith has no saving effect. Any description of justifying faith would be deplorably defective if it did not include confidence in Christ... Saving faith relies upon Christ as a Saviour ... a firm persuasion that there is no other saviour but Christ."<sup>4</sup> Fourthly, there must be the testimony of God to the promise, this lies in the Scriptures, which are interpreted to the soul by the Holy Spirit in answer to prayer along with diligent search. "Faith receives all that God has revealed to us in His Word, respecting our fallen and ruined state, and of the infinite provision made for our necessities, in Christ Jesus, and this, too, not merely in the head, but also in the heart. The Penitent sinner, exercising this lively and living faith comes to God through His Son, pleads what Christ has

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1. Minutes of Derry Presbytery, 7th February, 1860.

2. Seaver, op. cit. p. 101.

3. G. C. B. Davies, The Early Cornish Evangelicals, 1735-1760, p. 152.

4. Thomas Toye, op. cit. p. 8.



done, and suffered for him, disclaims every (other) hope of mercy and salvation, casts himself upon the atonement, and exclaims

"I give up every plea beside,  
Lord, I'm condemn'd, but Christ has died."

Upon the exercise of this life-giving principle, God reveals His mercy to the soul of the penitent sinner, gives him a comforting sense of pardon, ... and enables him to rejoice in the hope of the glory of God ... And then the Spirit, taking up His abode in the heart, brings forth the fruits of holiness in the life."<sup>1</sup> Saving faith was a continuous process that was to bear fruit in the lives of many "... they are ... consistent in their devout attention to the means of grace, and in their holy walk and conversation ... many of them have a ... towering faith, love and zeal in the cause of God ..."<sup>2</sup> Such faith was deepened by increase of knowledge, "this catechism, with proofs and explanations, of which I have circulated upwards of twelve dozen, since April last, (seven months), is taught in all our Sabbath schools, and to this circumstance, under God, I attribute the fact that of all the awakened none had such solid and really Scriptural knowledge as the Sabbath school teachers and scholars. They were enabled therefrom to derive much consolation and comfort to their own minds, and they were capable of being very useful to others not so well informed. This circumstance explains why many of them are so fluent, full, and felicitous in exhortation and Scripturally expressed extempore prayer."<sup>3</sup> This knowledge bore fruit in humble obedience by means of the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, Who applied the truths and promises of the Bible to the soul, and thus was fulfilled the teaching of this Shorter Catechism, "Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation, as He is offered to us in the Gospel."<sup>4</sup>

1. Toye, op. cit. p. 8.

2. Adams, op. cit. p. 26.

3. *ibid.* p. 20.

4. Westminster Shorter Catechism, Question 86.

The Rev. Isaac Ashe, writing to Primate Beresford, commented "The Scriptural doctrine of our church 'that Christ died for all mankind' is far better suited for the state into which the mind is brought in this gracious Revival, than the limited atonement maintained by the Presbyterian Church. They long for, and rejoice in, a full and unlimited exhibition of the Saviour's love, and I feel persuaded that many of their ministers have learned a sounder and more Scriptural theology from those who have been awakened among their own people."<sup>1</sup> Early Calvinism, as expressed by Dr. John Owen and President Edwards - the great American revivalist - was of a very severe type and it had been greatly used by many of the Evangelicals and in Ulster by the Seceders, but while it was still preached in Scotland by the famous Thomas Chalmers - one of Scotland's greatest sons - and in Ireland by men like Magill, and the visiting English Baptist, Spurgeon, there had come a great modification in its later outlook. The limited atonement of Owen and Edwards was broadened and it was held that the work of Christ was for all men. Many thinkers<sup>2</sup> and theologians contributed to this change of outlook, and the idea had certain features in common with the teaching of the Rev. McLeod Campbell, the Scottish Presbyterian who had been cast out of his church in 1831 for being at variance with contemporary orthodox theology on two points, the extent of the atonement and the nature of assurance. Further evidence of the change of emphasis is seen in the founding of the Evangelical Union Churches. In 1841 James Morison, minister of the United Secession Church at Kilmarnock, Scotland, was deposed for holding anti-Calvinistic views upon

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1. Primate Beresford's private correspondence MSS. pp. 393-397.
  2. The modification of Calvinism was presented in the writings of Dr. Pye Smith, Dr. Payne, and Dr. Jenkyn, all English Congregationalists; and Dr. Wardlaw, Scottish Congregationalist. McLeod Campbell wrote "My knowledge of the system is derived from them." - The Nature of the Atonement, by J. McLeod Campbell, Fourth Edition, Reprint 1959, p. 51. J. Angell James, in his autobiography said "To Dr. Williams (b.1644, d.1716) among the Independents, and Andrew Fuller among the Baptists, we owe the prevalence of the moderate Calvinism of modern times, and the present generally received opinion of the universal aspect of the Atonement. See Cairns, op. cit. p. 96. Dr. Daniel Williams was one-time pastor of Wood Street, Dublin.



faith, the work of the Spirit in salvation, and upon the extent of the atonement. The members of the Evangelical Union declared that faith was one's belief that Christ died for him; that the Spirit is "poured out upon all flesh" and strives with all the unregenerate, and dwells in all believers; while the atonement was universal. This movement spread and at least two churches were established in Belfast, independent in government they are like the Independent Churches in Britain and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A. Some three years before the Revival (1856) McLeod Campbell published 'The Nature of the Atonement' - a quarter of a century after his expulsion. In this book Campbell echoed the thought of many of the question of the atonement, that instead of being limited for the elect, as the Synod of Dort taught, it was for all, and this change is seen in the preaching of the Ulster Revival. Toye said "God has made a grant of His Son Jesus Christ, as an all-sufficient Saviour, to a lost and perishing world. God has made this grant absolutely free, independent, in every possible manner, of the worthiness of men. God has made this grant indiscriminately to all the hearers of the Gospel, and to every one of them in particular. God has made it the duty of every hearer of the Gospel to receive the Saviour thus given, and the hearer can only reject Him at the hazard of his soul.

'Though none will come till conscious of their want,  
Yet right to come they have by sovereign grant;  
Such right to Christ, His promise and His grace,  
That all are damn'd who hear and don't embrace'."<sup>1</sup>

William Montgomery Speers, one of the most energetic witnesses on behalf of Christ during the great awakening in Ulster, was converted when about twenty-seven years of age at Portglenone, in the early days of the Revival. A layman of great intelligence, he was much used in preaching and wrote a tract 'Dost thou believe on the Son of God?' in which he said: "This salvation is full and free for every man of the human race."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Toye, op. cit. p. 4.

2. R. M. Sibbett, The Revival in Ulster, p. 143.

Many of the preachers gave general invitations to their audiences: "... Arise, call upon thy God. The Lord, by His Spirit, is now manifesting awakening power, and will you be mad enough to slumber on amidst such shakings, and thus dishonour God and endanger your own soul?... Now, God is very near, put not off till tomorrow... Harden not your hearts, by always hearing but never obeying..."<sup>1</sup> In the Established Church preaching such a person as Dr. Salmon could say: "... the supernatural assistances bestowed by the Holy Spirit are compatible with a large amount of voluntary active exertion on the part of the human agent."<sup>2</sup> The Rev. S. M. Dill entered a house in Ballymena and spoke there with a woman and "... began to reason with her about her doubts and fears, assuring her that Christ was both able and willing to save her; for His 'blood cleanseth from all sin'."<sup>3</sup> In a tract 'A Word to Sinners', a 'Convert in Ireland' said "Dear fellow-sinner, God has done all that is needful for the salvation of man. He is reconciled; and as ambassadors for Christ, we now beseech you, in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God. And now, fellow-sinners, we must all be born again, or converted. This great change we cannot work in ourselves. Nothing short of the power of the Holy Ghost - the third Person in the Trinity - can bring to life a soul that is dead... You and I are sinners. But what a glorious thing that Christ Jesus came to seek and to save the lost... Come just as you are, with nothing to recommend you to Him but sin; and he will receive you - for 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out! ... God is not willing that you should perish... 'Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely'."<sup>4</sup> This modified Calvinism, with its message of Christ's dying for all and not merely the Elect, brings to the fore the doctrines of Wesley and the Arminians with their joyful choruses: "For all, for all the Saviour died,  
For all my Lord was crucified."<sup>5</sup>

1. Adams, op. cit. p. 28.

2. Salmon, op. cit. p. 10.

3. Dill, Revival at Ballymena, p. 6.

4. Tract, A Word to Sinners, by a Convert in Ireland.

5. Harrison, op. cit. p. 217.



In the Ulster revival the harsh wordy battles that had rent the Evangelical revival of the 18th century - battles between Whitfield, Harris, Walker of Truro, the Countess of Huntingdon, Toplady and the Hill brothers, Richard and Rowland (Calvinists) and John and Charles Wesley (Arminians) did not occur during the first years of the awakening. Instead there was a measure of harmony, wherein both mixed freely, and to the surprise of many the Presbyterians sang hymns like 'Jesu, lover of my soul' written by the Arminian Wesley, while Methodists sang the Presbyterian psalms, such as the '40th' - 'He took me from a fearful pit'; not to speak of the Anglican Calvinist Toplady's hymn 'Rock of Ages'.

The Wesleyan position was set forth by a Connor man - onetime Presbyterian, and become Methodist - the Rev. William Arthur, M.A., D.D., in his little tract "Did Christ die for all?" published in 1859, in which he wrote "... if there is a man living for whom Christ died not, how fearful is his condition! For him there is no atonement... if ever a desire to say 'God be merciful to me' rises in his mind, it is the movement of a false instinct." Arthur asked, was there 'no express and plain statement as a foundation for this despairing doctrine?' And he answered "None. Not one text? No, not one. Did we set down here the sentence Christ did not die for all, we should write what inspired pen has never written."<sup>1</sup> Arthur summarised the Wesleyan argument as follows:

1. It is not contained in one express text of the Bible.
2. None of its natural or probable equivalents are found.
3. Mention is never made of any person or class for whom Christ did not die.
4. The loss of souls is never attributed to the fact that He had not died for them.
5. The saved are never described as specially those for whom He died.
6. It implies that God was willing that some should perish, in direct contradiction to His word.

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1. Tract, Did Christ die for all? William Arthur, 1859, pp. 2, 3.

7. It makes the loss of souls to originate in Christ's exclusion of them; whereas the Scripture makes it to result from their rejection of Christ."<sup>1</sup>

As for the Independents, doctrinally their situation was anomalous. As Dr. Dale wrote, "They might hold fast to the creed that only the elect would repent and appeal to the divine mercy ... They might be assured that, according to the eternal counsels of God, Christ died only for the elect; but they preached as if they thought that He died for every man in the congregation."<sup>2</sup> "The Independents had been accustomed to hope that their children would be gradually drawn to Christ by the gentle influence of Christian homes... They did not deny the possibility of sudden conversion; but they were unfamiliar with it. They found it hard to believe that a man might go to a Methodist meeting, a swearer and a drunkard, and be 'born again' and find peace, and rejoice in the full assurance of his salvation before the meeting broke up."<sup>3</sup> Yet we read that in the Independent Chapel, Londonderry, the Rev. Robert Sewell preached on the subject of 'Revivals', "... generally proving that sudden conversions were the rule and not the exception ..."<sup>4</sup> That he believed in this, and put it to work, is seen in the statement "at least three hundred have been converted in my own chapel or in connection with my own efforts."<sup>5</sup>

Before the Revival and during its day the conversion experience was popularized by such writers as Bunyan in his 'Pilgrim's Progress', Rutherford's 'Rise and Progress of the Soul', and others<sup>6</sup>, and it might be said that the convert newly reconciled to God, had a great and rich endowment, for not only had he a constraining sense of gratitude, knowing himself a son of the Father through Christ, but he was knit in a mystical union with the glorified Christ, and sought to enter into and live out the

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1. Arthur, op. cit. p. 7.

2. R. W. Dale, History of English Congregationalism, p. 587.

3. *ibid.* p. 584.

4. Londonderry Standard, 9th July, 1859.

5. John Weir, The Ulster Awakening, p. 131.

6. See above Chapter II, p. 86.



the gifts of the Spirit. It was his place and privilege to make diligent use of the Word, the sacraments and prayer, both public and private; to serve God by diligence in his calling, and also to become more Christlike by sharing, according to his ability, in the works of Christ. But it was not to prove just so simple, for one of the peculiarities of James McQuilkin's conversion was his great assurance of salvation, believed by many at that time to be an innovation in the Presbyterian experience, and looked upon as a Methodist doctrine. Moore speaking at the General Assembly, said "that some of the true converts held 'that it was impossible to be a true child of God and not know it', and explained that this arose from the extraordinary change which had passed in themselves."<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, "a distinguished minister"<sup>2</sup> of the Presbyterian Church is reported to have said that 'the General Assembly has been of late years insensibly drifting into Methodism'.<sup>3</sup> The Rev. Dr. Brown was Moderator of the Presbytery of Coleraine when at a Visitation of Portrush on 30th July, 1860, it set as 'a piece of trial' for a student, Mr. R. F. Stewart, the question "Is the assurance of faith necessary to salvation?"<sup>4</sup> That this great doctrine of assurance was taught is seen in "Saved souls, can you read your title clear to mansions in the sky? Can you thankfully say, with all true believers, 'We know that if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' To have such a full assurance is a source of great joy. Often, then, examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith. Pray on, that the Spirit may shed abroad the love of God in your hearts..."<sup>5</sup> The Anglican position was stated "In a time of little faith and little love, people are content to live without assurance; but, on these scenes of the Spirit's power, we found the converts, not discussing assurance, but enjoying it. To be in doubt about their

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1. Weir, op. cit. p. 61.

2. The Rev. John Brown, D.D., Aghadoey (See Dobbin's 2nd letter, p.3.)

3. William Dobbin, Remarks on Assurance of Faith, p. 3.

4. Coleraine Presbytery Minutes, 30th July, 1860.

5. Adams, op. cit. p. 29. (his italics).



state, they seemed to feel to be a kind of hell; to know that they were forgiven, was heaven already begun... In the days of the Reformation, Luther used to hold it to be a test of Protestantism, that a man knew his sins to have been forgiven. Now, in many quarters, the same belief is branded with the stigma of fanaticism. Not very many, we fear, really accept, and have verified personally, that statement so often pronounced by them - 'I believe in the forgiveness of sins'.<sup>1</sup>

Against this tendency the Rev. William Dobbin,<sup>2</sup> of Annagh-lone, County Down, delivered a lecture in 1859, the substance of which was later, in February, 1864, published<sup>3</sup> in a twenty-page booklet entitled "Remarks on the Assurance of Faith." Dobbin alleged that the popular signification of the full assurance of faith was threefold: "First, the certainty of our election to Eternal Life before the foundation of the world: secondly, the certainty of our being regenerated by the Spirit of God, and that our sins are forgiven; and thirdly, the certainty, undoubting, and unhesitating, that we shall, in due time, enjoy everlasting life and glory. While the term is understood to express one, or other, or all of these matters combined, it is more usually confined to the second particular, and employed to proclaim, on the part of individuals, that they are in a state of grace, that they are regenerated by the Spirit, and that their sins are forgiven by a merciful God. The question then fairly presents itself for consideration:- Is it competent to any man, especially any Calvinist, to assert that he knows, with undoubting and infallible certainty, that he is regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and that his sins are forgiven? This question so stated, I unhesitatingly answer in the negative. I appeal to the Scriptures, and to the standards of my church."<sup>4</sup> The substance of Dobbin's

1. Baillie, op. cit. p. 79, footnote. (his italics)

2. Dobbin ordained 10th June, 1839. (Synod of Ulster Minutes 1839, p. 13.)

3. See 'A Protest against the Introduction of Unsound Theology into the Irish Presbyterian Church', Dobbin, p. 6.

4. William Dobbin, Assurance of Faith, p. 4 (my italics).



theology is that "regeneration is ... 'the Communication of spiritual life to a dead soul';"<sup>1</sup> "that the regenerated man thinks and feels, reasons and wills in the same way as he did before, and in the exercise of the same powers, the only changed condition being that these powers are renovated by the Grace of God - that the individual is 'renewed in the spirit of his mind'." He continues "If ... the Spirit of God ... imparts no new faculty ... nor destroy (any) ... it follows that bodily convulsions ... cannot be regarded as evidence of the Spirit's presence ... or of converting grace."<sup>2</sup> He states further "... The existence of the Spirit is a doctrine of pure revelation, and the conviction of His operations upon the souls of believers is derived, not from direct consciousness, but from an indirect inference, the Word of God having instructed us to conclude that the good, the right, the true within us, are to be ascribed to the Holy Ghost ... if the conviction (of our being under the influence of the Spirit) is a conclusion derived from evidence - then it follows that between the period when the Spirit's power first comes in contact with our souls, and the period when the mind becomes convinced ... there must be time for the evidence to exist and to be examined ... for the fruits of the spirit to be formed ... and to be decided upon by the reasoning faculty... In other words ... the existence of regeneration does not and cannot imply the assurance of it ..."<sup>3</sup> Dobbin sums up his ideas thus "... we admit instantaneous regeneration, but we deny that the assurance of the fact is its immediate, instantaneous, and necessary accompaniment."<sup>4</sup> In support of this Dobbin quoted a detached portion of the Confession of Faith<sup>5</sup>, torn from its context - the chapter dealing with Assurance of Grace and Salvation -

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1. Dobbin, op. cit. p. 5.

2. *ibid.* p. 5.

3. *ibid.* p. 8.

4. *ibid.* p. 8. (my italics)

5. Confession of Faith composed by Westminster Assembly, 1643, was an improvement on the Confession of Knox, 1560, the Aberdeen Confession, 1616, which gave forth "vague and inconclusive statements regarding justification" and began by being a revision of the Thirty-Nine Articles. - John Macpherson, the Confession of Faith, intro. p. 10.



Chapter XVIII, section 3: "This infallible assurance does not belong to the essence of faith but that a true believer may wait long and conflict with many difficulties before he be a partaker of it." This he took to prove "the existence of regeneration does not imply the certain knowledge of it."<sup>1</sup> "I deny, therefore", said Dobbin, "the right of any man to affirm, with undoubting and infallible certainty, that he knows that he is born of the Spirit, and that his sins are forgiven; but I maintain, with all my heart, the rational, the moderate, the Scriptural doctrine of 'the Full Assurance of Faith'."<sup>2</sup> In considering Dobbin's theology, the Confession of Faith, Chapter XVIII, sections 1 and 2, must be quoted: "... such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love Him in sincerity, endeavouring to walk in all good conscience before Him, may in this life be certainly assured that they are in the state of grace, and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, which hope shall never make them ashamed." (Sec. 2) "This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion, grounded upon a fallible hope: but an infallible assurance of faith, founded upon the divine truth of the promises of salvation, the inward evidence of those graces into which these promises are made, the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God: which Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption." Viewing this in contrast with Dobbin's brief quotation, we notice that he accepted the teaching of Section 3: "that a true believer may wait long and conflict with many difficulties before he be a partaker of it (assurance)" as if it taught that generally no man might have assurance, whereas instead it says in Section 1: "such as truly believe ... may in this life be certainly assured ..."

Dobbin, a bosom friend of the Rev. Isaac Nelson (apparently the only minister in Belfast not to support the Revival<sup>3</sup>), was

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1. Dobbin, op. cit. p. 9. (my italics)
  2. *ibid.* p. 14.
  3. Belfast Newsletter, 22nd June, 1859.



Clerk of the Banbridge Presbytery and also the Synod of Belfast. He supported the Revival, for when two converts from Ahoghill addressed the congregation of Boardmills, we read that "Messrs. Shanks (minister of Boardmills), Clugston, Dobbin, and Magill (Dundrod) were assisted by laymen," and both Dobbin and Clugston held prayer meetings in their churches on alternate nights.<sup>1</sup> On the last Sunday of June, 1859, the Rev. Prof. William Gibson, author of 'The Year of Grace', spoke in Second Annaghlonge (Dobbin's church) and so great was the crowd that Dobbin himself had to speak in the schoolhouse.<sup>2</sup> Dobbin published his provocative booklet in February, 1864, and the Rev. Robert Crawford joined issue with him in a sermon preached in the Presbyterian Church, Loughbrickland, on the Sabbath evening, 20th March, 1864. Crawford, a young man seven years in the ministry, faced an experienced opponent of twenty-five years' service, and this David-Goliath struggle was soon to interest the whole church. Crawford, judged by his writing, seems to have been a gentleman, while Dobbin, meticulous clerk and incisive writer, appears in a somewhat domineering light. Crawford<sup>3</sup> took up Dobbin's challenge "Is it competent to any man certainly to know that he is regenerated?" and bluntly answered "Let it be known, therefore, that it is competent to a Christian to know certainly his standing and character before God. 'Assurance of grace and salvation' is a doctrine most surely believed among us. It was held and maintained by our Reformers. It is embodied in all our evangelical creeds and confessions: and from our pulpits there is no one truth so frequently, clearly, and with unanimity preached. And why not? It is the uniform teaching of the Bible, that 'the believer in Christ may attain, without any special or immediate revelation, but in and by the use of ordinary means, not merely a conjectural or probable persuasion, but a

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1. Banner of Ulster, 25th June, and Ballymena Observer, July 2, 1859.

2. *ibid.* 28th June, 1859, and *ibid.*

3. Robert Crawford, Full Assurance, p. 6.

4. *ibid.*

5. Dobbin's Protest, June 25, 1859, p. 7.



certain and infallible assurance, that he is in the state of grace, that he has a personal interest in Christ, and that he shall be finally saved'." Dobbin alleged that assurance is not to be found in 'Christian experience', to which Crawford asked "Did the writer forget such recorded experience as that of the primitive Christians? - 'We know that we have passed from death unto life', 'we know that we are of God', 'we know that we are in Him that is true', and 'we know whom we have believed';"<sup>1</sup> or of the Reformers like Calvin who said "... it is miserable blindness to accuse Christians of pride, because they dare glory in the presence of the Spirit, without which glorying, Christianity itself could not be."<sup>2</sup> Not only Calvin, but Beza, Diodate, Pietet, Edwards, Chalmers and the Erskines are in support of the case of Crawford, who believed that he had proved "that the believer may have the certain assurance of his personal interest in Christ." Considering Dobbin's assertion that it is a "pretentious pietism in a believer to assert that he is regenerate" Crawford said assurance rests on three unquestionable witnesses - "The infallible Word, the undeniable work, the attesting Spirit of God - on whose evidence it is competent to the believer to assert his saving interest in Christ." And he continued "Does the Word of God not permit the believer to assert 'We have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins?' Is it not of the nature of faith to appropriate and enjoy what God is pleased to offer and bestow? Is it to be thought presumption to affirm that 'In Christ we have the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace'? Rather is it presumptuous in the justified to doubt it."<sup>3</sup> Quoting Erskine, Crawford asserted "... there is nothing to keep you from a full assurance of faith, unless it be your own ignorance and unbelief."<sup>4</sup>

Dobbin, hearing of Crawford's intention to review his publication, 'went over to hear my respected brother<sup>5</sup>' in Loughbrickland

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1. Crawford, op. cit. p. 14.

2. *ibid.* p. 19.

3. *ibid.* p. 16.

4. *ibid.* p. 24.

5. Dobbin's Protest, June 12, 1866, p. 7.



Church, and on the 21st November, 1864, published a reply entitled "A Letter to the Rev. Robert Crawford, of Loughbrickland", in which he says "... Sir, your conduct gave me pain, and its exposure is not less painful. When I saw you strutting your little hour before gaping credulity - heard you contradicting the principles of the Confession you had subscribed, teaching your people Arminian doctrine, proclaiming your conversion with the flippancy of a Methodist class leader, and illustrating it by scandalously misrepresentating and maligning, by means of Calvin and Spurgeon, a brother that never injured you to his knowledge, I humbled myself before God, and heaved a sigh for my Church."<sup>1</sup>

Dobbin defined "Full Assurance" to be - 'The full persuasion, or the unhesitating conviction of belief or trust, based upon the facts and truths of Divine revelation - the infallible verities of the Divine Word - which it is criminal to doubt or to reject.'<sup>2</sup> Dobbin commenced the furore by his pamphlet "Remarks on the Assurance of Faith", and Crawford had replied in a lecture. The matter was referred to the Presbytery of Banbridge, and by their aid seemed amicably settled; when, at the request of his congregation,<sup>3</sup> Crawford gave his lecture to the Press, and the peace was shattered. Dobbin tabled a charge of heresy before the Presbytery against Crawford. Upon the Presbytery's declining to investigate, Dobbin appealed to the Synod of Belfast, which likewise declined. Dobbin, ever aggressive, returned to the Presbytery and tabled the charge again. This time the Presbytery supported Crawford, holding that he did not teach any heresy, though he had expressed himself loosely in thought.<sup>4</sup> Dobbin appealed to the General Assembly in 1865; Crawford likewise appealed. Both were dissatisfied with the finding of the Presbytery of Banbridge. The Assembly appointed

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1. Dobbin's first letter, p. 4.

2. *ibid.* p. 4.

3. Crawford, *op. cit.* p. 2.

4. Minutes of the General Assembly, 1865, p. 483.

7. *ibid.*

a Commission to 'consider the whole case, examine the documents, and report to the next Assembly'.<sup>1</sup> The Commission met in Belfast<sup>2</sup> on Tuesday, 24th October, to consider; and having the documents, and having heard the parties, came to the conclusion "that the charges against Mr. Crawford have not been sustained" ... "and lest there should be any doubt in the public mind as to the teaching of this Church on the doctrine of the Assurance of Faith, hereby declare, that in the standards of the Church it is affirmed that while assurance is not of the essence of faith - that true believers can be infallibly assured that they are in a state of grace, and that they shall persevere therein unto salvation; and that this assurance is grounded on the truth of God's promises, and by the Spirit enabling them to discover in themselves those graces to which the promises of life are made, and bearing witness with their souls that they are the children of God."<sup>3</sup> This conclusion was arrived at and both appeals were dismissed - the finding of the Presbytery of Banbridge was confirmed - after a debate which occupied the greater portion of three days<sup>4</sup>; attracted the religious public of all denominations, and filled with a crowd of attentive hearers one of the largest churches in Belfast.<sup>5</sup> This debate was cited as being "the best and ablest ... that has been in the Assembly for years."<sup>6</sup> Among those taking part were Dr. Killen, Dr. Watts, the Revs. John Macnaughtan, J. B. Rentoul, and A. Robinson, not forgetting Crawford, and Dobbin with his henchman Nelson. Killen "found that Mr. Dobbin had deviated from the Confession of Faith" ...and "moved that he should be reported to the Assembly as an errorist."<sup>7</sup> Speaking on Assurance, Killen said "It thus appears that what has been called the theology of the Revival, is, after all, the theology of our Shorter Catechism

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1. Minutes of the General Assembly, 1865, p. 483.

2. *ibid.* 1866, p. 667.

3. *ibid.* 1866, 681.

4. Friday, June 8th (Minutes, pp. 667-9); Tuesday, June 12th, Wednesday, June 13th (Minutes, pp. 680-681).

5. The Assembly was held in Rosemary Street Church.

6. Speeches delivered at General Assembly, June 12, 1866.

7. *ibid.* p. 6.



and the theology of the Word of God."<sup>1</sup> He continued "... it (Assurance) is one of the most precious doctrines of evangelical Protestantism. If no man can be assured of his regeneration, Christianity must be a very different thing from what it is represented to be in the New Testament."<sup>2</sup> Macnaughtan said "assurance is not a grace separate and distinct from faith, as hope and love and repentance are. It is faith itself in its full development, faith risen up to its altitude of sublimity, the rich and ripened cluster that tells what fruit the flower of faith produces; and therefore something to be aimed at, sought for, expected, waited for by every follower of Christ."<sup>3</sup> "... I cannot go forth as a preacher of the everlasting Gospel if I must not tell sinners that they may know that they have eternal life."<sup>4</sup> The result finally was that the Assembly confirmed the finding of the Banbridge Presbytery, and also that of the Commission:- "... the charges against Mr. Crawford are not sustained ... that Crawford and Dobbin ... cultivate a spirit of harmony and peace ... and hereby declare that in the standards of the Church it is affirmed that while assurance is not of the essence of faith - that true believers can be infallibly assured that they are in a state of grace, and that they shall persevere therein unto salvation; and that this assurance is grounded on the truth of God's promises, and by the Spirit enabling them to discover in themselves those graces to which the promises of life are made, and bearing witness with their souls that they are the children of God."<sup>5</sup>

Such was the biggest theological issue emanating from the Revival, but that there was irresponsible teaching in the extreme sections of the Revival, is seen in such an expression as "Christ's blood gives us a perfect standing before, independent of how we

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1. Speeches delivered at the General Assembly, June 12, 1866, p. 8.

2. *ibid.* p. 9.

3. *ibid.* p. 14.

4. *ibid.* p. 18.

5. Minutes of General Assembly, Belfast, 1866, p. 681.

6. See above p. 316.

7. Shaft-Norson, Encyclopedia, Vol. IV, p. 2109.

walk or watch here below."<sup>1</sup> An extension of this view was the idea that "works have nothing to do with our salvation"<sup>2</sup> - plainly a misconception of the evidence to the bystander of salvation in the recipient's heart. A further peculiarity is the reversal of St. Paul's injunction "Let a man examine himself"<sup>3</sup>; "They go rooting within the corruption of their own heart, examining themselves - having their eyes fixed on self instead of Christ";<sup>4</sup> "looking into the muddied image of Christ in my own soul."<sup>5</sup> Both these quotations imply that it is wrong for any believer ever to 'look in' in self-examination, such practices being calculated to make people unhappy and lead them away from Christ. Sometimes confusion of thought took place between the atonement and personal forgiveness. In an effort to give comfort to perplexed souls on the question of forgiveness of sins, a little book entitled "Complete in Jesus" said, "... my every-day sins, are they forgiven? All sins are every-day sins, all your sins were future when He said "your sins and your iniquities I will remember no more." Sins were all future as to God."<sup>6</sup> This seems to imply that a believer is not to be called in question for his deeds after conversion, thereby contradicting St. Paul when he said "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."<sup>7</sup>

Above<sup>8</sup> it was mentioned that there were two strands of saving faith - intellectual assent to the truths of Christianity, and the act of will by which the sinner throws himself on Divine mercy and puts his trust in the Saviour. One section of the Christian Church which taught only the first part of this was Sandemanianism - "Doctrinally they distinguish themselves by defining faith as a mere assent to the teachings and workings of Christ,"<sup>9</sup> yet in

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1. "Notes of Five Addresses delivered at the Rotundo" quoted by Trench, p. 6.
  2. F. F. Trench, Extreme Views, p. 8.
  3. I. Cor. XI, 28.
  4. Tract, Stormy Lake ) Both quoted in Trench, op.
  5. Tract, Work of the Holy Spirit ) cit. p. 9. q.v.
  6. Trench, op. cit. p. 13.
  7. II. Cor. V. 10.
  8. See above p. 318.
  9. Schaff-Herzog, Encyclopedia, Vol. IV, p. 2109.



"Things New and Old"<sup>1</sup> we read "Jesus has put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. He suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. The soul that believes this grand fact is saved on the spot, saved now, saved for ever, he has no need to do this or that, he has just to believe what God has said about Jesus and be saved." According to this the later Lutheran theologians, Calvinists, Arminians and all evangelicals have erred, for there is no need for the act of will to cast oneself on the divine mercy, and put one's trust in Christ; rather belief in a sentiment is all that is required. The later Lutherans had analysed repentance into a "knowledge of sin, a sense of the divine wrath, agony of conscience, humiliation before God, sincere confession and hatred of sin,"<sup>2</sup> but in "Revival Truths" it was said "Whatever repentance be - whether ... submission to God, or forsaking of sin ... if it is a necessary state to be passed through before believing, it comes as a bar between the sinner and the Saviour."<sup>3</sup> This plainly taught that repentance was not needed, yet the same writer says "Repentance towards God is the grand end of all that God does in the sinner's heart; and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ is only the means by which this great end is brought about."

What a contrast this is to the Westminster divines when they wrote "What is repentance unto life? - Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavour after, new obedience."<sup>4</sup> In the New Testament we read "... ye are not under law but under grace",<sup>5</sup> surely teaching that the moral law is abrogated as a means of justification, but still in force as a moral code of ethics - a rule of life. Yet in the days of revival a tract was written

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1. Things New and Old, p. 67, quoted by Trench, op. cit. p. 14.
  2. W. P. Paterson, Conversion, p. 105. (his italics.)
  3. Revival Truths, p. 17, quoted by Trench, op. cit. p. 15 (my italics).
  4. Westminster Shorter Catechism, Question 87.
  5. Romans VI, 14.

entitled 'A Scriptural Inquiry into the True Nature of the Law', wherein it was said "The law could not have been a rule of life to him (Paul)", while a reviewer of tracts, writing on one named 'Test before you Trust' quoted in his remarks<sup>1</sup> "... As a sinner I cannot be bound to keep it (the law); it is an impossibility, and God does not require of me an impossibility." This tract must have been fairly widespread, as we read of the Presbytery of Coleraine asking of the Rev. Thomas Davidson, when he was appointed constant supplier of First Garvagh Presbyterian Church, before he was ordained its minister of the 25th September, 1860, to give, as a 'piece of trial', a sermon on the ominous title "Is the Moral Law binding on Christians as a rule of life?"<sup>2</sup> The Rev. F. F. Trench,<sup>3</sup> rector of Kells, County Meath, related that he was once distressed to hear a young preacher, addressing a very large congregation say "that God never gave His law to be kept," and the Rev. David Adams, warning that precautions should be taken with novices, said "We should not like to listen to a man talking heresy, when he states that Christ was a sinner like himself, or to a man praying according to his own sinful and absurd passions and prejudices, when he prays that all ministers' mouths may be stopped until they adopt his views which are most unscriptural."<sup>4</sup> In view of these outspoken, thoughtless expressions of the Christian experience, it is little wonder that men like Cooke, Stopford, Hincks, Adams, Salmon, Dill and others queried some at least of the converts' remarks, while men like Dobbin and Nelson could not subscribe to such extravagances.

Revival theology has very little reference to the modern 'Keswick' doctrine of Holiness, so far as Ulster is concerned at the time of the Revival, though in England, with the Mildmay Movement; and in America, with the publication of the book "The Higher Christian Life"<sup>5</sup> in 1860, there is evidence of it. In

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1. Remarks on a Review of C. S. Tracts, p. 7, quoted by Trench, op. cit. p. 20.
  2. Coleraine Presbytery Minutes, 14th August, 1860.
  3. Trench, op. cit, p. 22 (footnote).
  4. Adams, op. cit. p. 24.
  5. W. T. Boardman, The Higher Christian Life, Boston, 1860.



the Ulster Revival one of the very few references to Holiness was to the converts from Ahoghill, who advanced quickly in the Christian life, and of whom "it is not uncommon to hear them say 'We have got the glory', while others perhaps more scripturally declare 'We have received the joy'... Some of them, after a severe struggle, have enthusiastically exclaimed 'Victory!'... A few may, for a while, erroneously imagine that they are already perfect, but experience and Scripture soon teach them that they must 'give all diligence to add to their faith, virtue, and to virtue knowledge' ..."<sup>1</sup> While it may be true that conferences like Keswick - held for the deepening of spiritual life - had their seeds in the 1859 Revival, especially in England; in Ulster - apart from the Palmers,<sup>2</sup> with their two-fold message of crisis experience of salvation for sinners and sanctification for saints - the doctrine of sanctification was that of the Shorter Catechism, viz., "the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin and to live unto righteousness."<sup>3</sup>

Considering the Sacraments, it would seem as regards Baptism that this was a perennial question arising from the influx of Romanists to any of the churches of Protestantism. The early form of the question was 'Is baptism administered in the Church of Rome valid?' and in 1859 a tract<sup>4</sup> of thirty-seven closely written pages bore this very title, and the conclusion is that because Roman Catholic baptism is administered in the Name of the Trinity, it is therefore valid among Protestants. Among the awakened of the Revival a fresh interest in Baptism aroused questions as to the mode of administration - would it be by sprinkling or by immersion? - a pertinent question today.<sup>5</sup> The

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1. Adams, op. cit. pp. 26, 27.

2. Palmers in Great Britain, 1859-1864, see Irish Evangelist September, 1866.

3. Westminster Shorter Catechism, Question 35.

4. This tract was written by 'a minister of the General Assembly'.

5. Consult P. C. Marcel, Biblical Doctrine of Infant Baptism, James Clarke, 1951.

Brethren movement following the Baptist mode demanded re-baptism and by immersion. There was little mention of any form of baptismal regeneration.

Of the Lord's Supper, or Communion, it was said of the vast number of converts "now that many of the converts have ripened into holiness, there is an intense desire to have fellowship ... in the 'breaking of bread'."<sup>1</sup> Adams continued with a thought that must have seemed evident to every historian of the Revival, viz., Communion seasons seemed favourable to revival. However, S. J. Moore uttered a warning to young converts 'Don't be in haste to go to the Lord's Table,'<sup>2</sup> adding the injunction "... Clearly understand the ordinance. If you press forward without adequate knowledge you perform an unmeaning service, not pleasing to God; and if you press forward without trying your new principles and feelings for an adequate time, you take a dangerous course." Many Communion rolls were largely increased, for many of the converts, when they realised that they were now decided and committed Christians, asked themselves 'What is the Lord's Supper?' and many of Presbyterian upbringing remembered "The Lord's Supper is a sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, His death is shewed forth; and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of His body and blood, with all His benefits, to their spiritual nourishment, and growth in grace."<sup>3</sup> The emphasis on faith reveals a 'receptionist' view of the Sacrament, and this was the general view of the early evangelicals and most of the awakened in Ulster.

In a word, the message of the Revival "brought a new sense of assurance and of joy into Christian living. Hitherto a fairly frigid Calvinism had very generally been held, and the seeming arbitrariness or inscrutability of God's will therein depicted,

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1. Adams, op. cit. p. 16.

2. S. J. Moore, Counsels for Converts, November, 1859, p. 8.

3. Westminster Shorter Catechism, Question 96.





CHAPTER IX

THE RESULTS OF THE REVIVAL

The Lord Bishop of Down, Connor and Dromore in a sermon on the Revival said "... after hearing the (clergy) report of men of calm and sober minds, and mature judgments, I felt that God was shedding abroad, in many places, a spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord, inducing in many cases, reformation of life - I speak not now of the physical and bodily prostrations; to them I attach little importance, - but of that strong conviction of sin, prayer for mercy, calling upon Christ for pardon, and the testimony of a reformed life - and who can scoff at such fruits as these?"<sup>1</sup> Dr. Knox's words lead us to ask for the opinions of the churches engaged in the work of the Revival, and as the largest Reformed denomination in the north of Ireland in the time of the awakening was the Presbyterian Church, their opinion will be considered first. This Church numbered nearly six hundred ministers, and over half a million members<sup>2</sup> in the nine counties of Ulster.<sup>3</sup> Its General Assembly met in Belfast, in July, 1860, under the Moderator, the Rev. S. M. Dill, minister of First Ballymena, a man widely used in the Revival; and it was moved and agreed, at its meeting on 3rd July "... that this Assembly, humbly and thankfully recognising the riches of Divine mercy, in the spiritual awakening so largely experienced during the last year in the Province of Ulster, do hereby record their sense of the obligation which rests on us to watch, and pray, and strive that the work of grace may be deepened and perpetuated among our people and that this movement of the Spirit of God may speedily spread over the whole land."<sup>4</sup> This was not a precipitate decision, for a year previously it had been resolved and agreed "That we desire to express profound thankfulness to God, that it

1. Londonderry Sentinel, 8th July, 1859.

2. Weir, op. cit. p. 113.

3. Ball, op. cit. p. 349 (503,835 in nine counties); 1861 Census,

4. Total Presbyterians in Ireland 523,291. (See Appendix D 2.

A century later, 1959, it was reported that there were 393,453 Presbyterians in Ireland. (Minutes of Gen. Assembly 1959, p.152)

4. Minutes of General Assembly, 1860, p. 868.



has pleased Him to pour out His Spirit on so many of our congregations; and that we recognize with reverence and awe, and, at the same time, with inexpressible joy, that sovereign and infinite grace, which, notwithstanding our many shortcomings, has bestowed on us such evident and abundant tokens of the Divine favour ..."<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the Assembly "were engaged... in most delightful conference on the State of Religion, and on the present movement of the Holy Spirit of God,"<sup>2</sup> on Wednesday, 6th July, 1859, in Mary's Abbey Presbyterian Church, Dublin. A report was read by Dr. Kirkpatrick in which he said "... it is true - it is assuredly true - the Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad; and it becomes us with thankfulness and joy to acknowledge His mighty hand ... There can be no doubt, however, that under the guidance of the God of all grace, some previous preparation had been made in addition to the ordinary faithful preaching of the Word, and prayer ... At length there was a sudden and public manifestation of the power that had been long secretly leavening the minds and hearts of the people. The work of conviction and conversion having thus begun, was carried forward from heart to heart, and from district to district, with unprecedented rapidity ..."<sup>3</sup> A year later the Assembly again met "for conference on the state of religion within the bounds, and with special relation to the subject of revivals,"<sup>4</sup> at seven o'clock on Tuesday morning, 10th July, 1860. Next morning at 10 o'clock, resolutions deduced from this conference were presented. "That this Assembly desire to acknowledge and to record with deepest thankfulness to God, the great work of power and of grace which He has wrought, and which He continues to work amongst us, in the awakening of so many sinners, and in the confirming of so many believers in the faith of the Gospel. That, whilst we have occasion to lament, in connexion with this Revival,

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1. Minutes of the General Assembly, 1859, p. 773.

2. ibid. Dublin, 1859, p. 772.

3. Massie, op. cit. pp. 52, 53.

4. Minutes of the General Assembly, Belfast, 1860, p. 892.

5. Synod of Arragh and Enniskillen Minutes, Clones, 10th May, 1860.

cases of self-deception and of spiritual declension, we have reason to bless God that these cases are so few; that the charges of intemperance and impurity, which are reported by the enemies of the movement as prevailing in the awakened district, are proved on the testimony of competent persons, to be without foundation: and that, after inquiry and examination, we can discover so little that is calculated to bring just reproach on a work so remarkable and so widely extended over the North of Ireland."<sup>1</sup>

As the Assembly is made up of five Synods, it may be important to have some of their opinions. The Synod of Dublin "... earnestly recommended to the Assembly to appoint a deputation of ministers from the awakened districts of the North to visit the South and West in the course of the autumn, in order to address their congregations there on the revival of religion..."<sup>2</sup> The important Synod of Belfast, containing some 34,000 families - about two-fifths of the total Presbyterian families in Ireland - in the year 1859, in Belfast, recorded "Synod ... feels itself called upon gratefully to acknowledge the tokens of Divine mercy that have been manifested in the conviction and conversion of sinners, as well as in the edification of believers through the Word and prayer accompanied by the Spirit of God ..." <sup>3</sup> Next year, the same Synod "... having heard ... reports of Presbyteries bearing such gratifying testimony to the state of religion throughout their bounds, record their deep sense of thankfulness to Almighty God for what He has wrought."<sup>4</sup> The Synod Armagh and Monaghan asserted "... the reviving influences of God's Holy Spirit have been largely experienced, and the results that have been produced attest the genuine and permanent character of the work ..." <sup>5</sup> Ballymena and Coleraine Synod said "though the enthusiasm connected with the 'Revival' of 1859 is gone, there

1. Minutes of the General Assembly, 1860, pp. 899, 900.

2. ibid. p. 848.

3. Minutes of Belfast Synod, 1859.

4. ibid. 1860, and Minutes of the General Assembly 1860, p. 854.

5. Synod of Armagh and Monaghan Minutes, Clones, 15th May, 1860.



remain so many gracious and blessed results as to give cause for devout thanksgiving and praise to the God of all grace."<sup>1</sup> Considering the Presbyteries, Shaw of Alfred Street, speaking in the Belfast Presbytery, moved that they give thanks to God for the awakening. Prof. Murphy, disagreeing in some measure, avowed that the silent work was more lasting than the physical. Hamilton, of York Street, asked bluntly if the awakening was of the Holy Spirit or only just a passing influence, while Prof. Gibson stated that he had no sympathy with extravagances, but he did think much of the finger of God in the movement. Dr. Morgan, of Fisherwock, considered it a great movement. Watters, of Newtownards, expecting his town to be visited soon, believed bodily symptoms went with awakenings.<sup>2</sup> After long discussion it was unanimously agreed "that the Presbytery desire to express their thankfulness to Almighty God for the various signs of a religious awakening in this town and neighbourhood ..."<sup>3</sup> This cautious approach grew into eventual thankful appreciation, for by the beginning of the next year, the Presbytery of Belfast could testify to its Synod that they "rejoice not only in improved attendance ... a serious and earnest spirit ... Multitudes give evidence of a real thirst for the preaching of the Word."<sup>4</sup> The Presbytery of Armagh unanimously agreed "We desire to record our unfeigned gratitude to God for the abundant outpouring of the Spirit within our borders and in our several congregations since our last meeting ..."<sup>5</sup> In Strabane Presbytery "each minister gave a report of the Revival in his congregation, and the Presbytery was highly pleased and refreshed."<sup>6</sup> Comber Presbytery stated "Attendance in all congregations increased greatly, ... the Lord's Supper very solemn ... Deep respect for the Lord's Day ..."<sup>7</sup>

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1. Minutes of the Synod of Ballymena and Coleraine, 21st May, 1861.
  2. Belfast Newsletter, 8th June, 1859.
  3. Belfast Presbytery Minutes, 7th June, 1859.
  4. Synod of Belfast Minutes, May, 1860.
  5. Last meeting was 27th June, 1859. Armagh Presbytery Minutes, October 6th, 1859.
  6. Strabane Presbytery Minutes, 10th April, 1860.
  7. Synod of Belfast Minutes, May, 1860.



which the following... adopted unalteredly: "The Ahoghill Presbytery wrote<sup>1</sup> "... The Lord has been pleased to visit a large portion of our bounds with the genial showers of a gracious revival. Our churches have experienced an awakening, the most cheering in its character and holy in its fruits." Its neighbour, the Presbytery of Ballymena, avowed that "... A spirit of genuine religion has fallen upon many of the people, and the power of godliness is manifested in their conduct ..." <sup>2</sup> The Presbytery of Derry: "... the religious 'awakening' and 'revival' now graciously vouchsafed by God to this province ... (resulted in) a considerable number, it is believed, ... savingly impressed."<sup>3</sup> The Presbytery of Down "... record the expression of their sincere gratitude to Almighty God for what He has already done ..." <sup>4</sup> and at the same time the Templepatrick Presbytery could tell the Belfast Synod at their gathering, that they "... feel satisfied that in no past year of their history had they so much cause to thank God... , refreshing has visited all our congregations and new life is everywhere apparent ..." <sup>5</sup>; while the Dromore Presbytery reported to the same Synod, "that it had one hundred and twenty prayer meetings weekly within the bounds, more than one thousand religious periodicals circulated monthly ... at the Autumn Communion of 1859, more than 500 new Communicants sought admission for the first time." <sup>6</sup> Thus it is clearly seen that the opinion of the Presbyterian Church was favourable.

A small section of Presbyterians is known as "Covenanters" or "Reformed Presbyterians." At their Annual Synod, held in Belfast, in July, 1859, the Court was addressed on the subject of "Revivals" by the Rev. Dr. Thomas Houston, minister of Knockbracken, "with special reference to the duty of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in regard to the present awakenings;" after

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1. Missionary Herald, June, 1859, p. 323.

2. ibid. July, 1859, p. 335.

3. Derry Presbytery Minutes, 2nd August, 1859.

4. Special Meeting called on Revivals, held in Lissara Presbyterian Church, 28th June, 1859; Minutes of Down Presbytery.

5. Minutes of Belfast Synod, 1860.

6. ibid.



which the following resolution was adopted unanimously: "The subject of 'Revivals' having been before Synod in various forms, it was considered that the Court could not separate without some deliverance in regard to a matter of so much practical importance. It is therefore resolved, that without expressing any opinion with respect to the circumstances originating this movement, or the manner in which it may have been conducted in some quarters, Synod cannot but regard it as a reason for the most devout gratitude to the God of all grace, that there are so many and indubitable indications of increased earnestness in spiritual things, and delight in religious exercises, on the part of multitudes of professing Christians; and that there are also indications of many persons hitherto utterly careless, or ungodly and wicked, having been awakened to a concern for their souls, and the necessity for reformation - many, it is to be hoped, having undergone a saving change."<sup>1</sup>

Another section, called the "Remonstrant Synod" and known commonly as Arians, Non-Subscribers, or Unitarians, emerged in 1830, the result of the Cooke-Montgomery struggle.<sup>2</sup> As this is the only Protestant body openly hostile to the Revival, its views are considered in some detail. The historian of this Church, Dr. John Campbell, wrote of the Revival that it "... had not much influence on the Non-Subscribing and Remonstrant Churches. The scenes enacted during its progress proved that while it did some good, it also did much moral harm, and strengthened the Non-Subscribers' opinion that wild out-bursts of emotion are far inferior to the slow and steady growth of religious feeling."<sup>3</sup> Bearing in mind that "it was known that there were a good many Non-Subscribers who were Trinitarians"<sup>4</sup> among the laity, it is

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1. Minutes of Reformed Presbyterian Synod, Belfast, June, 1859, pp. 18, 19. Also Belfast Newsletter, July 9th, 1859, and Reformed Presbyterian Magazine, August, 1859, p. 267.

2. See above, Chapter I, pp. 37-40.

3. John Campbell, M.A., M.D. Short History of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland, 1914, pp. 76, 77.

4. *ibid.* p. 63.

interesting to note that, at the Remonstrant Synod held in York Street, Belfast, the Rev. John Montgomery, Moderator, stated that the Revival was not evidence of the fruits of the Spirit, but "an exhibition of fear."<sup>1</sup> It was further stated "that whilst assuming to encourage earnestness of religion we are not disposed to look upon the existing movement called 'revivals' with approbation, and we dissent from the popular theory of its origin, and entertain no very favourable opinion of its general practical tendencies." This latter resolution was, however, withdrawn on the appeal of Dr. Henry Montgomery, who argued that as revival districts in the past gave strength to Unitarian congregations, they might now expect such congregations to spread. "Therefore" said he, "I believe it would not be wise to pass this at all."<sup>2</sup> This caution was from Dr. Montgomery, one-time opponent of Dr. Henry Cooke; and who in early Revival days represented the Non-Subscribers at the Music Hall prayer meetings, but was later to urge his brethren to impede the awakening.<sup>3</sup> The Moderator, however, seemed to state the Non-Subscribing position when he advised his Synod that the present movement was not what was needed.<sup>4</sup> This is not to be wondered at when one reads that the minister of York Street Non-Subscribing Church, the Rev. David Maginnis, editor of 'Truth Seeker' and the Non-Subscriber, was taken to task by the Rev. Dr. Henry Montgomery, of Cunmurry, and even refused nomination to the Committee of the Unitarian Society, for his extreme views. He had the temerity, according to Dr. Montgomery, to have written "I do not take the Bible for my master, nor yet the church, nor even Christ Himself ..."<sup>5</sup> Not even the Non-Subscribers would elect such a man as a counsellor among their leaders. English Unitarians, on the other hand, gave the Revival a measure of qualified approval, at their meeting in

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1. Belfast Newsletter, 20th July, 1859.

2. Northern Whig, 21st July, 1859. See above p. 227, footnote (2).

3. Presbyterian Magazine, July 1859, p. 146. The Record, 15th July, 1859.

4. Belfast Newsletter, 20th July; Northern Whig, 20th July, 1859.

5. ibid. 14th June, 1859.



Radley's Hotel, London, in January 1860, and the Rev. James Martineau openly approved it as the work of the Spirit of God.<sup>1</sup> Of the actual transactions of Unitarian ministers with the Revival we read that the Rev. John A. Crozier, minister in Ballymena, told the mother of a family named Kinnear who had been influenced by the Revival "give this boy physic and put this nonsense out of his head." "It is blasphemy to pray in Jesus' Name", said Crozier.<sup>2</sup> Prebendary Marrable, who had entered into a fierce controversy with Crozier, said "Unitarian ministers in general are more bitter against the movement than Roman Catholic priests."<sup>3</sup>

For the opinion of the Church of Ireland, it must be remembered that there was no General Synod Meeting from Queen Anne's day till 1869, when the question of Disestablishment arose.<sup>4</sup> This Church numbered some 693,357 people in all Ireland, or some 391,315 in the nine counties of Ulster.<sup>5</sup> The official Church paper, The Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette, (begun in 1856) wrote "It is manifest from our prescribed limits that we could not give anything like a detailed account of this extraordinary movement, so that we are obliged to withhold any letters on the subject, such as may be seen in almost every newspaper. The Lord Bishop of Down, in whose diocese at Ballymena, it was first noticed, and the Lord Bishop of Derry, are among the principal of our ecclesiastical rulers who have taken a decided interest in the phenomena, and are watching them with concern."<sup>6</sup> Lack of official Synodical pronouncement demands the sifting of the evidence of individual church leaders, and we consider first, the Bishop of Down, Connor and Dromore, Dr. Robert Knox, who

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1. The Freeman, 28th December, 1859; The Nonconformist, 30th November, 1859; Orr, op. cit. p. 204. Martineau's speech summarized in Presbyterian Magazine, February 1860, p. 45.

2. Belfast Newsletter, 1st July, 1859.

3. ibid. 4th July, 1859.

4. Ball, op. cit. p. 185.

5. ibid. p. 349.

6. Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette, 11th July, 1859.

referred to "... the religious awakening, which, in the good Providence of God, has visited this Province, making many a barren spot fruitful and many a sorrowing heart glad. ... I cannot conclude without mentioning the result of my late confirmations in Belfast, as it marks the deep impression and devotional feeling which the Spirit of the living God, moving over this portion of our land, has kindled. The numbers confirmed annually by me in the parish of Belfast have averaged about two hundred and fifty, but last year they reached seven hundred and five, and never, since I have administered that rite of my Church, have I witnessed such solemnity of manner and deep feeling as was exhibited by all whom I then confirmed."<sup>1</sup> The Lord Bishop of the Diocese regularly occupied the chair in the Music Hall Prayer Meetings in Belfast, when often as many as eighty ministers were present.<sup>2</sup> In another united Diocese, Derry and Raphoe, where William Higgin was Bishop, a more qualified welcome was afforded the Revival, and it was stated that while all the other Protestant ministers - Smyth, Denham, Ross, Crawford, McClure and Wilson (Presbyterians), Wallace and Donnelly (Methodists) and Sewell (Congregational) - were diligently engaged, it was noted that for the first month "the Episcopalian ministers, notwithstanding that the Spirit has recognized other Protestant denominations, and has made no distinction, in this wonderful outpouring, will not leave their high prelatie notions to mix with those who are waiting on God day and night ... they will some day soon awake to see more empty pews than they have been accustomed to, for the people are alive to the work that is going on."<sup>3</sup> One who worked in Derry city at the time wrote "United prayer meetings were appointed to be held daily in the Corn Market

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1. Letter dated 13th February, 1860; also Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette, July 15, 1860, p. 346; Gibson, op. cit. pp. 168, 169.

2. Londonderry Standard, June, 30th, 1859.

3. ibid. June, 30th, 1859.

4. Londonderry Standard, July 16, 1859.

5. ibid. op. cit. p. 50.



and Corporation Hall, to be conducted by ministers of several churches, who all heartily joined, except Episcopalian ministers, who held aloof. Besides these were meetings for prayer every night."<sup>1</sup> Some support for the fact that the people did know what was going on is seen in the statement made in 1866, where it is claimed "It has been computed that in 1859 - the year of the Revival - 5,000 Irish Eipscopalians became members of the Presbyterian Church."<sup>2</sup> Even in the days of the Revival - in July 1859 - it was noted that there was something peculiar in Money-  
more, County Derry, where it was noted that all the stricken who had been members of the Established Church, had left that church and joined the Presbyterian Church.<sup>3</sup>

However, later on, about the end of June - Sunday, 26th June - it was reported that the Established Church, as it then was, began to take some part in Revival meetings in Londonderry, for then special services were announced to take place in the Cathedral on Wednesday and Friday evenings, and in the Chapel of Ease on Monday, Tuesday and Saturday.<sup>4</sup> That this matter of non-association in Derry and district was deeply felt is seen in the fact that even the Episcopal newspaper The Londonderry Sentinel wrote "While we rejoice that the Episcopal clergy of Dublin, Belfast, and other places are cordially uniting with their dissenting brethren in this movement, we cannot but regret that some of the Church clergy here are so slow in recognising the signs of the times. While the laity of the Established Church here are throwing themselves heart and soul into the movement, some of the clergy stand aloof."<sup>5</sup> The Rev. Arthur W. Edwards, Archdeacon of Derry, circulated a letter to the Diocese which read: "As to the advisability of joining with the ministers of other denominations, I am reluctant to give an opinion which

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1. Weir, op. cit. p. 130.

2. McComb's Presbyterian Almanac, 1866, p. 71.

3. Banner of Ulster, July 9th, 1859; Ballymena Observer, July 16,

4. Londonderry Sentinel, July 1st, 1859. 1859.

5. ibid. 24th June, 1859; Carson, op. cit. p. 50.

may appear narrow and illiberal; but my own feeling is that whatever temporary good might arise from such a course would be more than counterbalanced by subsequent evil, producing in our people uncertainty and doubtfulness of mind; and more especially as it is on their principles, and not on ours, that we must join with them if we join at all. Besides if all denominations can now actively unite, why have they ever separated, or how can they ever separate again? If their differences be of detail only, how have they ever been suffered to break the unity of the Church, or how can they ever be permitted to do so in the future? And if on the other hand, they be of principle, how can they be set aside for any emergency? As long then as conscientious differences do exist I would consider it wiser and more useful that each should according to their own views and principles try to forward the good work in the spirit of mutual love and forbearance, not forbidding others because they follow not with them; but on the contrary wishing and praying (as I for my part sincerely and earnestly do) that so far as any, however mutually differing, are instrumental in promoting God's glory and the good of souls, He may prosper the work of their hands upon them. On this point, however, I merely express my own opinion, without venturing to dictate to you or others."<sup>1</sup> This circular letter is given in full, because the official church magazine of the Church of Ireland described it as "one of the clearest and most satisfactory we have seen",<sup>2</sup> and because it is the means of giving us the personal opinion of both the Bishop of Derry, and through him the opinion of the Archbishop of Armagh, for in a visitation of the Diocese of Derry, Dr. Higgin referred to the religious movement in the diocese: "I thought it my duty to circulate the letter of my Archdeacon<sup>3</sup> which fully coincides with my own views ... the letter contained a just estimate of the facts connected with the movement."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Londonderry Standard, 14th July, 1859.

2. Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette, July, 1859, p. 11.

3. Archdeacon Edwards was son-in-law of Bishop Higgin. See George Scott, Death and Burial of All Abuses in the Church, p. 8.

4. Londonderry Sentinel, 29th July, 1859.



Dr. Higgin continued "It also met with the approval of our venerable and endeared Primate to whom I submitted it." Quoting then from a personal letter from the Primate<sup>1</sup>, Higgin stated that His Lordship said "... the view which he (the Archdeacon) takes of the whole matter is, I think, judicious" showing us plainly that the views expressed in this letter are by and large those of the Primate, too. This also accounts for the cool reception of the Revival in the Primatial city of Armagh, when it was noted that among the clergy "The Episcopalians (Mr. Wade,<sup>2</sup> the rector, is Evangelical), while they stood apart from other sections of the Church of Christ, held occasional meetings of their own."<sup>3</sup> It is also to be noted that as the Diocese of Clogher was united with Armagh from 1850 till 1886, we therefore have in the above letter the official opinion of this diocese too.<sup>4</sup>

The Bishop of Meath (Dr. Singer<sup>5</sup>) influenced by Mathias, regarded the work "as of God, and prayed that it may be universally extended."<sup>6</sup> Singer wrote a letter to the press on the Revival in which he stated "... few can refuse to recognise the hand of God in this ..."<sup>7</sup> The Rev. Edward A. Stopford, Archdeacon of Meath, whose 'Handbook of Ecclesiastical Law and Duty for the Use of Irish Clergy' was described as "a mass of information in small compass",<sup>8</sup> and who specially visited Belfast for ten days in the latter part of July, 1859, could write, "Even a stranger cannot fail to be struck with the earnest concern about religion which appears to pervade the people: as I listened to a street preacher during the dinner hour of the working men (the best sermon which I heard in Belfast) it was impossible not to be impressed with the earnest and reverent expression of countenance in all the working men and lads who gathered round,

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1. Lord John George Beresford, Primate 1822-1862.

2. The Rev. Benjamin Wade.

3. Weir, op. cit. p. 146.

4. Alison Phillips, History of the Church of Ireland, Vol.3, p.437.

5. See above, Chapter I, p. 5.

6. Massie, op. cit. pp. 59, 60.

7. Portadown News, 23rd July, 1859.

8. Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette, 14th May, 1861.

perhaps 150 in number; faces so earnest I never saw before in any congregation. From house to house I saw much of the same feeling."<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Theophilus Campbell,<sup>2</sup> first incumbent of Holy Trinity Church, Belfast, speaking at the Evangelical Alliance in September, 1859, stated "the most gratifying fact, that the great religious awakening commenced in this town, in connexion with his Church, more than two years ago."<sup>3</sup> ... A change was soon perceptible, in increased seriousness at public worship, increased attendance at Church, and at the Lord's Table, in the outpouring of a spirit of prayer on the young men of the congregation, and a true and genuine piety showing itself among them."<sup>4</sup> The Rev. F. Bewley, curate of Tullylish Parish, near Banbridge, wrote "The communicants in the parish church have been doubled within the last few months."<sup>5</sup> The Rev. Dr. Bagot, Dean of Dromore, presided over a united prayer meeting in Newry "where five clergymen of the Church of England, three Presbyterian ministers, and an Independent pastor were lovingly associated."<sup>6</sup> Here the Hon. and Rev. Henry Ward, rector of Killinchy, spoke; and his witness of the revival was "... that this work, so far as it has come under my observation, is the work of God, I have no more doubt than of the truth of the Philippian jailor's conversion."<sup>7</sup> Weir testified that from personal conversation with Ward he learned much more - "He stated that there had been about 260 cases of persons 'stricken', the great majority of whom (and he is a man of exceeding caution, and of ripe years and experience) he now regarded as the genuine children of God. There had been no attempt at excitement; no 'converts' were brought from a distance, no young people were encouraged to address the assembled people. The Presbyterian minister and

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1. Stopford, op. cit. p. 6.

2. S.H. Reid, The Story of Holy Trinity Church, 1956, pp. 11, 12.

3. His italics, i.e., 1857.

4. Seaver, op. cit. p. 7.

5. Weir, op. cit. p. 95.

6. *ibid.* p. 100.

7. *ibid.* p. 90.



himself had been present together at each meeting, and all things were conducted in perfect order."<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Mr. Smyth, rector of Errigal, wrote from near Garvagh, "I never before witnessed ... what is now going on. Vice and immorality, of every sort, lessened to an incredible extent, and oaths scarcely ever heard ... I have witnessed persons of all ages, from five years to nearly eighty, awakened to a sense of their sins, and calling for mercy through a crucified Saviour; and in no instance have I seen one backslider."<sup>2</sup> Seaver acknowledged "the results (are) so general and so widespread as to be noticed and acknowledged by all... all concurred in bearing witness to the change on the fact of society; to the almost entire disappearance of certain vices, to the sobriety and honesty that characterise all classes."<sup>3</sup> Dr. Hincks, of Killyleagh, County Down, wrote: "In many parts of this county, and in the neighbouring counties, it cannot be denied that during the present summer a great number of persons, both within and without the pale of our church, have been reclaimed from worldliness, or formalism, or gross sin, and led to walk in newness of life, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>4</sup> Dr. Knox, speaking in 1859 at Belfast at the Evangelical Alliance<sup>5</sup>, and apparently wishing to emphasise the unity of the Spirit and the intention of the Alliance 'Unum Corpus sumus in Christo'<sup>6</sup>, said "I rejoice to think that this movement has taken nothing of a sectarian aspect, but that like the dew of heaven, it has fallen on all the land, and blessed the increase."<sup>7</sup> From this it can be seen that the Dioceses of Connor, Down, Dromore and Meath were strongly in favour of the work, and with it the unity

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1. Weir, op. cit. p. 100.

2. *ibid.* p. 138.

3. Seaver, op. cit. p. 8.

4. Hincks, op. cit. p. 4.

5. The Evangelical Alliance was founded in London in 1846 at a great gathering of distinguished men - Christian ambassadors who represented the cause and principles of the Reformation in many lands - some 800 delegates representing fifty denominations. See G.E.Morgan, Revival Times, pp. 235-6.

6. Morgan, op. cit. p. 236.

7. Weir, op. cit. p. 132.

and fellowship; whereas those of Derry and Raphoe, and Armagh and Clogher, while against any unity in fellowship, considered "it wiser and more useful that each should according to their own views and principles try to forward the good work in the spirit of love and mutual forbearance."<sup>1</sup> It can be said that at least a moderate enthusiasm was manifested in the Revival by the leaders of the Church of Ireland.

Another church opinion is that of the United Brethren or Moravian people, who had six congregations in Ulster in 1859, viz., Gracehill and Ballinderry in County Antrim; Kilwarlin and Kilkeel in County Down; Gracefield in County Derry; and Cootehill, in County Cavan.<sup>2</sup> Their superintending minister was the Rev. James Lang, who lived at Gracehill, near Ballymena, where an academy was conducted, whose headmaster assured the Rev. William Marrable, Prebendary of St. John's, Dublin, when he visited the district, of the great work of the awakening,<sup>3</sup> and thereby showed approval.

Quaker opinion on the Revival is found in the words of Isabel Grubb "Though it (the Revival) swept over most of the country, it was felt much the most strongly in Ulster, and produced lasting results there."<sup>4</sup> The Rev. F.F. Trench, of Kells, County Meath, in a letter published in the Daily Express and Belfast Newsletter<sup>5</sup> carried the suggestion that ministers should be sent from other places to help in Ulster. This did not go unseen nor unanswered, for the Congregational Union of England and Wales, meeting at Aberdare, North Wales, sent over six English ministers to assist the hard pressed and over-worked ministers in Ulster.<sup>6</sup> Six Welsh Congregational ministers are noted as having visited Armagh on 7th October, 1859.<sup>7</sup>

1. See above, p. 351 (my italics).

2. McComb's Presbyterian Almanac, 1864, p. 74.

3. Belfast Newsletter, 1st July, 1859.

4. Isabel Grubb, Quakers in Ireland, 1927, p. 130.

5. Belfast Newsletter, June 15th, 1859.

6. The Freeman, 9th November, 1859; also Orr, op. cit. p. 193.

7. Portadown News, 15th October, 1859.



Congregational opinion on the Revival is given in the Irish Congregational Home Mission reports, dated 1859 and 1860. In the latter year the revived Union and the 'Irish Evangelical Society' began to come together in closer co-operation. Of the work of revival in 1859 the report said "The ages and classes of the subjects of this extraordinary work of grace are very remarkable and disproportioned; the aged are not one per cent. of the young in number. Again, those who were best instructed in the Holy Scriptures were the more numerous of those who were hopefully converted. Besides, in the bodily affection they generally suffered less than the more ignorant. It is deserving of devout gratitude to God that, with very few exceptions, the converts have continued to give practical evidence of the reality of the work of grace, which, it is hoped, was wrought on them. This is the more remarkable from the suddenness and wonderful nature of the work in every respect."<sup>1</sup> From the standpoint of Congregationalism the number of members added to the churches was limited owing to the fact that the great majority of those who were spiritually quickened returned, as was to be expected, to the churches of their upbringing. Typical of the attitude of the Congregational ministers was Sewell of Derry<sup>2</sup> who testified to having at least three hundred converted in his own church. "Some have joined; others would have joined had I been at home (he was invalided to Portrush); the building up of a sect is to me, however, of less importance - much less - than to see Zion in all her branches prosperous."<sup>3</sup>

The Methodist Church body in Ireland in 1861 numbered some 45,000, out of a population of 5,800,000<sup>4</sup>, a fair advance on the figures for 1821 of 37,100.<sup>5</sup> In Ulster's nine counties in 1861, Methodists numbered 31,560 out of a total population of

1. Cairns, op. cit. p. 219.

2. This church was closed in 1920 (Cairns, op. cit. p. 406.)

3. Weir, op. cit. p. 131.

4. Census of 1861 (J.T. Ball Reformed Church of Ireland 1537-1889 p. 356.)

Roman Catholics	Episcopalians	Presbyterians	Methodists	Jews	Others	TOTAL
4,505,265	693,357	523,291	45,399	393	31,262	5,798,967

5. Crookshank, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 24.

1,910,408.<sup>1</sup> From 1820 till the year of the Revival the Irish Methodist Church could count some sixty-five instances of revival in different places and circuits.<sup>2</sup> The annual Wesleyan Conference beginning on 22nd June, 1859, reported an increase of 285 members, which "did not include any of the results of this gracious visitation."<sup>3</sup> The Conference held numerous public services in churches and in the open-air, and on one occasion it adjourned that the members might attend a united prayer meeting in the Music Hall, under the presidency of the Bishop of the Diocese. "Glory be to God," the ministers said in their Pastoral Address, "for what we have heard, and seen, and felt during this Conference. The Holy Spirit is graciously at work in the various Churches, and many sinners have been converted. In public and in private, in the house, the street, the field, the family, and the Sunday-school, the Lord Jesus has been saving sinners. In many instances prostration of bodily strength and loud and bitter cries testify to the power with which conviction seizes the mind, but a large number of converts are brought to God without these extraordinary symptoms. There is great demand for the Word of God. The spirit of prayer is very prevalent, large congregations attend public worship, and thousands assemble at union prayer-meetings. At one of our Conference field-meetings, it is believed, ten thousand persons were present, and at a union prayer-meeting held in the Botanic Gardens it is estimated that twenty thousand were there. At all these meetings the power of the Holy Ghost rested on the people, many were born again, and there is a general expectation of still greater things."<sup>4</sup>

The Primitive Wesleyan Conference commenced its forty-fourth annual meeting in Dublin on the 29th June, and it was

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1. McComb, op. cit. p. 73.

2. Counted from 'Contents' of Vol. III, Crockshank, op. cit.

3. Crockshank, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 513.

4. *ibid.* pp. 513, 514.

5. *ibid.*

6. *ibid.*



noted that the increase in membership amounted to 821, "while upwards of 2,000 members had been added between the time of making up the returns and the meeting of the Conference."<sup>1</sup> In July, 1859, Dr. and Mrs. Palmer, who had been in large measure responsible for the outbreak of revival in the city of Hamilton, Canada, two years before,<sup>2</sup> arrived at Belfast, and commenced to work in Donegall Square Wesleyan Church. In a few days they were able to write: "In no place that we hear from is there a flame of revival burning more intensely than in some of the Wesleyan chapels here, particularly Donegall Square ... This commodious and beautiful edifice is nightly filled. A solemn awe seems depicted on every countenance... the large communion rail is at every service surrounded with seekers, and from thirty to forty are, evening after evening, raised up to testify to the power of Christ to save... Among these some are ministers and several are leading men."<sup>3</sup> Lisburn Primitive Wesleyan Chapel was unable, night after night, to accommodate the crowds, some two thousand at times seeking admission, and persons of every denomination in the town, including Roman Catholics, were converted.<sup>4</sup> In Portadown, in September, the Wesleyan Church was filled, its schoolroom crowded, as was also the Town Hall, and the Courthouse, to accommodate members.<sup>5</sup> The Rev. Robert Wallace, the senior Wesleyan minister in Derry, could write "I consider it (the Revival) the most glorious work of God ever known in this country in so short a time, and ... I believe there is a religious influence upon the people of Ulster surpassing anything ever before realised."<sup>6</sup>

The Baptist position may be gleaned from individual congregational sources, there being no official record to assist

1. Crookshank, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 514.
2. See above p. 95.
3. Dr. and Mrs. Palmer, Four Years in the Old World, pp. 45-58; also Crookshank, op. cit. p. 515.
4. Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, 1860, p. 111.
5. The Memorial of T. A. Shillington, J.P., pp. 141-148.
6. Gibson, op. cit. pp. 217-218; also C. W. Gordon, The Fifty-Nine Revival, p. 19.

us here, as the Baptist Union of Ireland did not come into existence until 1895. From the private correspondence of the Rev. Robert Haldane Carson,<sup>1</sup> minister of Carson Memorial Baptist Church, Tobermore, we read in a letter to the Baptist Irish Society, written in March, 1859 "... one fortnight after we commenced our meeting (for prayer for revival) I had two earnest inquirers after Christ and ere many weeks had passed not fewer than six souls professed fruits of the blessed movement. We have received to communion altogether during the season fourteen precious disciples. Never since settling here did I witness the like before ..." <sup>2</sup> Three months later the pastor reported eighteen souls gathered, and in the following nine months many more "Making in all eighty-one souls brought to God during the last nine months." <sup>3</sup> This made a total for the year of ninety-nine. The following year he is able to report "...We esteem it among our most hopeful indications that there appears not in our church roll book this year a single exclusion from fellowship. This under ordinary circumstances scarcely called for remark. But who can help noting it after the great Revival? ..." <sup>4</sup> Membership of this congregation grew from 168 members in 1857 to 269 in 1861. <sup>5</sup> Academy Street Baptist Church, Belfast - now Great Victoria Street Baptist Church - recorded an increase in membership from forty in 1858, to 128 in 1860. <sup>6</sup> The minister in Academy Street was the Rev. R. M. Henry, who was formerly a Covenanting minister, and was a strong influence in leading the Rev. J. G. McVicker, formerly of Cullybackey, to Baptist principles. He in turn established the present Baptist Church in Ballymena in the midst of the Revival. Henry had followed the Rev. W. S. Eccles in 1858, when Eccles moved to Banbridge where

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1. Son of the Rev. Dr. Alexander Carson, founder of the church now called "Carson Memorial."
  2. Letter of the Rev. R. H. Carson to the Baptist Irish Society, March, 1859.
  3. *ibid.* March, 1860.
  4. *ibid.* March, 1861.
  5. Minutes of the congregation.
  6. Irish Baptist, January, 1948.



he was much used during the Revival - "During that year scores were converted in the little chapel and the congregation became so large that it was found necessary to erect a gallery on three sides of the building."<sup>1</sup>

Brethren opinion was "the land had lain in spiritual darkness for centuries when, all unheralded, the light of a new era pierced the gloom and spread over the country, apparently with little human instrumentality. Very little clear Gospel truth was known save to a few who received the new birth about this time, or a little before."<sup>2</sup> The measure of this obvious untruth is seen in the remark of the great Charles Hadden Spurgeon, no mean judge nor a mincer of words, who visited Ireland in 1858, and also in 1860, and who said of his visit to Belfast in 1858, when he addressed a vast audience of seven thousand in the Botanic Gardens, "I have to thank you all for the kindness with which I have been received, and especially I have to thank the ministers of Belfast. I never was in a town in my life where I met with such a noble body of men who love the good old truth ..."<sup>3</sup>

Roman Catholic opinion can be gained from the remarks of several of her representatives. In the nine counties of Ulster there were 964,000 Roman Catholics in 1861, or about 18,000 more than the total Protestant denominations.<sup>4</sup> "At the commencement of the movement, a Roman Catholic newspaper, published in Dublin, boldly ascribed the whole agency to the "Devil."<sup>5</sup> The Rev. John Lynch, P.P., Ballymena, wrote: "If it (Revival) is found beneficial to the Presbyterian community, we shall rejoice."<sup>6</sup> Yet, less than a month later, he attempted to frustrate an open-air meeting at the Fair Hill by persuading the local magistrate, H. H. O'Hara, that it would lead to a breach of the peace - an

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1. The Irish Baptist, March, 1916.

2. D. J. Beattie, Brethren, pp. 283-284.

3. The Irish Baptist, April, 1934 - Spurgeon Centenary Number.

4. McComb, op. cit. p. 72.

5. Massie, op. cit. p. 91, part 2.

6. Ballymena Observer, quoted in Portadown Weekly News, June 4th 1859.

7. Ibid.

8. The Record.

idea regarded by the local press as 'utterly absurd.'<sup>1</sup> A correspondent of the Banner of Ulster wrote that the "boy who drove us from Magherafelt to Maghera said he 'had not seen a drunken man in Magherafelt for two or three weeks, and he did not hear any one for three months crying, 'To --- with the Pope'; before the Revival that exclamation was quite common. I am a Roman Catholic,' he said, 'and none but God could have produced such a change as has taken place among all sects of the people.'"<sup>2</sup> A prominent Roman Catholic judge "The Right Hon. Chief Baron Pigott ... took occasion to refer to the religious movement in the North as having extinguished all party animosities, and produced the most wholesome moral results upon the community at large. His lordship spoke in the most favourable terms of the movement, and expressed a hope that it would extend over the whole country, and influence society to its lowest depths ..."<sup>3</sup> Some Roman Catholics were converted, and for this incurred the displeasure of their former religionists. "The priests ... denounced the revival. Many advised their flocks against this 'new work of the devil,' and represented it as an alarming contagious disease. They blessed charms and bottles of holy water, and sold them to the people to prevent them from 'catching it'."<sup>4</sup> At Bellaghy the priest opposed the work, but members of his flock attended the meetings.<sup>5</sup> In most places where the Revival influence was felt, a few individual cases of conversion occurred,<sup>6</sup> but it cannot be said that the Roman Communion as a whole was influenced to any measurable extent - an opinion supported by the Bishop of Down, Connor and Dromore, in a letter written to an English friend on October 3rd, 1859.<sup>7</sup> Bishop Flannery, of Killaloe, lamented the success of the devil "working to destroy every soul he could entrap in the parish."<sup>8</sup>

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1. Ballymena Observer, July 2, 1859, leading article.
  2. The Revival, December 24th, 1859, p. 171.
  3. Banner of Ulster, quoted by Massie, op. cit. p. 91; Weir, op.cit.
  4. Quarterly Review, quoted Gibson, op. cit. p. 323. (p.189.)
  5. Belfast Newsletter, 7th June, 1859.
  6. *ibid.* 4th July, 1859.
  7. Weir, op. cit. p. 188.
  8. The Record, 23rd September, 1859, quoted Orr, op. cit. p. 205.



It may be worth while to quote the official opinion of the Free Church of Scotland, signed by the Moderator, the Rev. William Cunningham, and ordered to be read on the first Sabbath after it was received. It was dated 10th August, 1859, at Edinburgh, and entitled the "Deliverance of the Commission of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, appointed to be read from all the Pulpits."<sup>1</sup> "... The Commission ... desire especially to record their earnest thankfulness to God for thus manifesting his power and grace in the conversion of sinners, and in the quickening of his own people, thereby demonstrating that his ear is not heavy that it cannot hear, nor his arm shortened that it cannot save. They call upon all the ministers and members of this Church to acknowledge the hand of God in this out-pouring of his Spirit, and to engage in earnest prayer for the perfecting and extension of the good work which has thus been begun in Ireland; for the ministers, that they may be sustained amidst their arduous labours, and enabled rightly to divide the Word of truth; for the converts, that they may be enabled to go on from strength to strength, and be preserved from everything by which the work of God might be marred or the Holy Spirit grieved; and for Ireland itself, that this good work may extend until all its dark places are enlightened with the light of truth, and its entire population be made the willing subjects of Messiah the Prince."<sup>2</sup>

An English opinion is found in a statement of a Bristol merchant, Mr. Budgett, who was travelling in Ulster. He expressed himself more than surprised with what he had already seen in Ulster, especially at Belfast. "... With regard to this movement in Ireland he considered that it was indeed Divine, and that human appliances had not been the means of kindling the flame."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Quoted because of reference to Ireland.

2. The Revival, September 17th, 1859.

3. Weir, op. cit. p. 128.

Generally speaking, then, it appears evident from the above information that in large measure all branches, but one of the Protestant Christian Church appreciated the Revival as a heaven-sent gift of grace. The afterwards depleted Unitarian Church was evident testimony that many of her erstwhile members had found a more satisfactory spiritual home among orthodox evangelical churches. The general testimony of favourable appreciation is reflected in the increased attendance of all Protestant denominations, save Unitarians, at public worship. At the height of the Revival a Unitarian minister closed his Sunday evening service, when all other churches round about were crowded.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, in Ballymena there were no empty pews in any of the Protestant churches, all were filled.<sup>2</sup> A leading article in the local Ballymena press noted the permanent reformation and stability of the movement, and emphasised the fact that on the last Sabbath of June all churches were full and "It is evident that some means of additional accommodation must soon be provided for the continually increasing number of those who now anxiously desire to hear the glad tidings of gospel salvation."<sup>3</sup> "On an ordinary week evening, one or other of the spacious Presbyterian Churches of Ballymena has been filled to overflowing by an intensely serious congregation; and what is still more extraordinary, on the evening of Saturday - the day of the great weekly market, when, at other times, a dozen persons could scarcely have been convened for such a purpose - the capacious Presbyterian Church of Wellington Street has been crowded in all its parts by a prayer meeting."<sup>4</sup> "The three Presbyterian churches in Ahoghill are full; and the Second and Third are contemplating large additions to their accommodation."<sup>5</sup> In Ballyrashane it was said "Since the year of the 'Revival' the

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1. Northern Whig, 27th June, 1859.

2. Belfast Newsletter, 6th June, 1859.

3. Ballymena Observer, 2nd July, 1859.

4. Presbyterian Magazine, June 1859, p. 145.

5. ibid. March, 1860, p. 66. (First Ahoghill was rebuilt in 1858, twice its former size.)



change in the attendance on public worship has been marvellous."<sup>1</sup> As these things depict the general picture in Ulster, many new churches were required. Morgan, of Fisherwick, wrote: "The house of God is frequented by not a few who were formerly strangers there."<sup>2</sup> Hanna, of Berry Street Presbyterian Church, Belfast, wrote "In Belfast alone some tens of thousands have been brought under serious impressions. There is probably no evangelical church in the town where the attendance is not greatly increased at all the services ..."<sup>3</sup> "Seventeen new congregations were formed in two years."<sup>4</sup> Dr. Morgan, in his weekly Journal, 1834 to 1873, said, "In the course of the year we have had five new ministers and churches. This has been to a large extent the fruit of the recent Revival."<sup>5</sup> In all it would appear that some thirty-five new congregations were erected and new churches built, while twenty-eight others built galleries or in some way extended or completely rebuilt their places of worship;<sup>6</sup> a grand total of sixty-three new churches or enlargements, not to mention little Brethren Halls.

The Congregational Union of Ireland was formed on the 26th November, 1839, in Donegall Street Church, Belfast, by a group of ministers mainly from the smaller churches of Ulster, and four years later at Richhill on 28th November, 1833, the Union adopted the Irish Congregational Record as its official organ.<sup>7</sup> However, this Union had not functioned at all for about twelve or thirteen years before the Revival, from 1847 it had not even met.<sup>8</sup> In the midst of the awakening fresh enthusiasm was aroused, so that in Dublin in March 29, 1860, this Union was reformed as a direct result of the Revival, and has never ceased, though at the moment it would appear as if some form of union might take place

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1. Visitation by Presbytery in First Ballyrashane; Coleraine Presbytery Minutes, 12th May, 1863.
  2. James Morgan, The Revival of 1859, p. 8.
  3. Sibbett, op. cit. pp. 137-138; Weir, op. cit. pp. 84, 85.
  4. Davey, op. cit. p. 43.
  5. James Morgan, My Life and Times, p. 326.
  6. For details, see Appendix 'E'.
  7. Cairns, op. cit. pp. 234, 255.
  8. Irish Congregational Year Book, 1878.



with the Presbyterian Church.<sup>1</sup> Three new Congregational churches were built - Donegall Street, opened 1st March, 1860;<sup>2</sup> Donaghey, in County Tyrone, where the church was erected May, 1862;<sup>3</sup> and Albertbridge Church, Belfast, founded 1862.<sup>4</sup>

Possibly because of the fact that the parish churches were larger than many of their Presbyterian counterparts, there is less to record in the way of church building and enlargement; but Ahoghill Parish Church was rebuilt and enlarged; Shankill Parish Church at Lurgan stood in need of enlargement to accommodate another five hundred worshippers;<sup>5</sup> and at Anacloan a new parish church was consecrated on 7th November, 1861;<sup>6</sup> while Portrush Parish Church had to be made larger.<sup>7</sup> It will not be forgotten that a new Parish Church was built in Ballymena - St. Patrick's - in 1855, at a cost of £5,000.<sup>8</sup>

Two Covenanting ministers, R. M. Henry and J. G. McVicker, joined first the Baptist Church, and McVicker established the Baptist Church in Ballymena, after holding meetings in a spacious granary of Mr. James Taylor, in Broughshane Street;<sup>9</sup> later they threw in their lot with the Brethren movement. This movement's first meeting in Ulster was in Clare,<sup>10</sup> about four miles from Banbridge, where a few broke bread about 1840, nearly two decades before the Awakening began. About the time of the Revival it is claimed that C. H. Mackintosh and a brother called Moore were

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1. General Assembly Minutes, 1960, p. 51. Resolution: "That the Committee on Inter-Church Relations approach the Congregational Union of Ireland with a view to preparing a scheme of union or of closer co-operation for presentation to the General Assembly and the Assembly of the Congregational Union of Ireland as soon as possible."
  2. J. E. Archibald, A Century of Congregationalism, printed for private circulation by W. W. Cleland, 1901, p. 41.
  3. Cairns, op. cit. pp. 524-5. See Appendix E.
  4. Archibald, op. cit. p. 70; Cairns, op. cit. p. 483.
  5. Phillips, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 358. Enlargement completed 1875.
  6. Irish Eccl. Gaz. 15th November, 1861.
  7. Reid, op. cit. p. 83.
  8. Ulster Directory 1857, p. 507.
  9. Belfast Newsletter, 18th November, 1859.
  10. Beattie, op. cit. p. 280.



instrumental in saving many,<sup>1</sup> but no mention of these names is made in any newspaper of that time. A hall seems to have been obtained later and a 'breaking of bread service' begun near Randalstown. Another hall near Kells village is still known as Jerry's Hall, and is situated at Ballymacvea. This latter was the result of the work of Jeremiah Meneely, hence the name.

Along with the increased church attendance and the erection of new churches went a better attendance at Sunday school. These schools had done great work before the Revival, as is testified to by no less a person than the Chamberlain of London, Benjamin Scott, when he spoke to a large audience in the Y.M.C.A., Aldersgate Street, London. Speaking of the converts, he said "These people were surprisingly illuminated as to spiritual things. Many seemed to receive it by intuition. Many were full of the Scripture after forty years' absence from the Sunday School." Sunday schools were filled to overflowing. "Attendance upon Sabbath Schools is much larger than formerly, in some cases more than doubled."<sup>3</sup> "Sabbath Schools are a field of labour for earnest young men."<sup>4</sup> A great Sunday school union rally took place at Cullybackey, where "The largest number of convictions ever recorded" occurred.<sup>5</sup> The Committee of the Sunday School Society for Ireland appended to their occasional paper, under date of May 25th, the information that in County Antrim "in consequence of the great religious revival which prevails in this neighbourhood, even Roman Catholic children are asking if the school will not be re-opened; ... the leaven of scriptural education is beginning to work, and a spirit of enquiry is abroad among both parents and children."<sup>6</sup> The same publication on 4th July, said "Education is now become the principal object of concern amongst the uneducated class in this neighbourhood, both of old and young. The present revival has created a thirsting

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1. Beattie, op. cit. p. 281.

2. The Revival, 8th October, 1859, p. 87.

3. Carrickfergus Presbytery Minutes, May) State of Religion Report

4. Templepatrick Presbytery Minutes, May) Belfast Synod Mins. 1860

5. Ballymena Observer, 9th July, 1859.

6. The Revival, 27th August, 1859.

desire for the Word of God, and it is their continual and increasing study to learn to read it for themselves. The spirit of inquiry is so great, that we have been induced to open the school two evenings during the week, for the purpose of communicating instruction."<sup>1</sup> On July 6th an application for Bibles - reminding us that about 60,000 Bibles were disseminated in the first year of the Awakening<sup>2</sup> - was caused by the Revival Movement, and stated that "The incumbent is anxious to keep the converts together, and to bring as many of them as he can get, as well as other adults, to the Sunday-school of the church. He has given away all the Bibles he had, and still there are many unsupplied, who anxiously desire to 'search the Scriptures.' On this account he applies for the marginal reference Bibles." Under July 11th, we read "The recent revivals originated this school, and in case the Lord continues in this quarter the present movement, we could not contemplate to what extent it may be increased. Old and young are thirsting for scriptural education." Turning from County Antrim to County Down, it was stated on July 8th, "The school has nearly doubled within the last four weeks, owing to the revival, and to the benefit of the grant received a few weeks ago... I make this application for a supplemental grant, owing to the fact that the school has nearly doubled within the last few weeks, and is still largely increasing, both in teachers and scholars."

At the General Assembly of 1859 it was reported that "a communication was presented from the Committee of the Sunday School Society for Ireland expressing an anxious desire to co-operate, by every means consistent with its principles, with the conductors of Sunday-schools in any extension of the system that may result from the religious awakening in various parts of the North of Ireland, and declaring that they would gladly aid members of the General Assembly in promoting the spread of Sunday-school instruction, especially in those districts."<sup>3</sup> The Assembly heartily

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1. The Revival, 27th August, 1859.

2. See Chapter VI, pp. 238-239.

3. General Assembly Minutes, 1859, p. 783.



agreed to co-operate, and next year appointed a Sabbath School Committee.<sup>1</sup> In the very heart of the Revival area "the work of Sabbath School instruction is vigorously prosecuted, and never in the history of our Church was there promise of richer results."<sup>2</sup> By 1862 the Assembly inaugurated the "Sabbath School Society for Ireland in connexion with the Presbyterian Church."<sup>3</sup> It is claimed that a reason for the foundation of this society was the exclusion of the Rev. John Hall from a seat on the Committee of the Sunday School Society, allegedly because he had become a Commissioner of National Education.<sup>4</sup> However this may be, it seemed high time that another society should be used to advance the work after its tremendous increase through the Revival. In 1859 the Synod of Armagh and Monaghan declared "The Presbyteries of Ballybay and Dungannon be enjoined and hereby are enjoined to have Sabbath Schools established in all the congregations under their care."<sup>5</sup> Some idea of the growth of the Sabbath School Society is seen in the fact that in 1871, nine years after its commencement, it was reported that there were 915 schools, some 7,700 teachers, and about 62,000 scholars, with over five thousand Bibles and about six thousand New Testaments supplied. It was also stated that a sixpenny Teacher's Guide was produced at the rate of 3,000 a month, besides the monthly magazine The Teacher, at a rate of 1,200 a month.<sup>6</sup> Sabbath Schools, not only instructed in the Bible and Catechism, but also in a good many instances, were used to teach people, even adults, to read. There was apparently a great divergence in educational standards in various parts of Ulster. In Burt, County Donegal, it could be said in 1854, "Very few within the bounds (of the congregation) unable to read";<sup>7</sup> in Newtowncrommelin, beside Ballymena, in 1852, it was reported "... there are now much fewer of the people who cannot

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1. General Assembly Minutes, 1860, p. 899.

2. Minutes of Synod of Ballymena and Coleraine, 21st May, 1861.

3. General Assembly Minutes, 1862, p. 173.

4. Latimer, op. cit. p. 498; Also Armagh Presbytery Minutes, May 6, 1862; Derry Presbytery Minutes, 15th October, 1861.

5. Minutes of Synod of Armagh and Monaghan, 17th May, 1859.

6. Report of the Sabbath School Society, 1871.

7. Minutes of the Derry Presbytery, 29th May, 1854.



read;"<sup>1</sup> whereas in Belfast, even after the Revival, many were taught in Sunday schools to read and write, and a measure of the efficiency of such teaching is seen in a Roman Catholic convert who, before the Revival, was unable to read, eventually becoming not only a fair speaker and able to read, but also able to consult the Greek Testament in the original for himself.<sup>2</sup>

The zeal to learn to read emanated from a strong desire to study God's Word, "... under the present Revival many have manifested a strong desire for improvement in religious knowledge. They have become close and prayerful students of the Word of God - their views of divine truth are evangelical."<sup>3</sup> The Bible was conservatively regarded as being fully inspired; the Rev. Dr. William De Burgh, of Sandymount, Dublin, published a twenty-four page booklet recording a sermon preached by him in his church on 28th April, 1861, on the 'Plenary Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.' It was widely read and described as "an unanswerable case for the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures from I Thes. ii, 13."<sup>4</sup> It is interesting to note that up until 1859 the Hibernian Bible Society was a dependent auxiliary of the British and Foreign Bible Society.<sup>5</sup> In that year its executive was authorised to forward to London any surplus income, after the needs of Ireland had been met. The Belfast Auxiliary to the Hibernian Bible Society, owing to the vast sale of Scriptures was able in 1861 to vote £360-8-5d. to the Hibernian Society, with the stipulation that at least £150 should go to the British and Foreign Bible Society. The Hibernian Society in its turn issued 27,293 Bibles, 27,946 Testaments, and 26,785 Portions; received an "income of £5,832-7-1d, and has transmitted to the British and Foreign Bible Society the sum of £650 as its grant

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1. Minutes of the Ballymena Presbytery, 4th May, 1852.

2. Weir, op. cit. p. 123.

3. Minutes of the Carrickfergus Presbytery, State of Religion Report, May, 1860.

4. Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette, 15th August, 1861.

5. W. Canton, History of the British and Foreign Bible Society, Vol. III, p. 74.



for the past year."<sup>1</sup> Much credit for the sale and distribution of the Scriptures was due to the various colporteurs employed by some Presbyteries; at least four are known to have employed colporteurs - Armagh,<sup>2</sup> Carrickfergus,<sup>3</sup> Rathfriland<sup>4</sup> and Ards.<sup>5</sup> This last reported that they had maintained a colporteur with good results within their bounds, while the Rathfriland Presbytery maintained a town mission in Rathfriland for the poor.<sup>6</sup>

In the Sabbath Schools of the Presbyterian Church the Westminster Catechism was taught with fervour in pre-Revival days, a practice taken over from the usage of public catechising conducted by ministers in their congregations. In such catechising, the minister gathered a number of people, both young and old, together sometimes in a local schoolhouse, sometimes in the meeting house itself, and occasionally in the homes of the people. Here he lectured and expounded the Catechism and the Confession of Faith and Scriptural doctrine, and questioned his hearers on their knowledge of these things. On this work he had to report, as had the Session, at every visitation of Presbytery. With the rise of the Sunday School movement and with the increase in education so that the people could read for themselves, this practice fell into a measure of disuse in some places. In an unsigned centenary appreciation<sup>7</sup> of the Revival, it is suggested that among the drawbacks of the Revival is the disappearance of the diets of catechising by the ministers. In actual fact, it would appear from an examination of six presbyteries chosen at random<sup>8</sup> that before the Revival, in a total of ninety-seven congregations, some much used in the Revival, four are known to have catechised occasionally, forty-three definitely did not, and forty did, enabling us to surmise that catechising was on the way

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1. Report of Belfast Aux. Hib. Bible Soc. 1861-62 - Pamphlets 455

2. Armagh Presbytery Minutes, 7th January, 1862.

3. Carrickfergus Presbytery Minutes, 4th November, 1862.

4. Rathfriland Pres. Minutes, State of Religion Report, May 1861.

5. Ards Presbytery State of Religion Report to Belfast Synod,

6. Belfast Synod Minutes, May 1859. Minutes, 1861.

7. Presbyterian Herald, April, 1959.

8. See Appendix 'F'



out before the Revival in half of these congregations.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the Rev. Hugh Hamilton, of Cullybackey, stated that he "gave over public catechism owing to bad attendance,"<sup>2</sup> and this was ten years before the Revival. By 1857 the Rev. William Davidson, of Cloughwater, had ceased to practise public catechising, "due to the people not attending,"<sup>3</sup> while in the Presbytery of Armagh, out of a total of twenty congregations noted, only six at the most could be said to catechise, and two of these only occasionally.<sup>4</sup> Whether the Revival had come or not, it seems evident that the practice of catechising was failing. Of the kindred subject of family catechising the Presbytery of Templepatrick stated "We believe that parents more generally observe on the Sabbath evening the duty of family catechising. This old practice, though for a long time much neglected, is now happily reviving. Many of our ministers have urged attention to this matter with good results."<sup>5</sup>

In considering the question of the Sabbath School and catechising, we are led to the controversy over the Sabbath Day. Before the Revival - indeed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries - Sunday was looked on as a day of recreation. The Volunteers of 1782-1795 paraded to church to be sure, but often the minister had his black Genevan gown covering his Volunteer uniform. Even as late as 1846, it could be recorded that in County Antrim many people "lamented that Sabbath desecration was generally on the increase in many localities ..."<sup>6</sup> "The most prevalent forms of desecration ... (were) visiting friends, forming festive parties, and in season ... the sale of fruit;"<sup>7</sup> in Coleraine "the opening on the Sabbath of the 'Crystal Palace', and also the delivery of letters on the Lord's Day;"<sup>8</sup> "horse

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1. See Appendix 'F'

2. Presbytery of Ballymena, 6th August, 1850.

3. ibid. 5th May, 1857.

4. See Appendix 'F'

5. Templepatrick Presbytery State of Religion Report to Synod of Belfast, 1861.

6. Ballymena Presbytery Minutes, June 9th, 1846.

7. Minutes of Coleraine Presbytery, 26th July, 1853.

8. ibid. 25th January, 1853.



racing at Downhill ... lately revived,"<sup>1</sup> as well as railway travel.<sup>2</sup> Further efforts to oppose Sabbath desecration and intemperance were made, and ministers were urged to "do what they can to discountenance Sabbath funerals and the distribution of spirits on such occasions."<sup>3</sup> One of the remarkable results of the Revival was to place Sunday as a day of quiet worship in Ulster, and make the Ulster people not only well drilled in Scriptural knowledge, but scrupulously attentive to keep the Lord's day holy. In 1860 there was a "deep respect for the Lord's day,"<sup>4</sup> and the "Sabbath was better observed, parties for pleasure are less frequent, and many who formerly profaned the Sabbath by the sale and purchase of various commodities have ceased the evil practice ..."<sup>5</sup> In 1861 the General Assembly passed a resolution ordering that Sabbath Sanctification be preached upon on a suitable occasion,<sup>6</sup> for about this time a certain Rev. Dr. Reichel<sup>7</sup> wrote a pamphlet entitled "The Lord's Day not the Sabbath." To this the Rev. John Macnaughtan replied in a pamphlet entitled "The Lord's Day the Sabbath" - a sixty-page forthright booklet, in which quotations from Hooper, Bradford, Hooker, Ussher, and Hopkins, among Churchmen, and the Scot's Confession of 1560, taking Reichel to task in the very year of the Revival, 1859. A further notice of Reichel's remarks is seen in the appointment of a Committee by the Coleraine Presbytery to reply to his statements and "authorized to frame and publish a resolution on the subject, and to address a circular to the several Presbyteries of the Assembly, asking their co-operation in maintaining the sanctity of the Sabbath."<sup>8</sup>

1. Minutes of the Coleraine Presbytery, 29th July, 1856.
2. ibid. Noted Limavady Presbytery also against Sabbath desecration by railway, 5th September, 1854.
3. Synod of Armagh and Monaghan Minutes, 20th May, 1856.
4. Comber Presbytery Minutes, State of Religion Report, 1860.
5. Templepatrick Presbytery Report to Belfast Synod, Mins. 1861.
6. Armagh Presbytery Minutes, 3rd September, 1861.
7. The Most Rev. Charles Parsons Reichel, 1816-1894; Prof. of Latin Queen's College, Belfast, 1850-64; Bishop of Meath 1885; Prof. of Eccl. History T.C.D. 1878-83. His pamphlet was replied to by H. Henderson, "Lord's Day is Sabbath" as well as Macnaughtan.
8. Coleraine Presbytery Minutes, 25th January, 1859; Armagh Presbytery Minutes, 3rd January, 1859.



Reichel had said that there was not a single trace of the observance of the Sabbath in Genesis, nor any notice of it till the period of the manna, about two weeks before the giving of the law,<sup>1</sup> to which Macnaughtan replied "Is there not a trace of the Sabbath in Genesis? What is the meaning of Cain and Abel presenting their offerings to God 'In process of time', literally at the end of the days, a very natural expression for the end of the week ... confirmed by the all but universal tradition that existed in the heathen world of the sacredness of the seventh day ..."<sup>2</sup> Reichel seemed to maintain that this idea of the Sabbath came in Nehemiah ix, 14, "for the first time" implying these words were in the sacred text - which Macnaughtan denied. Macnaughtan, looking into the New Testament, found proof for the Lord's day being regarded as the Sabbath.<sup>3</sup> Next he alluded to the Reformers and the Puritan writers, and made mention of the days of King James and King Charles with the Book of Sports with its odd notion that the "strict observance of the Sabbath, and the custom of debarring the people on that day from lawful recreations, hindered the conversion of many ..."<sup>4</sup> His conclusion was that there was to be no relaxation of the demands of the Sabbath. Seven years later a similar argument arose in Scotland, when Dr. James Gibson, Professor of Systematic Theology in the Free Church College, Glasgow, and Dr. Norman Macleod of the Barony Church, Glasgow,<sup>5</sup> came to grips in 1865-66. From the Revival in Ulster it must be said that the Sabbath Day received a great reverence, public houses were closed in Ireland on the Lord's day by the Imperial House of Commons, a resolution of the Rev. Prof. Richard Smyth, M.P., in 1876, when the best thanks of the Assembly were accorded

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1. J. Macnaughtan, The Lord's Day the Sabbath, p. 20.

2. *ibid.* p. 21.

3. *ibid.* pp. 40-47.

4. *ibid.* p. 58.

5. "The Lord's Day," substance of a speech by Norman Macleod, delivered at a meeting of the Presbytery of Glasgow on Thursday, 16th November, 1865, and the reply by James Gibson, Prof. of Systematic Theology, Free Church College, Glasgow, "The Decalogue in Old Testament Dispensation."



him,<sup>1</sup> and almost a century later these traditions and practices are still very strongly upheld in Northern Ireland.

A further development of the renewed interest in Church life was a fresh appreciation of a Christian's obligations to his place of worship financially. "The Pew system, by which our churches, built for the many, are rented or appropriated by the few, hinders the preaching of the Gospel, cramps the energies of the Church, injures the clergy and laity, is a fruitful source of ungodliness and discord," so we read in a communication under the name of the Rev. J. S. Jones, of Randalstown, in the official Church of Ireland newspaper.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps it is not generally realized that the usual way of financing a Presbyterian congregation in the matter of ministerial income before this time was by the annual letting of the pews<sup>3</sup>, "not more than four families to a pew."<sup>4</sup> Often the clearing of a debt of stipend<sup>5</sup> was attempted by stimulating the 'offers' for the pews, and these debts of stipend to ministers were in some cases more than occasional. When one remembers that the average number of people per family was generally reckoned as five, one wonders what size of pews

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1. Minutes of General Assembly, 1876, p. 47.
  2. Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette, 15th May, 1861, p. 186.
  3. In Armagh the Rev. J. R. McAlister and a Committee member, J. Haddo, arranged to "attend in the church on ... for the purpose of having all seat holders' names and their annual payments entered in a Book to be submitted to the Committee." (Committee Minute Book, Third Armagh Presbyterian Church, June 15, 1855.)
  4. Minutes of Ballymena Presbytery, November 4th, 1845.
  5. J. R. McAlister was owed £116 stipend in May, 1852 (Minute Book, 3rd Armagh, October 22, 1853); James Knox, 2nd Portglenone, was owed over £45 stipend (Ahoghill Presbytery Minutes, 11th May, 1852; William Wallace, Rasharkin, suffered £209 arrears of stipend (*ibid.* 10th May, 1853); Frederick Buick, 2nd Ahoghill, over £68 (*ibid.* 9th May, 1854); Robert Torrens, Churchtown, arrears of £74 (*ibid.* 14th August, 1855); John Bell, Tandragee, no less than £235 (Banbridge Presbytery Minutes, 5th May, 1857); and James Thompson, Magherally, was owed £84 (*ibid.* 1st November, 1853). This latter reference contains an explanation of these many arrears of stipend, viz., that they were "accumulated in the depressed years from 1846-1849."



they had! At a visitation in Connor in 1843 it was stated that there were approximately one thousand families connected with the church, though 'only four hundred pay stipend'; but it was added "about two hundred men (i.e. heads of families) could pay stipend if they got seats."<sup>1</sup> As Connor church at that time seated 1,244 people - it was the biggest church in the Ballymena Presbytery - it is inconceivable how 5,200 people<sup>2</sup> could possibly be accommodated. This will explain why little district services in schoolhouses, etc., were popular, especially for the poorer people who could not afford pews. However, with the rising interest in spiritual matters as we have seen<sup>3</sup> a greater sense of responsibility in financial affairs was manifest. "In 1846 the Assembly had knocked at the door of a British Ministry for aid in ... erecting manses, and had been refused. Now (from 1855 onwards) it did the work itself, with the great gain not only of the rich offering, by which the people proved that they were to be trusted, but with the still greater gain of the learning of a lesson of self-help which after events, coming in the near future, were destined to utilize."<sup>4</sup> About 1855 great efforts were being made to enable each Presbyterian congregation to have its minister housed in a commodious manse, and it was hoped that 1856 would 'be the great manse-building year of the Assembly.'<sup>5</sup> This Church and Manse Fund 'was the means of raising ecclesiastical buildings over the country to the value of over £100,000.'<sup>6</sup>

Next year the town of Belfast congregations formed a committee led by the Mayor (S.G. Getty) and presented a memorial for better ministerial support which expressed 'much satisfaction with the movement on behalf of increased ministerial support, which has sprung up almost simultaneously throughout various

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1. Ballymena Presbytery Minutes, 2nd May, 1843.

2. ibid. 2nd April, 1850. Figures returned to the Government for R.D.

3. Chapters I and II.

4. T. Hamilton, History of the Irish Presbyterian Church, p. 180.

5. Minutes of the General Assembly, 1855, p. 356.

6. Hamilton, op. cit. p. 181.



parts of the Church ...'<sup>1</sup> Surely another evidence of religious awakening. The Church was become aware that ministers ought not to be 'compelled to involve themselves in secular pursuits to procure a livelihood.'<sup>2</sup> It was said at a visitation in Loughgall of their minister, the Rev. William Henry, "that he is not engaged in secular pursuits, except what is necessary to get through life."<sup>3</sup> Furthermore the Synods of Armagh and Monaghan, and Ballymena and Coleraine presented separate overtures, while the towns of Cookstown and Ballymena were interested in resolutions to the same effect.<sup>4</sup> At the Assembly of 1856 these resolutions were brought forward, and a Committee was formed immediately to deal with the matter.<sup>5</sup> When the Revival came the question of systematic offerings was being considered by some in the churches. "I will distrust this revival if it do not issue in increased Christian liberality. I will not believe that men are 'converted' if they continue to grudge a generous support to the minister who labours amongst them."<sup>6</sup> The Rev. John Ross published in 1863 "The Lord's Treasury and how to fill it," an eighty-page extension of his prize essay written twelve years before on "Gold and the gospel", and based on the Apostolic injunction "Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him."<sup>7</sup> Ross wrote that this "... instruction bears chiefly on the cultivation of conscientious principle in the measure, and of judicious system in the mode of giving."<sup>8</sup> In the same year Dr. John Cumming wrote "On doing what one does with one's might," an eight-page booklet, in which, referring to the Samaritan, the widow's mite, and the alabaster box, he stressed the present obligation of giving now.<sup>9</sup> Ross twice more put pen to paper, writing on

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1. Minutes of the General Assembly, 1856, p. 450.

2. Coleraine Presbytery Minutes, 1st April, 1856.

3. Armagh Presbytery Minutes, 7th November, 1854.

4. Minutes of the General Assembly, 1856, p.451.

5. *ibid.* p. 461.

6. Missionary Herald, November 1st, 1859. p. 433.

7. I. Cor. xvi, 2.

8. J. Ross, The Lord's Treasury and How to Fill it, p. 43.

9. J. Cumming, On doing what one does with one's might, p. 7.

"Christian Beneficence"<sup>1</sup> and "Six Reasons for Practising Weekly Offering",<sup>2</sup> stressing its motive, measure and mode. At the foot of his work is the advertisement for supplies of weekly free will offering envelopes at £1 for 5,000. L. E. Berkley, of Lurgan, wrote a four-page pamphlet on "First Fruits for God"<sup>3</sup> in which he stated "the first fruit is generally the best, and we prize it the most. This by the Hebrews was given to the Lord ... by the use a young man made of his property Jesus tested his character ... God's people in all ages ... (are) wont to set apart a specific portion of their property for Him ... Abraham a tenth ... Jacob too... Converted publican... a half, the widow, all ... On the first day of the week the Lord's portion (is to be set aside)..." He also wrote on "Men Bringing to God."<sup>4</sup>

The Moderator of the Free Church of Scotland, Dr. Candlish, in a sermon delivered in Fisherwick Place Church, Belfast, and afterwards published,<sup>5</sup> (1862), forcibly stated that the motive or moving power of Christian liberality is not desultory impulses, but "love to Him who first loved you."<sup>6</sup> All these writers stress systematic giving by weekly offering. The blessing of the Church of Ireland was given to a fine publication "The origin and objects of the Systematic Beneficence Society",<sup>7</sup> in which it was stated that the application of Scriptural economics - systematic beneficence - began in this country about 1847 - the year of the Irish famine. In 1856 the American Systematic Beneficence Society began<sup>8</sup> when the Secretary of the Ulster Prize Essays "Gold and the Gospel" had the joy of assisting at its inauguration, when he ventured a promise that similar agency would be established here. The gracious revival vouchsafed to

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1. J. Ross, Christian Beneficence - a four-page pamphlet.
  2. J. Ross, Six Reasons for Practising Weekly Offering, 8 pages.
  3. L. E. Berkley, First Fruits for God, 4 pages.
  4. L. E. Berkley, Men Bringing to God, 8 pages.
  5. R. S. Candlish, 1862, The Duty of Laying By, 24 pages.
  6. *ibid.* p. 23.
  7. The Origin and Objects of the Systematic Beneficence Society, by R. G. Cather, LL.D. - paper read at a conversazione in Belfast, 1862 The Lord Bishop of Down, Connor and Dromore in the chair.
  8. *ibid.* p. 28.



Ulster was the means of launching, in March 1860, the British Systematic Beneficence Society. "In Ireland - where the Society originated, and where its principles are steadily working a mighty change in the thoughts and habits of the people of Christ in all Churches - by meetings, lectures and sermons, the public have been appealed to in nearly all the principal cities and towns of the kingdom. For example, in the south of Ireland services have been held in Dublin, Waterford, Limerick, Cork, Bandon, and Skibbereen; and in the north the Secretary has preached, lectured, and held meetings in Belfast, Drogheda, Cavan, Cookstown, Magherafelt, Lisburn, Londonderry, Enniskillen, Strabane, Portadown, Larne, Ballymena, Hyde Park, Ballyclare, Donaghadee, and Newtownards. In all these places the Society has been received with favour ... there are very few of the intelligent Protestants of this country who have not had their attention in some degree turned to the question - 'Am I a faithful steward of my Master's goods?' ..."<sup>1</sup> The Secretary was assured by a gentleman that he met that "scores of Belfast merchants regularly tithed their profits for Christ, and that had no doubt it would yet become universal in all Churches."<sup>2</sup> The results of this Society's work, in 1862, are stated:<sup>3</sup> among the Wesleyan body, ministerial income doubled, and capital funds increased by £50,000; Presbyterians: improved stipends, Church and Manse Fund inaugurated, which "cannot have increased their working capital as a Church by much less than £100,000";<sup>4</sup> Church of Ireland proposed to spend £100,000 on their new cathedral. In all Churches in Ulster, as well as amongst the Protestants of Ireland at large, there has been a general augmentation of contributions which does not fall short of some £20,000 a year,<sup>5</sup> "which is equal to the interest at four per cent., of a capital

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1. Cather, op. cit. pp. 37, 38.

2. *ibid.* p. 39.

3. *ibid.* p. 47. *Annual Report of the Society, Vol. 3, 1862, p. 140.*

4. *ibid.* p. 47. *Annual Report of the Society, published 1862 (12 pages)*

5. *ibid.* p. 62.

6. *ibid.* p. 13.

7. *ibid.* p. 22 (*his italics*).

sum of half a million sterling." Confirmation of part of these figures is seen in the Report on Ministerial Support of 1862, when at the Presbyterian Assembly it was stated "There may thus be said to be an increase of capital in the matter of ministerial support, amounting to not less than £150,000."<sup>1</sup>

An anonymous booklet<sup>2</sup> scorned the idea of pew rents as very unsatisfactory in financing church budgets, for they "shut the poor from the sanctuary, strengthen class distinction, sink the spirituality and value of ministerial labour, weaken sympathy between people and pastor ... Pew rents may be a suitable homage from the unconverted for the moral and social advantages of the ministry, and towards the costs of the material arrangements of worship ... but the Christian should treat the cause he supremely loves on nobler principles."<sup>3</sup> Referring to the weekly free-will offering the writer said "there must first be the individual purpose to rise to the demand of the cause from lofty integrity and love, and then the oft repeated act of its performance."<sup>4</sup> Other motives may be referred to: "it is an act of worship rendered to God, and a means of grace to man's spirit; the proof and expression of the sincerity of his worship; - it gives a sense of possession combined with stewardship; - it secures the widest co-operation with the highest conscientiousness and fullest means; - it makes needful provision beforehand; - it secures the payment of all that is due, as no other plan does; - it cherishes constant affection to the Saviour's cause; - it adjusts every one's measure of offering by his own assessment; - it nourishes the feeling of gratitude for good received; - it strengthens spiritual life and joy in the soul, through sense of consistency and Divine favour; - it fosters in man a habit and character of bountifulness; - it is a pause weekly, from the creature action of receiving, for the God-like action of giving; - it is a safety-

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1. General Assembly Minutes, Vol. 3, 1862, p. 140.

2. Giving Made Easy and Pleasant, published 1862 (32 pages)

See also above p. 374.

3. *ibid.* p. 13.

4. *ibid.* p. 22 (his italics).



valve for the perilous condition of prosperity, letting off for the noblest purposes a part of the gains which, when retained, make a man's heart as cold and hard as the gold he idolizes and stores."<sup>1</sup> In 1862, Bishop Knox presided when the Rev. William Arthur, a Methodist, spoke in the Victoria Hall on the "Duty of Giving Away a Stated Proportion of our Income" - "The habit of stately giving first-fruits of all you receive tends to prosperity by the double force of a natural means and a Divine blessing."<sup>2</sup> Some evidence that financial giving was a foremost result of the Revival is seen in the fact that there was no less than £8,000 increase in the annual income for the maintenance of the ministry in the years 1856-62; especially when it is remembered that "... last year (1861) ... has been one of trial in both commercial and agricultural interests ... therefore ... a testing time to all such questions as involved pecuniary contribution. Your Committee are in a position to say that in the present instance this test has stood successfully ... comparing the past year with the commencement of the movement, there has been an increase in the members of the congregations, and in their contributions ... An incidental proof is furnished of the influence of the recent revival on both, which must be gratefully acknowledged to the praise of Divine grace ..."<sup>3</sup> We must keep in mind that the Templepatrick Presbytery emphasised "It must be remembered their Revival has been chiefly among the poor outcasts of their population, and among the young members of respectable families, who have not yet the command of means according to their wishes. They believe it is a fact that very few of their pushing, enterprising and well-to-do farmers have yet had their hearts and purses opened - so true is it that we cannot serve God and mammon."<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless the Presbytery of Down could report "We might mention as an evidence of the work of grace on the heart,

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1. Giving Made Easy and Pleasant, pp. 23, 24.

2. William Arthur, Duty of Giving Away a Stated Proportion of our Income, p. 56.

3. General Assembly Minutes, Vol. III, p. 140 (1862).

4. Synod of Belfast Minutes, 1860, State of Religion Report of the Templepatrick Presbytery.



the liberality of many of the congregations to missions, their wiping off congregational debts, and their more liberal support of the ministry."<sup>1</sup> Particularising, above<sup>2</sup> was mentioned the arrears of stipend by the Churchtown congregation to the Rev. Robert Torrens, who had been promised a stipend of £35 per annum. At a visitation of Presbytery in May, 1861, it was stated that he had been paid a stipend of £40 per year for the past two years, and concerning the arrears of £84-14-3, it was further stated that £10 of this was in hand, and the congregation were "determined to use exertions to meet the balance."<sup>3</sup> First Ahoghill could report "all stipend paid since 1858," and even increased by about fifty per cent., £94 instead of £60.<sup>4</sup> Enthusiasm for conscientious weekly giving aroused such interest that in 1865 a competition inspired by the Ulster Prize Essays and the work of the Systematic Beneficence Society, offering two prizes of £30 and £20, was organised. Among the Presbyterians in Ulster a simple four-page tract "I will give more to my minister" stated that three-fifths of the ministers of the General Assembly had an income of about £100 a year, including the Regium Donum.

What might be taken as a valid criticism of the financial results of the Revival was made by the Rev. J. H. Orr, in the Report on Statistics, 1868, when he stated "... outward show never heralds the advent or marks the growth of genuine religion." He then noted a "... decrease of 11,632 communicants and of 372 stipend payers ..." <sup>5</sup> inferring that this reduction was in some way due to the 'outward show' which seemingly was not genuine. However, examination of the statistics reveals the startling fact that while in 1864 "returns were received from 500 leaving 31 from which no replies have been received," <sup>6</sup> in 1867 the number with no returns was 24; <sup>7</sup> in 1868 there were 35 no returns of

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1. Down Presbytery Report to the Synod of Belfast, Minutes, 1860.

2. See above p. 374.

3. Ahoghill Presbytery Minutes, 7th May, 1861.

4. Ballymena Presbytery Minutes, 5th May, 1863.

5. General Assembly Minutes, 1868, Vol. III, p. 943.

6. General Assembly Statistics, 1864, Minutes, p. 468.

7. General Assembly Minutes, 1867, counted from Statistics.



communicants and 28 no returns for stipend.<sup>1</sup> The next year we read that "forty returns of former years"<sup>2</sup> had to be added to the total returns given to arrive at a true appreciation of the situation. With this addition the communicant roll reads 126,858 for 1869 against the much emphasised declining figure of 111,298 for 1868, an increase of 15,560. But the additional figure for non return in 1869 was about ten per cent., - 8,981 persons, showing us that some part of the decrease of 11,632 was due to non-return of figures as to the communicant members. As to Stipend payers, the figures for 1867 were 68,535, for 1868 - 68,159, for 1869 - 65,960 plus 6,582 added in for the non-return of 40 congregations, making a total of 72,542. It would thus seem that the Rev. J. H. Orr had an incomplete set of figures from which his remarks were deduced, and that the true picture was one of steady improvement. As regards the scathing indictment that the givings in the Ballymena and Ahoghill areas were only threepence and twopence per week as compared with twenty-one and a half pence per week in the Dublin area, "... that in any district of the Presbyterian Church in this land her people can be truly liberal when giving only 2d. per family per week for God ... (your committee) will not believe,"<sup>3</sup> these are strong words, no doubt, but it must be remembered that the Presbyterians about Dublin were in a great many cases better placed financially to donate to ministerial upkeep, than the small farmer of County Antrim, and his farm labourer neighbours. Around the north-west of Ballymena, in the Ahoghill area, was the densest population, apart from the Lagan valley, in the county; both had over 400 people per square mile.<sup>4</sup> Small farms were characteristic, and holdings of one to five acres numbered twenty-nine per cent. in County Antrim.<sup>5</sup> When it is remembered that in Ulster "no county had even ten per cent. of farms of more than thirty acres"<sup>6</sup>

1. General Assembly Minutes, 1868, counted from Statistics.

2. ibid. 1869.

3. ibid. 1868, p. 946. (his italics)

4. T. W. Freeman, Pre-Famine Ireland, p. 277.

5. ibid. p. 271.

6. ibid. p. 271.

and that most of the remainder were in the 5-15 acre class it is easy to see that thrift, hard work, and frugality were an absolute necessity to be sure of a living. As the Revival touched very largely only those who were in the poorest classes or those who were the young in the farming group, and that the elders in this group were not so much influenced; as a serious effort was made to pay arrears of stipend; and as additions were built at considerable cost to churches - indeed in some cases new churches - which were not required in other parts outside Ulster, perhaps it is less difficult to understand the 3d. a week of Ballymena and the 2d. per week of Ahoghill district, the latter being the equivalent of a labourer's food allowance for one day in the week.<sup>1</sup>

A further result of the Revival and awakening interest was that not only did people give of their substance, but also of their service. The Synod of Armagh and Monaghan<sup>2</sup> had instructed its members to give the elders more opportunity in the conduct of Session meetings. That this was carried out is seen in the following statement "that the elders shall at least occasionally take part in conducting the devotional exercises of the Session."<sup>3</sup> In 1863 there were about 1,600 prayer meetings going on over the whole of the Presbyterian Church, largely in the hands of elders,<sup>4</sup> for in 1860 the Comber Presbytery told their Synod at Belfast that in their district "the prayer meetings were conducted chiefly by the laity,"<sup>5</sup> while the Ards Presbytery reported to the same Synod "numerous prayer meetings by elders and laymen principally." Next year the Belfast Presbytery could state "One of the most precious fruits of the late Revival is to be found in the number of those who from their Scripture knowledge, their earnest piety and zeal are now well qualified to take part in the conducting of such meetings. Many of our young men, especially, are doing good in

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1. See above, Chapter I, p. 57.

2. Minutes of Synod of Armagh and Monaghan, 17th May, 1859.

3. Minutes of Session, Clare, County Armagh, 3rd July, 1859.

4. Minutes of General Assembly, 1864, statistics.

5. Belfast Synod Minutes, 1860.



service to the Church and to the world by their unwearied labours in this department of evangelistic work. Prayer meeting associations have been formed in some congregations with beneficial results. At stated times - once a month or so - the persons who take part in the conducting of the different Prayer Meetings in connexion with the congregation meet with the minister for special prayer and conference regarding their work. Dangers may be thus avoided, difficulties overcome and new helpers be brought to unite with this good cause."<sup>1</sup> The use of so many elders in prayer meetings in the awakening led to these men and many more with them being used in the laymen's movements, where Bible classes and Sunday schools and prayer meetings were conducted, in Methodist class meetings, among Presbyterians, and the advance of many laymen in the Established church, which proved a tremendous strength in the days of the Disestablishment. From the very important diocese of Down, Connor and Dromore came the six-page article on "The Irish Convocation - should it be revived?" by the Very Rev. T. Woodward, Dean of Down.<sup>2</sup> This cry was followed by a meeting at the Clerical Rooms in Belfast on the 18th April, 1861, when a proposal for the revival of the Convocation in Ireland was forwarded to the Lord Bishop of Armagh. It was signed by the Bishop of the Down, Connor and Dromore Diocese, Dr. R. Knox, as chairman, and by Theophilus Campbell, Alfred T. Lee, and H. Murphy, as Honorary Secretaries. Some few months later clergy and laity met in conference in the Lecture Room of St. George's, Belfast, when Dean Bagot presided, and interesting papers on Diocesan Home Mission work among working classes were read, the topic being opened by the Rev. T. Hincks, of Dervock. Another subject discussed was "Convocation in Ireland", when Dr. Drew, and Messrs. Murphy, Anderson, Heatrick, Hobson and Campbell contributed their thoughts.<sup>3</sup> It will be noticed that many of these were leaders in

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1. Belfast Synod Minutes, 1861.

2. Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette, 15th April, 1861.

3. ibid. 15th November, 1861.



the Revival. By the time of the Disestablishment laymen of the Church of Ireland met in a Lay Conference in October, 1869, and adopted a resolution suggesting that "it is expedient that the number of lay representatives in the General Synod should be to the clerical, in the proportion of two to one."<sup>1</sup> Interest in this matter is seen in the series of meetings held in the Corn Exchange, Belfast, beginning on 5th September, 1869, and called the General Assembly of the Protestant People of the city and diocese of Belfast. It remarked "By this Act the Bishops and Clergy recover their right of assembly in synods and convocations, and it is well to improve to the utmost the liberty of which they should never have been deprived."<sup>2</sup> The Minutes conclude "The Assembly ... engaged in prayer ... any Christian man present, who had faith in God to obtain an answer, being requested to pray. The audience was then dismissed with the Apostolic benediction."<sup>3</sup> "To the unforgettable credit of both clergy and laity, the crisis was met courageously and with open-handed generosity. The first Synod called for the co-operation of the faithful laity. Its appeal was not in vain. In 1868 Cardinal Cullen had endorsed a Roman Catholic statement that "Protestantism has no other hold on its followers than the mere temporal endowments. The great motive is money. Remove this inducement and they will become the followers of Rome." The response of the Church proved that nothing could have been further from the facts. Nearly 98 per cent of the clergy were courageous enough to abandon the solid security of the State as a paymaster, and to trust their future to the new and untried Representative Church Body, while through the newly-founded sustentation fund an endowment for the future was built up by voluntary contribution in every parish."<sup>4</sup> This giving of opportunity to laymen led to the demand for a place in the government of the Church, and wove the laity closely into the fabric of the life

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1. Phillips, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 365; Ball, op. cit. p. 292.
  2. Minutes No. 2, Irish Church Act, p. 6.
  3. ibid. p. 8.
  4. Johnston, Robinson, Jackson, op. cit. p. 262.



of the Church.<sup>1</sup> At the disestablishment of the Episcopal Church, there arose the question of union with the Primitive Wesleyans, but as "the Church of Ireland would not abandon episcopal authority, and the Primitives would not acknowledge it,"<sup>2</sup> there the matter ended. However, in 1875 union with the Wesleyans was favoured by the Primitives, and "one definite condition of the union was made, that laymen should become members of the Conference,"<sup>3</sup> which came to pass in 1877, when the Wesleyan Conference - the name of the union - was composed of seventy-two ministers and a layman with each minister.

The disestablishment of the Episcopal Church led, too, to the withdrawal of the two-hundred-year-old Regium Donum, one of the main planks in the support of the ministry of the Presbyterian Church at that time. In 1869 and 1870 further Lay Conferences were held in Belfast to seek to solve the difficulties. In January, 1870, the Presbyterian ministers largely commuted their money received, and in September the laymen promised full support, and reminded those congregations that still had not agreed "Your church membership therefore binds you not to the limits of your own parish or congregation, but unites you with the church throughout (sic, throughout) the length and breadth of Ireland."<sup>4</sup> These laymen, trying to set the ministers' house in order, were not above criticizing their own givings "We deeply lament that the duty of systematic and proportionate giving is not so fully recognised among us as it should be. As a rule we are systematic and proportionate in our expenditure upon everything except the cause of God."<sup>5</sup> Laymen who had taken much part in the Awakening of 1859, had now grown in appreciative faith to interest in the temporal affairs and church life as a whole. In the days of the Revival a tribute to the work of the laity was paid by S. J. Moore, when he wrote "... As to the human agency by which this

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1. Johnston, Robinson, Jackson, op. cit. p. 263.

2. R. L. Cole, History of Methodism in Ireland, 1860-1960, p. 22.

3. *ibid.* p. 22. The Primitives had included laymen in their Conference since its inception.

4. Address from the Lay Conference, Belfast, 28/9/70, by John Lytle, and W. W. Kirk, Chairman and Secretary, p. 2.

5. *ibid.* p. 3.



revival has been begun, and continues to be extended, it is not through the ministers of the churches alone, or even chiefly. The earnest and faithful preaching of the Word may have been the preparation in some degree, but the chief and honoured agents in the work are the converted themselves ..."<sup>1</sup> Not all agreed with Moore, however, and we find the Rev. Josias A. Chancellor, minister of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Bready, near Strabane, replying to the Rev. J. F. Porter who had "published a pamphlet pleading for the introduction of lay agency in the public administration of worship"<sup>2</sup> stating "... that Lay-preaching has been the first and principal means of the Revival, or ... proof of the legitimacy of Lay-preaching ... I most emphatically deny."<sup>3</sup>

As well as these laymen there were a few others who had taken much part in the Revival meetings, when many such meetings were presided over by ministers, and who had disputed the authority of the clergy, e.g., at Ahoghill and Ballymena, and who preached on their own authority. It would have been such as these that a writer at the time was describing when he said that their "... religious zeal is most unmanageable. It is of all things most difficult to keep pure. It deceives by its intensity ... overbears the judgment and harries some into fanaticism. Its effect is to create disunion amongst brethren because it cannot abide moderation and sobriety ..."<sup>4</sup> Again there were others newly converted who disputed the right of those whom they judged unconverted to break bread at the Lord's Table with them, and still some others who separated on the matter of Believer's baptism. All these conspired to encourage the membership of the Brethren movement,<sup>5</sup> for we read "shortly after 1859 a few Christian men and women, whose hearts had been stirred by the wonders God had wrought in their midst during the great spiritual revival, which had invaded both Church and home, met together in a private house

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1. Moore, op. cit. pp. 5 and 6.

2. J. McDonald, Memoir of the Rev. Dr. Chancellor, p. 49.

3. J. A. Chancellor, Lay Preaching and Hymn Singing unwarranted in the Church, 1860, Sentinel Office, Derry.

4. Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette, 15th August, 1861, p. 260.

5. See Table p. 388.



in Belfast to read the Scriptures and celebrate the Lord's Supper."<sup>1</sup> These were 'open brethren', but C. H. Mackintosh arrived from Westport intending to stay in Belfast, "but finding that these brethren would not go with him in his exclusive circle, he moved to Coleraine ..." <sup>2</sup> thus indicating to us that divisive spirit, which has characterised, unfortunately, much of the work of the Brethren movement.

It has been said <sup>3</sup> that "various sects of religious enthusiasts have sprung into existence, and some of the smaller sects, which previously existed have largely increased. The Wesleyan Methodists have rapidly grown into a powerful denomination. The Baptists and Independents have made very considerable progress. Even the Plymouth Brethren have greatly increased. The "Salvation Army" has obtained a foothold; but only in the larger towns and among persons who have no church connection." Evidence of this was the Clogher Presbytery's warning to the Synod of Armagh and Monaghan that their people must not "get absorbed in the zealous surrounding sectaries which are in active operation in almost all our congregations."<sup>4</sup> Consideration of the census figures supports this as a

Protestant Population, Six  
Counties of Ulster

	1861		1871	
Ch. of Ireland	319,295	353,245	678,661	683,295
Presbyterian	463,371	410,215	528,992	503,461
Methodists	27,572	66,639	44,532	41,815
Independents	3,156	9,346	5,062	4,485
Baptists	3,253	11,870	4,165	4,643
Quakers	1,448	-	3,812	3,834
Others	5,238	24,028	8,414 <sup>≠</sup>	19,035
Brethren	-	17,845		
Unitarians	-	6,273		

<sup>≠</sup>Others here include: Protestant Dissenters, Reformed Presbyterians, Separatists, Christian Brethren, Christians, Covenanters, Unitarians, Seceders, Moravians, etc.

(Figures taken from McComb, op. cit. 1862, p. 72 - 1861 figures.

W. D. Killen, Eccl. History, vol. ii, p. 543 - 1871 figures.

Ulster Year Book, 1956, p. 56 - 1951 figures.

1. D. J. Beattie, op. cit. p. 281.

2. *ibid.* p. 282.

3. Latimer, op. cit. p. 495.

4. Clogher Presbytery Minutes State of Religion Report 1862;  
Synod of Armagh and Monaghan Minutes, 1862.



true state of affairs. In the census of 1861 and 1871 it was seen that Episcopalians increased from 678,661 to 683,295; Presbyterians decreased from 528,992 to 503,461; Methodists decreased from 44,532 to 41,815; Independents decreased from 5,062 to 4,485; Baptists increased from 4,165 to 4,643; with the Society of Friends remaining static at 3,812 and 3,834 respectively. One ominous increase came under the heading of 'Other persuasions'<sup>1</sup> which rose from 8,414 to 19,035, largely substantiating the contention that sects sprang into existence as a result of the Revival. The dissent of some ministers, like the Rev. R. M. Henry, and the Rev. J. G. McVicker, both Covenanters, and the lay preaching of men like Jeremiah Meneely, helped on the Brethren movement, and at the same time aroused bitter indignation in many other people, who remained faithful to their own places of worship. Pamphlets appeared against the Brethren movement, or Darbyism, as it was sometimes called from the fact that J. N. Darby was once minister of the Church of Ireland, and a founder member of the 'Brethren' meeting in Dublin in 1830. A publication, 'Darbyism, its fruits and doctrines' by the author of 'Our Old Prayer Meeting', appeared in 1863, when it was reviewed in the Church of Ireland newspaper - "The extravagances of Mr. Darby are ably exposed... Mr. Darby and his repugnance to an organised ministry in our Church is dealt with as it deserves."<sup>2</sup> Some years later the Rev. W. T. Latimer, minister of English Presbyterian Church, published a twelve-page booklet entitled "The Doctrines of the Plymouth Brethren".<sup>3</sup> The passing of the years has healed many a breach of misunderstanding, and in some quarters at any rate a spirit of toleration now seems to prevail.

The question of Baptism was very much in the public mind,<sup>4</sup> even McComb's Almanac<sup>5</sup> carried an article on 'Baptism', and as

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1. See Table, p. 388.

2. Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette, 15th July, 1863, p. 827.

3. W. T. Latimer, The Doctrines of the Plymouth Brethren, 1883.

4. Ballymena Pres. Mins. 4/5/58; Dungannon Mins. 1/2/59; Armagh Mins. 6/5/62; Banbridge Mins. 6/5/56; Down Pres. Mins. 1/5/60.

5. McComb's Almanac, 1860, p. 65.



it was so strictly interpreted in the Presbyterian Church before the Revival and even during the days of it, many Presbyterian parents took their children to the local Parish church,<sup>1</sup> for the rite. In County Antrim especially there was a strong insistence that all children should be baptised in the presence of the congregation on the Lord's Day, a requirement not rigidly enforced in many other Presbyteries.<sup>2</sup> In Clough, County Antrim, the Presbytery was memorialised "that baptism was privately administered ... even to some not members,"<sup>3</sup> while in May, 1858, at Portglenone, it was alleged that the Rev. W. K. McKay baptised no children in church since 1854,<sup>4</sup> for which he was rebuked, showing us that where Presbyterianism had its strength there was a great insistence on public baptism, as compared with other Presbyteries. In Tassagh, County Armagh, it was stated that there were no baptisms in church, but all in the homes of the people, where preaching is carried out,<sup>5</sup> while at Ballyreagh baptisms were generally at home,<sup>6</sup> despite the fact that at a Presbytery meeting in Dungannon<sup>7</sup> the Rev. John Stinson had urged public baptism before the Presbytery. This different attitude may be accounted for by the fact that Presbyterianism was not in such a dominant position as in County Antrim. Matters, however, developed further at Ahoghill in the very midst of the awakening when at Presbytery held in Ballymena the Rev. D. Adams was strongly rebuked for baptising the children of James Telford, contrary to the Book of Discipline, and the "minister and Session of 1st Ahoghill be admonished to carry out strictly the law of the General Assembly."<sup>8</sup> Adams, however, was not so easily frightened as his neighbour and rival, the Rev. Hugh Hamilton, had hoped, and the matter continued to be discussed for some time

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1. Banbridge Presbytery Minutes, 6th May, 1856.
  2. Ballymena Presbytery Minutes, 4th November, 1845.
  3. ibid. 4th Nov, 1845.
  4. ibid. 4th May, 1858.
  5. Armagh Presbytery Minutes, 2nd September, 1856.
  6. Dungannon Presbytery Minutes, 2nd Aug. 1859: "most of the 22  
(were generally at home.)"
  7. ibid. 1st Feb. 1859.
  8. Ballymena Presbytery Minutes, 4th October, 1859.



till on 3rd April, 1860, the Presbytery appointed the Rev. Samuel Hamilton, of Buckna, to read its finding, six months after it had been drawn up, on the third Sunday in April in First Ahoghill. This latter minister stated at Presbytery, which met at Glenwherry on 1st May, 1860, that he had done the will of Presbytery, and had made no comment on the finding; but that afterwards the Clerk of Session of First Ahoghill gave reasons why the Session were not satisfied with the Presbytery. A few days later, on June 11th, Adams asked direction from the Presbytery as to how he was to interpret "that baptism should be administered in the presence of the church after a public religious service," and stated that his Session thought that the directory of public worship "does not limit the administration of it to the Meeting House, or to the Lord's Day, but permits it to be performed at any assemblage of the people for public worship, at any time, or place, after a public religious service sanctioned by the Session; the only exception being the sudden illness either of parents or children ..."<sup>1</sup> As the Presbytery seemed reluctant to discuss the matter, Adams appealed to the Assembly, who gave an equivocal answer, viz., "That the ordinance of baptism shall be administered publicly in the presence of the Church, except in cases of necessity, the nature of which to be reported to the Presbytery of the bounds."<sup>2</sup> Adams, however, continued his former practice, for we find in 1863 that he and his congregation "persist in the practice of baptism in private."<sup>3</sup> Adams, the prophet of the Revival in many ways, and its leader around Ahoghill, stood his ground on what he considered a non-essential, while making great contributions to the furtherance of the work. He was faced with an opponent in the person of the Rev. Hugh Hamilton, of Cullybaskey, whose congregation had known the famous Sunday School union rally, where "the largest number of convictions

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1. Ballymena Presbytery Minutes, 11th June, 1860.

2. General Assembly Minutes, 1860, p. 896.

3. Ballymena Presbytery Minutes, 5th May, 1863.



ever recorded" occurred,<sup>1</sup> in the very midst of the Revival, yet whose congregation dwindled in numbers when every other congregation in the Presbytery of Ballymena showed an increase. In 1856 Cullybackey returned 463 families, in 1862, but 397,<sup>2</sup> a loss of sixty-six families in six years.

Judging by the great numbers of people awakened in the Revival it is stated on good authority that there was an increase of 10,000 communicants<sup>3</sup> in the Presbyterian church alone, this in a church that numbered some 122,000 communicants in 1863<sup>4</sup>, and the Rev. R. Wallace, Wesleyan, judged "that not less than 100,000 persons in Ulster were brought under gracious influence..."<sup>5</sup>, while Weir claimed "at least 10,000 souls" in Belfast alone,<sup>6</sup> out of a population of 120,000 people<sup>7</sup>, or approximately 8 per cent. The Rev. B. W. Noel thought that converts numbered 100,000 in Ulster.<sup>8</sup> Many people had been rudely alerted to a true realization of the demands of the Christian faith by a different way from the old idea of the covenant and children included in the faith through their parents' belief. Indeed, the revival preaching emphasised to the uttermost the necessity of conversion. Before the days of 1859, a large number of parents considered their children as a 'gift from God' - as many still do - and believed with the Congregationalists that the influence of a Christian home would lead these young ones to the place where in quietness they would acknowledge Christ.<sup>9</sup> In the awakening itself quite a number of young people of somewhat tender age confessed to their being sinners, and were among those who professed salvation. "Many little children and young persons male and female have been constrained individually to cry out 'What must I do to be saved?' and by the Holy Spirit have been led to

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1. See above p. 366.

2. Figures taken from Government Returns for Regium Donum in the respective years - Ballymena Presbytery Minutes.

3. General Assembly Minutes, 1860, p. 866.

4. ibid. 1864 (first year of statistics summary).

5. Gibson, op. cit. p. 217.

6. Weir, op. cit. p. 44.

7. McComb's Almanac, 1862, p. 72.

8. R. C. Morgan, op. cit. p. 96.

9. R. W. Dale, op. cit. p. 584.



Christ as a personal Saviour, and are now rejoicing in a present salvation."<sup>1</sup> "It was not an unusual thing to hear ... even children crying out under the most stinging conviction of sin..."<sup>2</sup> "Young boys and girls being very often honoured in the erection of the (family) altar."<sup>3</sup> This led to many considering children to be in need of salvation from very tender years, and virtually born heathen to be converted. It was said that the Brethren "argue because an infant cannot believe, therefore an infant should not be baptized. But if that conclusion be correct it would follow that because an infant cannot believe therefore an infant cannot be saved. This argument the Brethren reject, while accepting of the other."<sup>4</sup> One who played a great part in child evangelism was an American, the Rev. E. Payson Hammond, whose work began at Musselburgh, near Edinburgh, in the winter of 1860. His work in Ireland did not really begin until 1867, but in the meantime special missions for children were held - in days when child conversion was sceptically regarded in some quarters, - and these labours culminated later in the formation of the Children's Special Service Mission.<sup>5</sup>

Apparently in the heat of the revival fire and enthusiasm, there was little appreciation of the types of conversion; everyone was preaching the extreme words of Scripture 'ye must be born again', and it was but right that this message should have been fearlessly proclaimed. But where the trouble arose was in the manner of the conversion, for in many instances unless these conformed to a certain pattern, that of sudden conversion, they were questioned. There was little appreciation of the unconscious type, or what has been called the 'once-born' type<sup>6</sup>, where conversion was a process rather than a crisis, as Brandon rightly says "It is to be regretted that this type of conversion experience

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1. Carrickfergus Presbytery State of Religion Report; Belfast Synod Minutes, 1860.
  2. Templepatrick Pres. State of Religion Report to Belfast Synod, Minutes, 1859.
  3. Down Pres. S.R. Report to Belfast Synod, Minutes, May 1860.
  4. W. T. Latimer, Plymouth Brethren, p. 11.
  5. R. C. Morgan, op. cit. p. 74 and p. 125.
  6. Owen Brandon, The Battle for the Soul, p. 27.



is not always recognised by those who engage in evangelistic enterprise."<sup>1</sup> Nor was there much consideration of 'gradual conversion' or conversion by stages, where after periods of preparation, partly conscious and partly unconscious, the moment of decision is but the climax. Instead, sudden conversion was demanded by the converts, who often preached for the explosive verdict by means of the physical prostration, so accentuating the abnormal as to make it appear for a time the norm. Such emphasis led to two very different ideas, the neglect of the rites of Baptism and Communion by a sect that partly arose from the revival in England and quickly came to Ireland - the Salvation Army; and on the other hand there was the rise of the China Inland Mission, which might be described as double-barrelled in its teaching on Baptism, for those China Inland missionaries placed in the south of China near to the Church Missionary Society's work, and being largely members of the Episcopal Church, taught the doctrine of Infant Baptism, while those in the Northern parts practised the doctrine of Believers' Baptism, following some who had Brethren or Baptist leanings.<sup>2</sup>

Consideration of the Sacraments, the place of the child, and the emphasis of sudden conversion entered very deeply into the lives of the people, and family worship was greatly increased. It was said to have been stirred up by the Cholera epidemic of 1832<sup>3</sup> and to have advanced gradually, until about 1857 the Carrickfergus Presbytery could say "... There is not only an increased attendance on public religious ordinances, but many family altars have been set up, and many souls have been brought to feel and know the power of divine truth,"<sup>4</sup> the Armagh Presbytery claimed that family worship was generally increasing; the Ballymena Presbytery noted an increase in family worship; while the Coleraine Presbytery could record that in their midst about half the people

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1. O. Brandon, op. cit. p. 28.

2. Dr. & Mrs. Howard Taylor, Hudson Taylor, The Early Years, p.466.

3. Coleraine Presbytery Minutes, 15th May, 1851.

4. Carrickfergus Presbytery State of Religion Report to Belfast Synod, Minutes, 1857.



observed family worship, and in the Derry district a considerable number had it. Such was the case before the Revival's beginning, and upon its outburst there occurred a great increase, so much so that it could be said "... family prayer occupies a place and a prominence not known in this land ..."<sup>1</sup> Much family prayer increased interest in the many prayer meetings that were dotted all over Ulster. Besides this there were Presbytery prayer meetings held in different parts of the Presbytery; Dungannon Presbytery met for prayer in Upper Clenanees,<sup>2</sup> Eglis,<sup>3</sup> Pomeroy,<sup>4</sup> and Lower Clenanees.<sup>5</sup> Carrickfergus met in First Carrickfergus,<sup>6</sup> Joymount,<sup>7</sup> First Carrickfergus (a second time),<sup>8</sup> and First Larne.<sup>9</sup> Coleraine Presbytery had two special meetings - 14th June and 9th August.<sup>10</sup> Many other Presbyteries had meetings also, and it will not be forgotten that there were united prayer meetings in Derry, Coleraine, Ballymena, Belfast, Portadown, Armagh and other centres.

All of these conspired to the raising of the spiritual thermometer in the home life and in the community, as is shown in the use of laymen in Sunday School, Bible class, prayer meetings, etc., and as well to quite a considerable number of young men entering the Christian ministry. "There was certainly some increase ... in the number of candidates for the Presbyterian ministry"<sup>11</sup> is a claim made by Prof. J. C. Beckett. Taking a short view of about five years, Beckett's contention is supported by the facts, but if we take a longer view and consider the numbers from the union of Synods (1840) till the famine (1847) we find that the average number of students for the ministry is thirty-five; from

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1. Carrickfergus Presbytery State of Religion Report, May 1860.
  2. Dungannon Presbytery Minutes, 1st February, 1859.
  3. *ibid.* 1st November, 1859.
  4. *ibid.* 1st November, 1859.
  5. *ibid.* 7th February, 1860.
  6. Carrickfergus Presbytery Minutes, 2nd August, 1859.
  7. *ibid.* 9th August, 1859.
  8. *ibid.* 9th August, 1859.
  9. *ibid.* 9th August, 1859.
  10. Coleraine Presbytery Minutes, 14th June, and 9th August, 1859.
  11. Moody and Beckett, Ulster Since 1800 (series ii) p. 165.



the famine till the year before the Awakening (1848-58) the average is ten, while for the ten years after the Revival the average is nine.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps it should be remembered that in 1857 there was only one student who received the General Certificate in Arts of the Assembly.<sup>2</sup> An article in 1860 stated "It is by no means the least hopeful sign in the church that many are turning their thought to the ministry of the Word. It is one of the fruits of the great Revival, and a prominent mark of the 'year of grace'."<sup>3</sup> Stating the qualifications required it is boldly asserted "though a man be wise as Solomon, able and learned as Paul, eloquent as Apollos, and bold as Peter, yet is he utterly unfitted for the Christian ministry if he is not converted to Christ ..."<sup>4</sup> These students were fervent evangelicals and good faithful pastors, like Samuel McComb, of Agnes Street Presbyterian Church, Belfast; Dr. Alexander Patton, of First Bangor,; and Dr. Henry Montgomery of the Shankill Road Mission, Belfast, "who raised over £200,000 for missionary and philanthropic works".<sup>5</sup>

This outlook led to a greater interest in education generally. But as it was remarked at presbytery visitation before the Revival that parents were not interested enough in the education of their children,<sup>6</sup> the result of the Revival was that the breaking off of so many from the ways of intemperance and the new love of God's Word manifest in their lives, especially of the parents, made very many people desire to give to their children what they had missed in their own lives. "The Revival ... made folk anxious to commend the Gospel by decorous habits" as Carson has so well said.<sup>7</sup> "Education is now become the principal object of concern

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1. See Appendix G
  2. Reckoned equivalent to M.A., Minutes of Assembly, 1844, p. 338.
  3. Presbyterian Magazine, August, 1860, p. 193.
  4. ibid. p. 194.
  5. General Assembly Reports, 1843, p. 83.
  6. Ballymena Presbytery Minutes, 5th August, 1857.
  7. Carson, op. cit. p. 99.

6. ibid. p. 131.

7. ibid. p. 131.



amongst the uneducated class ..."<sup>1</sup> Four ministers of the main Revival churches - Adams, First Ahoghill; Robinson, First Broughshane; MacIntosh, new minister of Connor; and Macloy, of the church now known as Wellington Street, Ballymena - were appointed a committee to draw up "prospectus of the new classical school, find out who may be expected to support it, and continue their efforts till the school be opened."<sup>2</sup>

Considering social problems it was noted that in some districts of Belfast prior to the Revival "owing to the operation of the Factory System the state of family religion is low."<sup>3</sup> Some of the working class girls were noted for their immodest attire and profligate life as was the case in the port of Derry also. This was said to be due to the Famine days of 1846-47, when many Mediterranean grain ships entered the ports, and the social vice of prostitution became rampant.<sup>4</sup> The degree to which this was so is seen in the emigration to Australia. When the vessel 'Earl Grey' arrived at Sydney rumour of the bad name of the emigrants from Famine stricken Ireland caused an inquiry to be made, when it was "reported that fifty-six of the orphans, the 'Belfast girls', were 'abandoned profligates', some of them even professed prostitutes."<sup>5</sup> The Rev. Hugh Hanna of Berry Street, Belfast, wrote in a private letter "The great social evil, the unblushing profligacy that infects the streets of large towns was felt in Belfast, as elsewhere. It was a great affliction to contemplate it. Christian people did not know how to deal with it. But this movement has entered the haunts of the worst wickedness, and many a Magdalene has come to sit at Jesus' feet.."<sup>6</sup> while a Christian merchant in Derry testified "One half of them are in the penitentiary by their own desire, the other half have almost all left the town."<sup>7</sup> "The night constables, she hears,

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1. The Revival, August, 1859.
  2. Ballymena Presbytery Minutes, 21st May, 1864.
  3. Belfast Presbytery State of Religion Report, May, 1858, Synod Minutes.
  4. Weir, op. cit. p. 131.
  5. Edwards and Williams, The Great Famine, p. 357.
  6. Weir, op. cit. p. 151.
  7. *ibid.* p. 131.



have now little to do, many public houses have been closed, and people are making restitution for past wrongs, and 'all this family have observed a great improvement in the manners of the girls coming out of the mills which we pass almost daily going through Bedford Street... Formerly their dress was immodest and their language had been bold and offensive, now they appear modest and quiet which is proof of the change for the better'.<sup>1</sup> "Three evenings in the week we have long had a school for mill-girls, who could not attend at any other time. Formerly many of them were rude and unmanageable, but now they are devout, respectful, diligent, and in all respects present the most agreeable and encouraging appearance. There has been a gracious work in the souls of many of them."<sup>2</sup>

On the Temperance question it will be known that from about 1820 till 1829 the liquer consumed in Ulster doubled,<sup>3</sup> and when it is remembered that "on the county road from Belfast to Antrim" - approximately fourteen miles - "there were twenty-three public houses,"<sup>4</sup> something needed to be done to improve this dreadful state of affairs. And done it was by the Temperance movement, guided by John Edgar, Father Mathew, and the Quakers together, to such an extent that about the time of the Repeal agitation in 1843, O'Connell's meetings were without excess, for no less than two million Irishmen (out of a total population of about eight millions) had signed the pledge.<sup>5</sup> The famine, however, undid much of this good, and the privations broke the morale of the people, who slipped back into intemperate ways. The Revival tackled the problem from another standpoint, besides that of the drinker, for since many publications were themselves converted, they voluntarily gave up their licences, rather than have anything to do with the drink trade. The Down Presbytery reported that

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1. Mary McNeill, Mary Ann McCracken, p. 291.

2. Reid, op. cit. p. 14.

3. In all Ireland the increase in spirits amounted to six million gallons. - J. McDermott, John Edgar, D.D., p. 35.

4. *ibid.* p. 23.

5. E. A. D'Alton, History of Ireland, Vol. V, pp. 176-177.



six public houses were shut within their bounds and two "others have little to do, and it is easy to quit a losing trade, may be expected soon to follow."<sup>1</sup> The Rev. J. B. Rentoul, of Garvagh, got the Coleraine Presbytery to refuse to sanction the use of intoxicating drinks at ordinations,<sup>2</sup> while at Crumlin licensing Sessions in October, 1859, no fewer than ten publicans declined to seek renewals ... six others applied for, and obtained renewals, solely in order to dispose of their remaining stock, with a view to giving up what they have reason to regard as ... the ruined trade of a publican."<sup>3</sup> In Newry, drunkenness all but disappeared in the north - Protestant - side of the town. In one district three out of six public houses were closed, others resigned the business, and "never has there been in this season of the year so little drinking in the country districts."<sup>4</sup> In Belfast, Messrs. Mackenzie's distillery "capable of turning out 1,200,000 gallons per annum, is for sale by auction, and if not sold as a distillery, is to be dismantled and sold piecemeal. The distillery at Hillsborough is also for sale."<sup>5</sup>

Some idea of the task of the Revival in accomplishing this social reform is seen in the fact that "a reader of seventy years standing" writing in the newspaper could affirm that "on the 27th June, 1859, a Monday, at between 8 - 9 a.m. there were seventy-five public houses violating the law, and twenty-nine observing it."<sup>6</sup> It was also recorded that of some fifty-four cases in court, no less than fifty-two were drunks! But some ten weeks later it could be asserted that "... the Gospel has annihilated the temperance societies - not all, but many of them. A higher argument and influence than they can wield, has regenerated the masses, and the absence of drunkenness from our streets - in markets, fairs, and on fair-days - is as marked as it is gratifying.

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1. Belfast Synod Minutes, Down Presbytery State of Religion Report, 1860.
  2. Coleraine Presbytery Minutes, 4th September, 1860.
  3. Banner of Ulster, October 12, 1859.
  4. The Revival, 12th November, 1859.
  5. ibid.
  6. Belfast Newsletter, 11th July, 1859. The Revival, 17th September, 1859.



You rarely see a drunken man now; brawling and disorder are consequently rare; and our police hardly know what to do with themselves. An officer in the county prison here, remarked the other day on the extraordinary decrease of prisoners for trifling offences. The Revival has elevated the moral character of the whole community, and the social effects must necessarily be equally gratifying. I am myself aware of four publicans who abandoned their trade, partly from the fact that their sales had fallen off so greatly that it was not worth their while to continue the trade, and partly because they considered that such a trade is a sin against society. In other parts of the country, similar facts are reported. Where worldly prudence and conscience regulate the spirit-seller's occupation, he will exhaust the time covered by his licence, and sell off his stock. When that is done, I expect that many publicans over Ulster will renounce their licences, and betake themselves to callings more consistent with the public good ..."<sup>1</sup> In Ballymena before the Revival "It is calculated by persons able to judge that about £100 were spent each Saturday in the public houses on whiskey. A few Saturdays ago, inquiry was made at the different public houses in the evening. It was found that the receipts of all of them put together did not amount to 10s. 6d."<sup>2</sup> In Limavady "on the market or fair day ... they transact business without lying and cursing ... (and) at an early hour they return to their homes in sobriety."<sup>3</sup> At Larne the fair day was "long notorious for the scenes of drunkenness and turbulence which it presented in the evenings, when the inebriate could have been reckoned by scores. A correspondent informs us that on the last fair day he saw only three drunken persons, and that long before the evening the great bulk of those who had been present had wended their way. homeward."<sup>4</sup> Broughshane fair, near Ballymena, was infamous

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1. Personal letter of Rev. Hugh Hanna, dated Sept. 20, 1859, to Rev. Dr. Weir, of London. See Weir, op. cit. p. 150.

2. Plain Words, July, 1859, p. 2. (his italics)

3. Londonderry Standard, 28th July, 1859.

4. Coleraine Chronicle, 13th December; The Revival, 17th December, 1859.

for its cockfighting, revelry and drunkenness, when Protestants and Roman Catholics joined in these profane scenes, "at the last fair day, which took place only a few weeks ago, there was scarcely a glass of whiskey sold at all; the people in the evening formed themselves into two large assemblies, and unitedly called upon God in prayer and praise. They afterwards went home peacefully to their own homes."<sup>1</sup> When it is remembered that John Edgar, the apostle of temperance, "did not ask for total abstinence but for abstinence from distilled spirits and temperance in the use of wine,"<sup>2</sup> it will be realised how great was the effect of the Revival with its far higher demand for utter and complete total abstinence from all liquer.

The temperance question developed into a minor controversy in the Presbyterian Church, where extreme views on alcoholism raised a point of issue in 1875, where one side argued for unfermented grape juice as the proper wine to use at the Sacrament, the other side maintaining that such was not the original wine of the celebration. That year the question was raised by the Belfast Presbytery in view of the numerous disturbances in many congregations. "In some cases the controversy became very acute, one Belfast congregation, St. Enoch's, (the new building for the former Berry Street congregation of the Rev. Hugh Hanna) finding it so hard to reach amicable agreement that they established two tables, one fermented and the other unfermented, at the Communion service, one held before and the other after the sermon; and their dispute was even carried to the Assembly itself. Pamphlets appeared to prove that Bible wine was not fermented, and one leading laymen went so far as to say: 'If Christ used fermented wine, He could not be my Saviour'. "<sup>3</sup> This struggle continued for thirty years till in 1906 a measure of peace was secured.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Plain Words, July, 1859, p. 2 (his italics).

2. J. E. Davey, The Story of a Hundred Years, p. 58.

3. Davey, op. cit. p. 58.

4. General Assembly Minutes, 1906, p. 80; see also Minutes 1875, p. 807.



Dr. Hanna seemed to think that the Revival had annihilated the temperance societies<sup>1</sup> whereas the very opposite was the case. At least one society reported "For several years, the objects of the Association were prosecuted by its own members without any paid agency."<sup>2</sup> Such was the story before the Awakening, but "in the year 1863 ... the Directors unanimously fixed on the Rev. Robert Lewers, of 2d. Clontibret, and invited him to engage in the work"<sup>3</sup> of full-time agent of the Temperance Association, "and, for twelve months, (he) labored throughout the Province, with unflagging zeal, and with an ability and acceptance even beyond the anticipations of the Directors ... besides preaching on the subject of temperance on almost every Sabbath during the year, Mr. Lewers addressed above 150 meetings."<sup>4</sup> Further proof of the Revival's effect was a drop of almost two million gallons of distilled spirits retained in the country in 1863 as compared with 1859 - 5,748,534 gallons in 1859, and 3,862,937 in 1863.<sup>5</sup> After this date the amount slowly rises again.

Interest in Mission work, both foreign and home, began many years before the Union of the Presbyterian Synods in 1840. Above<sup>6</sup> is mentioned the fact that in 1833 the Synod of Ulster raised £140 for its Home Mission effort, and that by 1857 the General Assembly raised £3,000 for the same object - a twenty-fold increase. In the same year 1857, a sum of £8,880 was raised for all missionary efforts by the Presbyterian Church.<sup>7</sup> By 1860 this amount had risen to £12,153.<sup>8</sup> In 1864 a sum of £9,929 was raised for Missions by the congregations and some £453 by Sabbath Schools, making a total of £10,362.<sup>9</sup> It must be remembered that the Church raised as well another £3,300 for

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1. See above, p. 399.

2. Report, The Temperance Association, April, 1865, p. 2,

3. *ibid.* Pamphlets 453.

4. *ibid.*

5. See Appendix 'H'

6. See above, Chapter II, p. 90.

7. Missionary Herald, January, 1858, p. 1.

8. *ibid.* August, 1860, p. 609.

9. General Assembly Minutes, 1864, Statistics.

'Other religious or charitable collections.' It will thus be seen that the acceleration in giving came in the days of the Revival, showing us that a real genuine interest was manifest in the work of the different missions of the church, viz., Home Mission, Roman Catholic Mission, Foreign Mission, Weak Congregations, Jewish Mission and the Colonial and Commonwealth Mission. Direct influence on the life of a future missionary of New Guinea is recorded in the story of James Chalmers: "In November, 1859, two evangelists from the North of Ireland arrived in Inveraray ... Several of us young fellows decided to do all we could to interfere with the meetings, and so prevent what were called conversions. ... The following Sunday night, in the Free Church, I was pierced through and through with conviction of sin ... On the Monday... I felt that ... salvation was possible for me ... and I believed unto salvation."<sup>1</sup> The Belfast Town Mission made the most of its opportunities in the Awakening, "During the Revival of the past year this (Belfast Town) Mission was signally blessed. The number of persons drafted from it and by it into the churches may be reckoned by thousands. The people had been gathered during the many years previously into prayer meetings, and Bible classes, and when the tide of living waters flowed through the town they were borne into the House of God, and are now among the most earnest and regular occupants of the pews there. The work of excavation and preliminary training was effected by the missionaries, so that, when the quickening and refreshing grace was given as a plenteous shower, a rich harvest was gathered. There is still, however, a vast work to be accomplished."<sup>2</sup>

One of the important results of the Revival was in the sphere of spiritual song. Above<sup>3</sup> was mentioned the way in which praise was developed and hymns and psalms used in all sorts of Revival meetings from the giant prayer meetings in the Botanic Gardens to

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1. Richard Lovett, James Chalmers, pp. 26 and 27; also William Robson, James Chalmers, pp. 14 and 15. See also Johnston, Robinson, Jackson, op. cit. p. 263, and Phillips, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 416.
  2. Belfast Newsletter, October 27th, 1860; Sibbett, op. cit. p.142.
  3. See above Chapter VI, pp. 232-237.



the homely cottage meeting; but it must be remembered that "Some congregations in the Synod of Ulster had used scriptural paraphrases and hymns prior to the Union with the Secession Synod in 1840, but to facilitate the Union the church's praise was limited to 'the metrical version of the Psalms used by the Church of Scotland'."<sup>1</sup> A little time before the Revival, in 1854, at a meeting of the Presbytery in Ballymena, a Mr. David Lynn asked the Presbytery to rule whether they should stand or sit during praise, as since standing was introduced, at first the majority stood, but now more than half sit down. The Presbytery advised them all to sit.<sup>2</sup> In 1854 a Psalmody Committee was formed,<sup>3</sup> reporting next year that in thirty-two congregations a choir led the praise, that singing classes have been attended by up to 160 members, recommending the employment of one or more professional teachers by the Assembly, and the publication of a book of psalm tunes, "as throughout the Assembly there are no less than six different collections of tunes employed."<sup>4</sup> Evidence that paraphrases were not popular is seen in a protest made in 1856 against their use at public worship, when the Presbytery of Ballymena stated at its visitation of Clough congregation "With regard to the singing of paraphrases, they simply repeat the enactment of the Assembly, viz., 'The Metrical Version of the Psalms of David used by the Church of Scotland, is the only Psalmody authorized by the General Assembly'."<sup>5</sup> However, a memorial to the Presbytery some months later stated that paraphrases "still continue to be sung in the congregation."<sup>6</sup> Not all were so obdurate, however, and in the same year we read of the formation of one of the first choirs trained by a precentor, and it was stated that their psalmody was good in First Derry.<sup>7</sup> The Revival made a great

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1. Directory for Public Worship, Westminster (1841) iii, p. 2.  
See also J. M. Barkley, A Short History of the Pres. Church in Ireland, p. 114; also J. E. Davey, *op. cit.* pp. 56, 57.
  2. Ballymena Presbytery Minutes, 1st August, 1854.
  3. General Assembly Minutes, 1854, p. 289.
  4. *ibid.* 1855, p. 377.
  5. Ballymena Presbytery Minutes, 5th August, 1856.
  6. *ibid.* 7th October, 1856.
  7. Derry Presbytery Minutes, 6th May, 1856.

change, for no longer did the people sit for singing and stand for prayer, but for both they knelt.<sup>1</sup> Then as hymns were sung at all the prayer meetings, many wanted to sing them in the psalm-singing Presbyterian churches. At the very beginning of the Revival some Presbyteries - Armagh,<sup>2</sup> Down,<sup>3</sup> Dungannon,<sup>4</sup> - appointed paid professional teachers of music, while in some of the smaller congregations precentors or singing clerks were paid officials of the congregation - Clare Presbyterian Church, County Armagh, in 1854, raised the singing clerk's salary from £4-10-0 to £7-0-0 due to the Harden Endowment.<sup>5</sup>

In 1860 a fierce dispute arose over the matter of hymn singing, practised in the Established Church, the Methodist places of worship, besides the Congregational and Friends Meeting Houses, but not, save in a very few instances (Townsend Street, Belfast,<sup>6</sup> and Clough, Ballymena) in the Presbyterian Church. "It was argued by the leaders of the Assembly that the common law of the Church excluded the use of instrumental music - a strange commentary on the Greek work 'Psalm' which means a song rendered to an instrumental accompaniment (literally of 'plucked' instruments), for the Psalms formed one of the chief features of Presbyterian worship."<sup>7</sup> In this dispute hymns were described in the heat of controversy as "The paltry effusions of theological montebanks,"<sup>8</sup> "vapid and sometimes erroneous",<sup>9</sup> or "ballad-like trivialities called Revival Hymns."<sup>10</sup> An anonymous author published a little tract entitled "Dr. Cooke's Vindication of Scripture Paraphrases" - surely to the embarrassment of Cooke - for the writer reminded

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1. See above Chapter VI, pp. 233-234.
  2. Armagh Presbytery Minutes, 3rd January, 1859.
  3. Down Presbytery Minutes, 5th April, 1859.
  4. Dungannon Presbytery Minutes, 1st February, 1859.
  5. Clare Session Minutes, 5th October, 1845.
  6. William Johnston, Psalms and Paraphrases, p. 3, Pamphlets 449.
  7. Davey, op. cit. p. 54.
  8. Robert Ramsay, David's Psalms Defended, p. 3.
  9. Thomas Houston, Divine Psalms, p. 5.
  10. J. A. Chancellor, Lay-Preaching and Hymn Singing, p. 29.

5. Carletonville, May 1858, p. 138, and July 1857, p. 192.



his readers that Cooke had formerly published a collection of Scripture "Translations and Paraphrases in Verse" and that Cooke had said "Where in the whole Word of God is the command restricting Christians to pray or praise in no other language than that of David?"<sup>1</sup> Actually, Cooke, when the struggle of hymns versus Psalms came on, adopted the exclusive view on the subject of psalmody, due it is said "that in a season of solitude and sickness he found comfort in the Psalms of David, but no comfort in hymns."<sup>2</sup> "Hymns versus Psalms" written anonymously in 1860 stated that the Psalms of David "were in many cases the first metrical compositions sung in religious worship among Christians... why? ... because the form of worship of the Jewish synagogue was in a great measure incorporated with Christianity ... By this means David's Psalms were sung in Christian worship ... So the Jews clung for a time to David's Psalms after they became Christians, and would have endeavoured to fasten the singing of them on the Christian Church ... as circumcision ... had it not pleased God to raise up holy men to prepare psalms of Christian praise."<sup>3</sup> Hymns crept gradually into favour for the experiences of their expression of the soul's praise to God were not easily forgotten. Various congregations used a variety of books, one Belfast congregation, Elmwood, actually compiling their own book, under their second minister, Dr. A. C. Murphy, who succeeded Moore, formerly of Connor. This book was used in Portrush among other places.<sup>4</sup> The introduction of uninspired hymns is looked upon in some quarters as the main cause of the innovation of organs, in English and Scottish churches,<sup>5</sup> even before the days of the Awakening, while in Ireland many of the Parish churches had long enjoyed the inspiration of a pipe organ to lead the praise, and in the Methodist church the days just immediately after the Revival saw "the

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1. Dr. Cooke's Vindication of Scripture Paraphrases, p. 1.

2. ibid. p. 4.

3. Hymns versus Psalms, pp. 4, 5.

4. See Davey, op. cit. p. 57.

5. Covenanter, May 1858, p. 139, and July 1857, p. 192.

introduction of harmoniums and organs."<sup>1</sup> In 1868, the Synod of Armagh and Monaghan "agreed to refer to the Assembly the case of Enniskillen Presbyterian Church where instrumental music is employed in the celebration of the praises of God during public worship,"<sup>2</sup> "and at almost every subsequent meeting of the Supreme Court the subject was brought forward for eighteen years."<sup>3</sup> A century later, as we look back we see the contribution of the Revival in the enriching of the service of God by the use of hymns as well as Psalms, and the aid of the organ to assist well-trained choirs leading the congregational singing.

Consideration of the worship in the sanctuary leads us to consider results of the Revival in preaching. Among the Quakers, the Minute of 1825 emphasised Divine Guidance "... to seek for ability to get down to the place of true waiting, and in reverence and fear to wrestle for the blessing ..." Forty years later the emphasis had shifted to faith in Christ "... worship ... is a solemn act of allegiance and love to our Father ... and ... an expressive testimony of our faith in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ... our all-sufficient Mediator..."<sup>4</sup> In the Presbyterian Church the strong Calvinism of the Synod of Dort was softened in attitude,<sup>5</sup> less was preached about the elect, the inscrutability of the Creator's ways was less emphasised, and instead the forgiveness of a Father, the love of Christ for the sinner's soul, the message of assurance of forgiveness, these all brought joy to the Christian living. In the Established Church more and more emphasis had been laid on the message that Christ died for all the world. This was also the message in large measure of the Methodist Church, and despite the personality of the great Spurgeon, many of the Baptists and Congregationalists preached it too. In a word, the preaching of the Revival was a re-emphasis of the love of God towards men, with lesser emphasis on the judgments of God.

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1. R. L. Cole, op. cit. p. 5.

2. Minutes of the General Assembly, 1868, p. 935.

3. T. Hamilton, History of the Irish Presbyterian Church, p. 186.

4. I. Grubb, op. cit. p. 131.

5. See Chapter VIII, p. 293.



Not that these were not preached, they were, but the words of Toye sum up the preaching:-

'Though none come till conscious of their want,  
Yet right to come they have by sovereign grant,  
Such right to Christ, His promise and His grace,<sup>1</sup>  
That all are damned who hear and don't embrace.'

The teaching of the Revival not only laid a strong emphasis on the plenary inspiration of Scripture - "We admit nothing that is not in accordance with the written revelation contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments"<sup>2</sup> - but also "did much to balance the diverse positions of the extreme Calvinists on the one hand (within Presbyterianism) and the extreme Arminians on the other (some Methodists and a few Anglicans)."<sup>3</sup> Emphasis, too, was given to the sovereignty of God - "The Father is the God of providence. He acts by fixed and wise laws, dispensing good and evil to all men. We should submit without a murmur to His dispensations, whatever they may be... He gives and He takes away: and whichever He does, blessed be His name!"<sup>4</sup> - and to man's impotence and need, which led to a very potent realization of sin, its desperate reality and the hopelessness of the sinner apart from Christ the only Saviour. Paradoxical as it may seem this doctrine of the heinousness of sin was one of the most appreciated, for it suited the desperate need of the hour.<sup>5</sup> This in turn emphasised the full deity of Christ. No longer was He thought of merely as an ethical teacher, but because of the inmost peace of soul that He gave, and the exclamation of every 'saved one' was "I have found Him whom my soul loves",<sup>6</sup> Jesus Christ was seen to be "God and Man united in One Person, in His dealings with the sons of men... He is an all-sufficient Saviour..."<sup>7</sup> A one-time Arian had to say "... I now see that He is God, and I have blasphemed Him, by making Him a mere creature."<sup>8</sup> The Holy

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1. T. Toye, op. cit. p. 4.

2. Alexander McCreery, Satan's Devices and Dr. Hincks's Fancies, p. 6.

3. J. W. White, The Influence of North American Evangelism on the Religious Life of Scotland and Ireland, 1855-1914, unpublished B.Litt. thesis, Chapter X, p. 23.

4. Hincks, op. cit. p. 13.

5. See above Chapter VIII, p. 308.

6. Adams, op. cit. p. 16.

7. Hincks, op. cit. p. 14.

8. J. Baillie, op. cit. p. 76.



Spirit, too, was much emphasised, as the One who leads to a true appreciation of ourselves, and the knowledge of Jesus as the all sufficient Saviour. "He taught you... to see the preciousness of Jesus as a Saviour; to love His church ... to seek after holiness and to hate and avoid sin..."<sup>1</sup> But warning was given too of the danger of procrastination, for man is not to presume on the continual prompting of the Spirit, as some one he can heed when he chooses.<sup>2</sup> In short, the teaching of the Revival was that of Low Church doctrine; Reformation emphasis on 'justification by faith', and the Evangelical appropriation of this doctrine, not just merely the intellectual assent to the truths of Christianity, as the Haldanes taught before the days of the Revival, and as the Brethren were alleged to teach afterwards, with their emphasis on the knowledge of Christ "an act of the intellect."<sup>3</sup> "With the Brethren, faith is 'simply to believe the record that God has given of His Son'."<sup>4</sup> Rather there is an act of the will by which the sinner throws himself on the Divine mercy of God, and puts himself in trust upon the Saviour Jesus Christ, by heeding the promptings of the Holy Ghost. The effect of this preaching and teaching, where the emphasis was more on the mercy and forgiveness of God in Christ, was seen in the much more lenient and forgiving attitude of the Kirk-Sessions towards offenders in cases of discipline.

Another result of the preaching of the Revival days, by both clergy and laymen was the making of the form of worship more emotional and the developing of a desire for modes of worship which excite the feelings.<sup>5</sup> This arose through the well-meaning desire of many to bear witness to what Christ meant to them. Naturally as they told and retold their story, certain effects were witnessed in those who heard, for many earnest but sometimes untutored young Christians were allowed to speak, and ministers

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1. Hincks, op. cit. p. 14.

2. Salmon, op. cit. pp. 9-12.

3. W. T. Latimer, Plymouth Brethren, p. 4.

4. *ibid.* p. 3.

5. W. T. Latimer, History of the Irish Presbyterians, pp.493-5.



themselves occasionally said somewhat irresponsible things, as when the Newsletter reporter assured his readers "some ministers of religion have declared themselves blessed by revival, that they never knew how to preach the gospel in all its fullness before."<sup>1</sup> A 'true Presbyterian' reported in a letter in the press that he had been in Berry Street Church and had heard "one speak of Very God of Very God condescending to die on Calvary's Cross to save sinful souls 'from curling and swinging' in hell's flames eternally."<sup>2</sup> While it is remembered that emotion is a very important part of our nature, nevertheless it would appear that there were certain dangers in this super-emotional outlook that tended to spoil the real solid work of the Revival, the undervaluing of the importance of thorough and systematic Bible teaching, due largely to two causes, the desire to exalt prayer upon which it was said 'If on the one hand we are called to be on our guard against a cold dreary, lifeless orthodoxy; we are not the less called, on the other, to be on our guard against an empty and ignorant fanaticism. There is nothing to hinder us from exalting prayer more, without honouring preaching less.'<sup>3</sup> Another reason assigned was a desire to exalt what was called 'the simple gospel.' Some were said to have always wanted to keep to the alphabet - the first principles of the Gospel, but "we are poor scholars and poorer teachers if we do not feel impelled to ... leave the first principles ... and go on to knowledge ..."<sup>4</sup> A warning was also given of the danger of dependence on mere human machinery, and also of our too hastily forming and announcing our decisions respecting conversions.<sup>5</sup>

Lest it should be thought that this 'emotional preaching' was the result of untutored laymen, it is well to note the advice given in May, 1859, by the Synod of Belfast "... encourage the brethren

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1. Belfast Newsletter, 7th June, 1859.
  2. ibid. 23rd June, 1859.
  3. Plain Words, November 1861, p. 123 (A paper edited by the Rev. Hamilton Magee, for the 'Ancient Apostolic Faith.')
  4. Hebrews VI, 1-3. This article is a synopsis of Lecture VIII of W. B. Sprague on Revivals.
  5. Plain Words, p. 124.



resident in these districts (where the Awakening has occurred) carefully to cherish and wisely to direct this good work as God by his grace may enable them ..."<sup>1</sup> Next year the Synod were told that the Presbytery of Carrickfergus had held meetings, duly publicly announced, 'to exhort and instruct against error and extravagances;'<sup>2</sup> whilst their neighbours the Presbytery of Templepatrick could state "They have also reason to believe that their Standards, the Catechisms and the Confession of Faith, are much sought after and greatly prized by the people."<sup>3</sup> The Presbytery of Belfast could report in 1861 that "... prayer meeting associations have been formed in some congregations with beneficial results. At stated times - once a month or so - the persons who take part in conducting the different prayer meetings ... meet with the minister for special prayer and conference regarding their work. Dangers may thus be avoided, difficulties overcome and new helpers be brought to unite with the good cause."<sup>4</sup> The Carrickfergus Presbytery could further substantiate its previous declaration by saying a year later "Those who regularly officiate at these meetings and those who may occasionally be called upon to take a part in the services, seem to be sound in the faith, propounding no other principles and professing no other doctrines than those contained in the Standards of our church to which not only in name they belong, but to which year by year they are becoming more ardently and affectionately attached..."<sup>5</sup> A further testimony to such excellent results was made by the Carrickfergus Presbytery "Sabbath Schools are numerously attended, and well qualified teachers ... in sufficient numbers ... ready to devote time and talent to this work ..." <sup>6</sup> "Very many ... are now engaged in Sabbath School instruction."<sup>7</sup> "Sabbath Schools were equipped with better staff... young better

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1. Belfast Synod Minutes, May, 1859.
  2. Carrickfergus Pres. State of Religion Report, Belfast Synod 1860.
  3. Templepatrick Pres. ibid.
  4. Belfast Synod Minutes, May, 1861.
  5. ibid.
  6. ibid.
  7. Belfast Presbytery State of Religion Report, May, 1861.



taught ..."<sup>1</sup> "Many ... anxiously enquiring into the cardinal doctrines of God's Word."<sup>2</sup> "Ministers ... paying much attention to the religious teaching of the young, ... in some congregations there are associations of young men for the study of the sacred scriptures ... from which much good is expected."<sup>3</sup> A centenary article states "The Revival established the popularity of emotional preaching, with a corresponding tendency to seek it wherever it could be found. This seriously undermined the 'building up' of converts."<sup>4</sup> In reply to this criticism it may at least be said that this generalization was not substantiated in the main districts of the Awakening, where it has been shown that many of the ministers, besides working day and night, were willing to strive to teach and encourage the new converts in the faith.

In view of these remarks it may be well to pose the question 'what portion of the people were influenced by the Revival?'<sup>5</sup> In reply let it be honestly admitted that there was a fairly considerable portion that were not influenced at all, as well as some who were only 'stoney ground' Christians. As evidence for the former statement, the Presbytery of Carrickfergus, who could affirm that the Revival had reached every congregation within their bounds in June, 1859, could also say a year later, albeit sorrowfully, "At the same time it must be stated that although God is walking about throughout the length and breadth of the land in mercy, there are still souls unawakened, dead in sin who regard not the works of the Lord,"<sup>6</sup> while the Down Presbytery reported that there were "still many nominal Protestants."<sup>7</sup> While the Rev. Richard Smyth argued that it was a mistake to say "it was only the ignorant and those in the humbler ranks of

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1. Comber Presbytery State of Religion Report, 1861.

2. Dromore Presbytery            ibid.

3. Rathfriland Presbytery    ibid.

4. Belfast Telegraph, 28th January, 1959.

5. See above p. 392.

6. Carrickfergus Pres. S.R. Report, Belfast Synod Minutes, 1860.

7. Down Presbytery            ibid.



life who were visited with the influence of the revival..." he continued "Men of education, and men of business talents ... were brought to weep and lament over their unbelieving hearts, and had eventually their sorrow turned to joy,"<sup>1</sup> and the Belfast Newsletter stated that the Revival affected all classes, but generally though not exclusively the poorer people,<sup>2</sup> the Templepatrick Presbytery could positively affirm that the "Revival has been chiefly among the poor outcasts of their population, and among the young members of respectable families... It is a fact that very few of their pushing enterprising and well-to-do farmers have yet had their hearts ... opened..."<sup>3</sup> They could further say that other opposing influences were apathy, negligence and a spirit of worldliness. In the year 1860 the Belfast Presbytery could report "intemperance, Sabbath desecration, and an eager struggling for the getting of gain", - these were special hindrances to the good work done, and surveying the whole situation after about a year of Revival work in their midst, they had to say "a vast work ... yet remains to be accomplished."<sup>4</sup> The Down Presbytery, reporting to the Synod in 1861, had to admit while things spiritual were advancing in their midst, and temperance was still gaining ground, yet "... drunkenness to some extent prevails, chiefly however among that portion of the people lying beyond their ecclesiastical superintendance."<sup>5</sup> One of the first Presbyteries to report the Awakening in their midst had to say after a two-year period of Revival "We would not be stating the whole truth if we did not confess that we have many obstacles, many enemies, much opposition. When we think of the ignorance, the unbelief, the worldliness, the lukewarmness that are so frequently to be encountered and in places we would not expect, we must admit we have much to do ..." <sup>6</sup> Banbridge Presbytery reported "that they have some discouragements having reason to lament the indifference

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1. Gibson, op. cit. p. 220.

2. Belfast Newsletter, 25th May, 1859.

3. Templepatrick Presbytery S.R. Report, Belfast Synod Mins. 1860.

4. Belfast Presbytery ibid.

5. Down Presbytery S.R. Report, Belfast Synod Minutes, 1861.

6. Templepatrick Pres. S.R. Report, ibid.







church accommodation; in Broughshane there was seating room for 900 people,<sup>1</sup> yet in 1849 850 families or 2825 persons claimed connection, and in 1851 the figures were 860 families with 4,300 persons; and in Connor the position is similar, in 1843 there were 1,000 families to be seated in a building fashioned to seat 1244 people, when it was actually said that though there were 1,000 families only some 400 contributed to the running of the church, and as well there were "about 200 men who could pay stipend if they got seats."<sup>2</sup> In 1850 there were 950 families, numbering 4350 people,<sup>3</sup> while in 1861 the Presbytery of Ballymena were told that there were 600 adult members (individuals) who had no interest at present in the meeting house."<sup>4</sup> As the Presbytery of Ballymena had ruled that there must be "not more than four families to a pew"<sup>5</sup> in a meeting-house, and as these pews were given to the higher bidders it can only be assumed that many of the poorer families had not the means to purchase seats to attend worship. This was stated openly in 1843 "a great number of non-payers do not attend public worship except the evening service."<sup>6</sup> Thus the 'means test' in some congregations virtually supported the contention of the Templepatrick Presbytery when they stated that the Revival was chiefly among the poor outcasts, and young members of respectable classes - these were the ones who could have little opportunity to attend worship, by virtue of this 'test'. It also offers us a clue to the question of Isaac Nelson as to why the comparatively new congregation of Berry Street<sup>7</sup> with its 800 families, "is crowded, and many fall down to demonstrate a visible work of Revival; whilst Rosemary Street a few perches distant remains ... very much as it was."<sup>8</sup> Nelson scathingly queried "Is it the sovereignty of God, or is it to be accounted for by the ability of

1. General Assembly Minutes, 1864 Statistics.

2. Ballymena Presbytery Minutes, 2nd May, 1843.

3. ibid. 2nd April, 1850, Government Return Figures for the Regium Donum.

4. Ballymena Presbytery Minutes, 5th February, 1861.

5. ibid. 4th November, 1845.

6. ibid. 2nd May, 1843.

7. Organised in 1852, See McConnell, op. cit. p. 95.

8. I. Nelson, Year of Delusion, p. 37.



educated people to control and master their feelings?" Actually it appears due to the ability of the wealthier folk to pay for their pews, attend church and have their spiritual needs satisfied! But when opportunity was given to the so-called outcasts to hear, the Gospel story was repeated, for "the common people heard Him gladly." Despite Nelson, his own Presbytery testified in its State of Religion Report in 1860 that there was greater life even among those who had, previous to the Revival, professed to be followers.<sup>1</sup> The fact that the Revival affected the poorer classes most accounts in a measure for the failure of the stipend income to rise very much in some places. The people who had their pew rights retained them, but where new churches were built these meant on each occasion a new minister and stipend for a new church upkeep. As to the effect of the Revival on these people, it was said "that whilst as might be expected, instances of defection have not been wanting, this Synod (of Ballymena and Coleraine) is especially grateful for the stability and permanence of the work that has now, for a considerable period, been progressing amongst its congregations."<sup>2</sup> That this was no solitary instance is evidenced by the same Synod in 1861 stating "Though the enthusiasm connected with the 'Revival' of 1859 is gone, there remain so many gracious and blessed results as to give cause for devout thanksgiving, and praise to the God of all grace. In particular the attendance on the services of the Sanctuary is well sustained, there is such an ardent desire for the great doctrines of the Gospel as to show that ... the knowledge of Jesus is the most excellent of the Sciences ... The tone of morality is considerably improved, the Sabbath is better observed, the sin of intemperance is less frequent, while the important testimony of the 'Judges of the Land' had been freely and repeatedly given to the value and the decided character of the change... The elders and people in general cordially unite with their ministers in

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1. Belfast Presbytery State of Religion Report, information gathered by means of a query sheet, Belfast Synod Minutes, 1860.
  2. Resolution of Synod of Ballymena and Coleraine, Minutes, May 1860.



evangelical efforts; the hitherto neglected portions of the population are more sought after; and by district visitation and the circulation of religious works, the knowledge of the truth is being conveyed, it is hoped, to many of this class."<sup>1</sup> Although this Synod stated in 1862 that many had fallen away from their profession of faith, and that attendance at church was diminished in some places "but not to a greater extent than might be expected from the depression in Commerce, and the extreme privations of the poor ... The amount of contributions for religious objects is considerably affected by the depression in agriculture and trade,"<sup>2</sup> yet many remained steadfast.

A further question would seem to be 'how long did the Revival last?' In reply we need to remember that not all places had its influence at the same time, or for the same duration. If our contention that the true beginning of Revival, as distinct from a smouldering unflashed zealous interest in Connor, Belfast, Comber, Antrim, Ahoghill, Killyleagh, Boveva, and Stourbridge in England,<sup>3</sup> burst forth at Ahoghill on the 14th March, 1859, appeared in Ballymena in mid May, and Belfast the same month, in Derry in mid June, and Armagh about the beginning of August, then we note that it is referred to as the 'late Revival' in Garvagh at the end of July,<sup>4</sup> while in Ballymena it was noted about this time that public 'convictions' were less numerous than formerly.<sup>5</sup> The Dungannon district referred to the 'late Revival' in April, 1860,<sup>6</sup> whereas the Presbytery of Carrickfergus remarked that at the same time (May, 1860) certain improvements in the lives of the people were noteworthy 'under the present Revival.'<sup>7</sup> At the Synod of Belfast it was reported in 1861 that in the area of the Down Presbytery 'the peculiarities of the Revival have passed away,' while the Dromore Presbytery

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1. Resolution of Synod of Ballymena and Coleraine, Mins. May 1860.

2. Ballymena and Coleraine Synodical S.R. Report, May 1862.

3. See Above Chapter III, pp. 122-123.

4. Coleraine Presbytery Minutes, 26th July, 1859.

5. Ballymena Observer, 23rd July, 1859.

6. Dungannon Presbytery Minutes, 1st May, 1860.

7. Carrickfergus Pres. Minutes, S.R. Report, Belfast Synod Mins. 1860.



referred to the 'blessed results of the recent outpouring of God's Holy Spirit ...'<sup>1</sup> Thus it would appear that the explosive results manifest in prostration and such episodes lasted from mid March till August, 1859, when these began slowly to wane, while the effective work of mass conversion seemed to continue till about 1862. About this time it could be stated that interest in prayer meetings was failing, elders appeared to show less interest in them, and in 1864 there was a perceptible rise in intemperance. Such is the actual time of the Revival, a few months in some places and a little better than two years in others, but its effects are still with us, for as Latimer said "A majority of our younger ministers incline to Broad Church views, while most of our people are evangelical."<sup>2</sup>

Two recent articles have suggested that "in some places the Revival did not endure."<sup>3</sup> Doubtless he would be over optimistic who would expect every convert to be true to his vows. However, let us consider some instances. In First Ahoghill, the number of communicant members in 1846 was 350, from some 520 families with an average of thirty-two new communicants per year.<sup>4</sup> In 1853 the number of families was 560, with 330 communicants attending, and some twenty-four to thirty new communicants per year. In 1863 the families numbered 700, the Communion Roll was 695 with 600 usually attending, and observance of the rite was now thrice a year (instead of twice as formerly), with an average of twenty to twenty-five new communicants each time. As the articles state "in one centre in County Antrim the attendance at Communion<sup>5</sup> was 1858, 64; 1859, 174; 1860, blank; 1861, 29;" it behoves us to discover, if possible, this unnamed congregation, and unless it is a pure coincidence, the figures for Broughshane make interesting reading: in 1848, the congregation numbered 860 families with 700 people attending the Lord's

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1. Synod of Belfast Minutes, 1861.  
2. Latimer, op. cit. p. 495.  
3. Belfast Telegraph, 28th Jan. 1959; Presbyterian Herald, April 1959.  
4. These figures are taken from the Ballymena Presbytery Minutes of the relevant years.  
5. My italics.



Supper, and an average of thirty new communicants twice<sup>1</sup> per year; in 1855, families numbered 800 with between 800 and 900 attending Communion, and fifty new communicants twice per year. in 1865, owing to there being the new congregation of Second Broughshane, the families numbered 630, when 565 was the average attendance at Communion, and eighteen new communicants twice per year. A close look at the Session Book of First Broughshane (as it was afterwards known) reveals a Roll of New Communicant<sup>2</sup> Members as follows: April 1858, thirty-six; October 1858, twenty-eight (a total of 64, same as above); April 1859, eleven; May 1859, seventeen; August 1859, sixty-three; October 1859, eighty-three (total 174, as above); no record for 1860, pages are blank; April 1861, fourteen; October 1861, fifteen; (total of new communicants 29, same as above); April 1862, twenty-three; October 1862, thirteen (total new communicants 36, same as above). Thus it appears that the writer of these articles mistook the Roll of New Communicants for the Communion Roll of the Church in drawing his conclusion. Considering the congregation of First Ballymena<sup>3</sup> we find that in 1847 there were 650 families with some 550-590 attending Communion, and twenty-two new Communicants twice per year; in 1855 there were 644 families with 500-600 attending Communion and thirty-three new Communicants twice per year. In 1864 there were 610 families claiming connection, with a Communion attendance of 600, and twenty-eight or thirty new Communicants twice per year. Wellington Street, Ballymena, in 1854 numbered 467 families with 420-440 attending Communion, and twenty-three new communicants twice a year. It will be remembered that this congregation, as a result of the Revival, built a new church in the town which in 1865 claimed 320 families with 320 Communicants and eighteen new Communicants twice a year; the old building continued as a separate congregation which in 1864 numbered 160 families with 250-300 attending Communion, and ten or twelve new

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1. My italics.

2. My italics.

3. Ballymena Presbytery Minutes, in 1847, 1855 and 1864.



Communicants per year. The old congregation of Connor, which in 1850 numbered 950 families with 750 attending Communion, had some thirty-eight new communicants, or an average of forty on each occasion. In 1857 this congregation numbered 870 families (470 contributors to funds) with some twenty to eighty new communicants per year for the first time, and an average attendance of 750 communicants. In 1869 Connor had 849 families with 750 communicants attending, and an average of forty new communicants twice per year. Consideration of all these figures does not suggest that there was a great lack of endurance of the results of the Revival, and the increased number of church buildings and new congregations erected<sup>1</sup>, no less than sixty-three new buildings or additions, would testify that much enduring good had resulted.

A criticism which demands attention is that of the Rev. R.H. Carson, of Tobermore Baptist Church, when in 1869 he wrote to the Home Mission of the Baptist Church in London, "... The past year has been with us here one of great spiritual drought... there may have been hindrances to success now that did not formerly exist. Indeed, I cannot but think that the comparatively small results of the past few years, may be traced, at least for the most part, to what we all regarded at the time as a great spiritual movement - the Revival of 1859. As it now appears and so far as we here are concerned, that movement was anything but a blessing. Out of some 80 or 90 individuals at that time, scarcely one remains to us at this moment. And what is worse than their mere exclusion or withdrawal - their evil conduct, or their spiritual apathy while among us, did not fail to leave its mark behind. I have often wished they could have all been taken away in one day. They have been our Achan in the camp, and till we see the last of them, or nearly so, I scarcely venture to hope for success. As regards attendance at Public Worship I am thankful to say that it never was better, never, indeed, perhaps so good. In this respect I have everything to encourage me ..."<sup>2</sup> Support for these remarks

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1. See Appendix 'E'

2. Extract from letter copy book of Tobermore Baptist Church.

is found in the trend of Baptist church membership in Tobermore, which in 1858 numbered 176; in 1860, 269; in 1865, 223; and in 1869, 213.<sup>1</sup> Despite this gloomy appraisal, the Baptist Irish

Society Chronicle for 1869 contains the following reference:

"TUBBERMORE is a name well known as the field of the late learned and beloved Dr. Carson's labours. Here the church, under the fostering care of Mr. Carson, is doing a good work for God's glory, and the salvation of souls."<sup>2</sup> A fairer conclusion than Mr. Carson's individual assessment would be the State of Religion Report of the Synod of Ballymena and Coleraine for 1869: "The Synod report that they received Reports on the State of Religion from all Presbyteries under their care ... the attendance upon the Sanctuary is fully sustained, Sabbath school instruction ... receiving increasing attention ... number of prayer meetings and the attendance upon them have not changed materially since our last report ... The Sabbath is observed by our people with a large measure of respect, notwithstanding that the present times furnish special temptations to Sabbath desecration... More than one Presbytery refers to the fruit of the Revival in 1859, and while they lament that there have been instances in which some who has begun to rull well were soon hindered, at the same time they bear testimony to the consistent walk of others, and the strong faith in Christ by which some have been sustained on a bed of death..."<sup>3</sup>

We may conclude this consideration of the results in words of 1861: "A feeling of individual responsibility is growing and professing Christians are manifesting an increasing anxiety for the extension of Christ's kingdom... There is but one opinion among brethren that the blessed results of the recent outpouring of God's Holy Spirit were everywhere manifest,"<sup>4</sup> and "they have

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1. Figures from congregational records of Tobermore Baptist Church.
  2. Baptist Irish Society's chronicle, Baptist Magazine, April, 1869.
  3. Minutes of the Synod of Ballymena and Coleraine, 27th April, 1869.
  4. Presbytery of Dromore Minutes, May 1861, presented at Belfast Synod, May 1861, State of Religion Report.





CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

"As a result of my observation and investigation, I may say that, while there is not a little that is doubtful, a good deal that is objectionable, and much that is perplexing, there is very much that seemed to me a glorious and triumphant work of grace."<sup>1</sup> So wrote the Rev. Dr. Spence, of London, in his observations on the Ulster Revival, and in surveying the previous chapters with a conclusion in mind, certain points need to be emphasised, showing us that the Revival of 1859 cannot be omitted from the Christian life of the North of Ireland as its influence permeated the life of the community in every way. The political, social, economic and religious life have been considered, with their bearing on the character of the people of Ulster, and the lateness of the rise of religious societies - 'The General Evangelical Society' founded in Dublin about 1792,<sup>2</sup> and the 'Ulster Evangelical Society' founded in Armagh in 1798 - will have been noticed. What may not be quite so clear is that these societies arose in Ireland a century later than their counterparts on the Continent, Britain and America. Edwards, in America, with Labadie, Spener and Francke on the Continent, are names associated with this 17th century Pietist movement. Through the last three, not only was there the idea of the formation of small private societies, with public readings, prayers and exhortations, but there was the separatist idea fostered admittedly by the circumstances in which the Pietists found themselves. These people were sincerely in earnest, and believed in the priesthood of all believers, the necessity of a good moral life, and the true Church was an amalgam of the groups of faithful ones meeting together to worship God. These societies came to England about the beginning of the 17th century, but did not make much impression in Ireland until the 18th century, though it will be remembered

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1. Article in the Patriot, reprinted in the Londonderry Standard, 18th August, 1859.

2. See above Chapter I, pp. 32, 33.



that in the meantime there were little groups of Moravians here and there up and down the land, which along with Seceders and Methodists, played their part in fostering and maintaining evangelical religion.

In the preparation for the Ulster Revival the rise of Evangelical doctrine was due to many faithful men, but notably to the influence of the Rev. Dr. B. W. McDowel, an American born of Irish emigrant parents, who was successively minister of Ballykelly in County Derry, and Dublin; to the Rev. James Elder, minister of Finvoy - 'The gun of the Gospel'; Dr. Cooke, of Belfast; Dr. Samuel Hanna, of Rosemary Street, Belfast, and Professor of Divinity and Church History for the Synod of Ulster; to name but a few in the Presbyterian Church; and to Bishop O'Beirne, the Rev. Thomas Tighe, the Rev. B. W. Mathias, Bishop O'Brien, Bishop J. H. Singer, the Revs. Francis Dobbs and E. J. Heatrick, and the members of the Ossory Clerical Club in the Church of Ireland. These with the Seceders and the Methodists raised the little societies, dotted over the midlands and especially in the northern part of the land, 'where prayer was wont to be made', for many years before the Awakening transpired. These prayer meetings, after they had played a great part in the work of Revival, and during it had been the means of many conversions, and the training of a multitude of laymen for many spheres of service, unfortunately sometimes manifested the divisive characteristics that Pietism had shown on the Continent and elsewhere. A great deal of the success of these prayer meetings seemed to depend on their leadership, and where this was carefully handled much strength was afforded to all the churches by them. But where an irresponsible and misguided few assumed leadership, irregularities of one sort and another arose, and some people were influenced away from the larger Christian churches to the 'sects'. Just as the Moravian Brethren received many members from the early Pietists, so the Irish 'Plymouth' Brethren, which began in Dublin before the name 'Plymouth' was associated with them, were, after the Revival,



greatly augmented in numbers.

Due consideration of the amassed information on the Awakening strengthens the conclusion that it was very definitely sought for by the prayers and preaching of many faithful servants in all the churches in all parts of the North for a very considerable period of time. The rise of evangelicalism in the Presbyterian church, distinguished by the name of Synod of Ulster, together with the Seceders, led to the Union of Synods, and with it the very definite mention of an expected Revival some fifteen years before it came. Conscientious hard work by many devout earnest men, largely clerical at first (but later including laymen), working in their own congregations, preaching 'applied' sermons, engaging in open air work, encouraging the Sunday School movement, and assisting in increasing vigilance with regard to church privileges, prepared the way for its advent. As well, there was family worship, organised local prayer meetings, with earnest tract distribution, and the dissemination of the news of the American Revival.

The Revival arrived at the crescendo of effort in almost all the Protestant churches as a result of the remarkable prayer movement - an evidence of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit - and resulted in the attendant conviction of sin in the hearts of many. The Awakening glowed in many places, Belfast, Ahoghill, Comber, Carrickfergus, Banbridge, Boveva, and Connor, for some two years before 1859, but in March of that year, at the Communion season in Ahoghill, it burst forth into a flaming zeal that for weeks and months carried many into the Christian life. After Ahoghill the Revival ignited in a score of places round about almost instantaneously and simultaneously, and many thousands in Ulster were awakened, Christian life being stepped up to a higher plane as a result. All classes were affected, though principally those who had little opportunity hitherto, in many places, to avail themselves of the privilege of worship. This tremendous acceleration outlined above<sup>1</sup> - in half a dozen weeks some four

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1. See above Chapter III, p. 123.



to five thousand people were converted around Ahoghill - was in a way the result of the serious interest enlivened by the fervent prayer meetings, and also by the early prostrations, but most of all was it the result of the work of the Holy Spirit. Admittedly some were deceived into thinking that prostration was conversion, but that so few, comparatively speaking, made the blunder, must be credited to the guidance of the ministers and laymen of the church as a whole, who laboured hard to correct such extravagances.

Because it was a crescendo of effort, and was sought for in all the Protestant churches, except Unitarians, to a greater or lesser extent, it was therefore part of the Christian life of Ulster, not only in preparation but in result, and not merely so for the three or four years of 1859-63, for it gave fresh impetus to the consolidation of Christian witness in Ulster in the years that followed. Warmth of Christian fellowship - common singing of hymns and psalms, prayers and worship - meant a unity of outlook, and in Christian worship it became the practice to address 'believers' at the morning service, while the evening meeting now became evangelistic. Even the fervent Methodists manifest this striking change, "hitherto a chief prupose of services (in the Methodist Church) was the evangelisation of unconverted people. Now a large place was given to the acts of adoration, devotion, supplication, which ought to be in divine worship."<sup>1</sup>

Substantial evidence was detailed above to show that the converts were in a large measure those of the working class, but "the Revival was not confined to the lower classes in society."<sup>2</sup> While in a general sense it may have been leaderless in other parts of the British Isles, it must be said that in Ulster it was definitely sought for, prayed for, and worked for, by men like Adams, Magill, McDonnell, J. M. Killen, Seaver, Campbell, Crook, White, Sewell and others, and by the Presbyterian Church's

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1. Cole, op. cit. p. 6.

2. Londonderry Standard, 18th August, 1859.



General Assembly. Such men as these led and guided the movement, and preaching in the open air became quite the common and acceptable thing. Vast gatherings for prayer meant that interest was further aroused, and there seemed to be little, comparatively speaking, in the way of opposition to this open-air evangelism. The victory of 1857 in Belfast was confirmed, and even to this day some of the memorable Revival spots - many of which were once cockpits of vice - have commemorative anniversary services. Dr. Edwin Orr stated "Individually, the 1859 Awakening presented the church and the people with a crop of sturdy husbandmen in every field of life ..." <sup>1</sup> and our evidence supports this conclusion, for the number of men who entered Christian work either whole-time as ministers, the vast opportunity offered for part-time service as teachers of Sunday school or Bible classes, as elders in the Kirk, or as laymen working in some capacity, helped the two larger Protestant churches - the Established and the Presbyterian - to surmount the difficult years of 1869-1870, when due to the Dis-Establishment, and the annulment of the Regium Donum, the financial burden of these churches devolved directly on the members themselves, and not as hitherto largely on the State and tithe rent. Systematic offerings, more commensurate with the expenses incurred had come into use, and people had a greater consciousness of their financial obligations. The idea of weekly free-will offerings seems to have stemmed from the work of the beneficence societies <sup>2</sup> and the much discussed tracts on giving, so common from 1860 onwards. The contribution of the converts to the upbuilding of the ordinances of religion was seen in the fact that more than five dozen churches were built, increased in seating capacity, or rebuilt completely. When this is added to the numbers of churches built in the forty years before the Awakening - nearly ten dozen in the Presbyterian communion alone - it confirms the argument of this thesis that the Revival was the topmost wave of a great spiritual movement. The characteristic trait that most Ulster people attend church stems from the greatly

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1. Orr, op. cit. p. 264.

2. See above p. 381.



increased church attendance resulting from the Revival. Not only so but the calling of the Church of Ireland General Synod<sup>1</sup> has been shown to have been the work of prominent Revival leaders, and the outcome of the meetings at the Dis-Establishment in 1870 was a much more important emphasis on the work of laymen in the Episcopal, the Methodist, and the Presbyterian Churches.

Evidence was also offered to show that the movement sustained the shocks of the failure in agriculture and commerce in 1861 and 1862, and that givings to the various missions were sustained at the high level of the vigour of the Awakening - not an ignoble effort when one bears in mind that these five dozen and more new church buildings and alterations had also to be paid for, that new pastors' stipends were to be met, and that some effort, at least, was made to pay off debts of stipend owed in years previous to the Revival, and largely incurred as a result of the Famine.

Socially, in the matter of Temperance the ideal was raised higher to that of Total Abstinence, and the rise of religious philanthropic work like the Orphan Societies of the Presbyterians<sup>2</sup> and Methodists<sup>3</sup>, together with the desire to assist the orphans of ministers and missionaries,<sup>4</sup> the demand for higher education - even the Y.M.C.A.<sup>5</sup> conducted evening classes and at one time three hundred students were enrolled to receive instruction in fourteen subjects - better home conditions, and the closing of so many public houses (Sunday closing, too) led to a much nobler ideal of social consciousness. The curse of prostitution was removed to a great extent, and the Kirk Session, hitherto strict invigilators of social misdemeanours, became more tolerant and Christ-like, welcoming redeemed sinners into fellowship.

The vast quantities of tracts, Christian literature and Bibles, together with the newly acquired ability to read, pro-

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1. See above, p. 384.

2. 1866, see Prenter, op. cit. p. 134.

3. 1870, see Cole, op. cit. p. 9.

4. 1873, see Prenter, op. cit. p. 190.

5. Dornan, op. cit. p. 27.



vided an opportunity for Christian newspapers. Already the Presbyterian Church had ventured into this realm with The Orthodox Presbyterian, the Missionary Herald, the Irish Presbyterian; the Reformed Presbyterian Church, with the Reformed Presbyterian Magazine, and the Covenanter; all of which were monthly publications. In 1856 the Church of Ireland published a bi-monthly paper The Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette, and soon afterwards the Methodists came forward with a monthly publication, The Irish Evangelist, in October, 1859. In the same year the Book Society, London, published The Revival, "a weekly record of events." Other monthly papers begun in the Revival were Plain Words, July 1859; The Evangelical Witness January 1862; and the Witness, a weekly paper commenced in 1870.

Theologically, the Bible was placed in the hands of an awakened populace in a greater measure than ever before, and the great veneration that still abides in the hearts of Ulster people for it was increased as a result of this Awakening. Along with this emerged the similar regard and reverence for the Sabbath day, and the attendance at Worship, which likewise are still abiding. The Sabbath School Society was constituted in 1862, which together with the Sunday School Society continue to influence young life. The child was given a new importance for instead of being a 'child of God' he was now looked upon as a 'heathen to be converted', and child evangelism, largely influenced by Payson Hammond, came to the fore. The Bible itself was read and studied, both at home and in Bible classes, till it has become part of the warp and woof of Ulster's character. As well, the severe Calvinism of the Synod of Dort was modified and the question of Christian Assurance clarified in the minds of many. Furthermore, the great use of hymns in Revival meetings opened the way for their re-introduction and use in the Presbyterian church, and contributed not a little to the use of instrumental music, not alone in the Presbyterian Church, but also in the Methodist.



Earlier awakenings had produced cleavages amongst churches - the Lutheran Reformation caused many Europeans to hive off from the Roman Church, the Reformed Awakening caused the Calvinistic secession from the Roman Church too, of the Reformed Church of England, and the Reformed Church of Scotland, one episcopal, the other presbyterian in government; while the Wesleyan-Whitfield Revival saw the arising of new forms of Non-conformity, albeit not at first; yet it has been said "the Evangelical Awakening of the nineteenth century produced no further divisions<sup>1</sup>." Consultation, however, of the Irish census figures of 1861 and 1871 reveals a rise of some thousands in the various smaller sections of the church - notably the Brethren movement in Ulster, which a century later ranks as the fourth Protestant sect in numbers. But it must also be stated that the roots of church harmony were there too. The seeds of church union sowed by Thomas Campbell, the Evangelical Societies and others, which resulted in the Secession union of 1818 and the Presbyterian union of 1840 were further emphasised by the fellowship of the various prayer meetings. The Evangelical Alliance - with its motto "Unum corpus sumus in Christo" - founded in 1846, was greatly increased in numbers and influence after its meeting in Belfast in 1859. A further attempt at church union was tried in 1870 between the Primitive Methodists and the Episcopal Church, but the time was not propitious. However, in 1877, the Primitives and the Wesleyans succeeded in union. Fresh strength came to the once defunct Congregational Union, so that it began again, and has now worked well for over a century. Today union is immanent between the Irish Congregationalists and the Presbyterian Church, while there have been exploratory talks between Presbyterians, Methodists and Church of Ireland.

Mission work abroad and at home in Ireland received a great impetus, with the consecrated giving of the awakened, together with their prayers, and in some instances the service of their

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1. Orr, op. cit. p. 265.

lives. Leaders in business, like Sinclair, Corry and Shillington, school teachers like W. M. Speers, and William Craig, as well as workmen and farmers' sons, even reclaimed down-and-outs, not to speak of housewives, all saw their obligation in a new light of zeal and urgency. The years following 1859 was a very definite period of expansion in Christian outreach in Ulster. Interest in missions was in large measure evidenced in the missionaries of, and mission givings to, the Irish Presbyterian Church, the Church of Ireland, and the Methodist Church, while one of the sons of Ulster, born in 1863, Samuel Alexander Bill, went to Africa in 1887 to found Qua Iboe Mission. As the evidence for the beginning of the Revival seems to point to many people having a mind to pray, and in their supplications to ask for a definite outpouring of God's Spirit on the population, so the Revival itself could be said to have been in large measure an extension of this prayerfulness - virtually multitudes in the place of intercession brought crowds to the valley of decision. Likewise the work of awakening diminished as the place of prayer was slowly neglected, and the Christian church settled down to its less enthusiastic and spectacular progress. Despite this it can be said that the church as a whole was enthused with a new vision - that the responsibility for the salvation of souls was as much the concern of the laity as the clergy; even at the risk of committing power and authority into untried hands. This was a difficult problem, and just how always discreetly in the white heat of revival enthusiasm to teach humility to those with a new-found sense of their own importance, caused much concern. But it can be said that many ministers learned to be their own evangelists, and not a few laymen discovered their gifts in this direction also.

The enthusiasm of the Revival lasted until 1863 or 1864 - about five years at the most in Ulster (though the theological battle on Assurance only began when the fervency abated) - as is seen in the publication in 1865 by one of the leaders of the work, the Rev. John Macnaughtan, of a tract 'Praying for Revival



of Religion'. Nevertheless, visiting evangelists of the later years, like Moody, Torrey and Chapman, only extended the scope of the Awakening on whose fruits they laboured, and improved some of the methods. They took the idea of the united prayer meetings into use, and building on the lessening sect emphasis and the increase of unity, instituted co-operative evangelism in Ulster, as elsewhere. They encouraged the ministry of laymen, and lay leadership, emphasising the place of the Bible and its teaching, all of which was evident in 1859, and the most that could be said was that Moody and his friends extended these ideas still further.

People today have asked if no similar outburst has since occurred in Ulster, parallel, for instance, to the 1905 Awakening in Wales? And in reply it can be said, "a period of great spiritual awakening, amounting almost to a revival, occurred ... during the early months of 1874, prior to the first visit paid by Messrs. Moody and Sankey to Belfast."<sup>1</sup> "Those who remember Belfast during the early 'twenties will clearly recall the great religious awakening which swept over the whole Province at that time. Nothing to compare with it had been seen in Ulster since the days of the "Fifty-Nine" revival. It is true, ... that large campaigns had been conducted by Moody and others, but the movement to which we now refer was different both in duration and extent. It reached its climax in the Missions conducted by the Rev. W. P. Nicholson, but the work of grace was by no means confined to them. Ministers of religion, evangelists, and numerous unnamed Christian workers all had their share in this spontaneous movement of the Spirit of God. It is undeniable that it left a deep indelible impression on the religious life of Ulster. Ministers now serving in all branches of the Christian Church, missionaries who have gone abroad, and many men and women engaged in the professions, in commerce and industry, date their first interest in spiritual matters back to those wonderful days... Some experienced

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1. Dornan, op. cit. p. 22.

observers felt that the daily prayer meetings in the Y.M.C.A. had a direct bearing on the whole movement, which lasted for more than two years."<sup>1</sup> Further confirmation of this came from the establishing of a prayer meeting in the Belfast City Mission office in 1921 "at nine o'clock each morning... These meetings were continued for two weeks, and God heard our prayer and manifested His power"<sup>2</sup>... Without any special effort attendances at meetings and Bible classes greatly increased, and anxious ones, at the close of almost every meeting, remained behind to seek the Saviour. This movement has spread all over the city; there is scarcely a district which has not shared in the blessing... the streams of grace ... kept flowing in ever-increasing volume until they had become mighty torrents... We have felt the throb of revival, which is still spreading. Never before have we witnessed such eagerness on the part of the people to hear the simple Gospel message from the lips of our missionaries. The Rev. W.P. Nicholson ... by his vigorous proclamations of the words of life, ... had created a great storm of discussion. Multitudes, as a result, had been aroused out of the torpor of death, and made full of vigorous bounding life, which was afterwards to be spent in wholehearted service of Christ."<sup>3</sup>

This shows us that if the place of prayer is availed of by God's people He still will answer, and today we hear of little prayer meetings in Belfast, and in many places in Ulster under the auspices of the Irish Revival Fellowship, and a paper Tidings of Irish Evangelism has been published in Dublin, where prayer meetings are held in the Y.M.C.A. Further publications on Revival work emanate from the Revival Publishing Company in Belfast, all very like the preparation of 1859, but lacking one thing:- so far as is yet known, no large influential church has thrown her official weight into the issue, and it cannot be said that the people as a whole as yet have a mind to pray.

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1. Dornan, op. cit. p. 53.

2. Sibbett, For Christ and Crown, p. 319.

3. *ibid.* p. 322.



Letter of Bishop O'Beirne to his Clergy in Ossory (Life of Peter Roe, pp. 72-3)

Ossory House, December 1st, 1795.

Rev. Sir - I have to communicate to you a wish which I have very much at heart. It is that the clergy of Kilkenny and of the neighbourhood, within no inconvenient distance, should meet at stated times, for the purpose of improving each other in the knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures, and in other studies connected with our ministry.

I am persuaded that your attachment to your profession, and your desire of seeing a succession of ministers, properly instructed and qualified for the discharge of its important duties, secured to the diocese, will of themselves point out to you the utility of such meetings; and that it will require no exhortations of mine to induce you to assist at them.

Each will contribute his part, as well from his reading as from his experience, to the general improvement; and besides the advantages which I shall reap in this view from such communications, I shall have great pleasure in the more frequent opportunities they will afford me of seeing so many of my respectable brethren.

I therefore hope for the satisfaction of seeing you at the Cathedral Library, on Thursday, the 21st of January next, and that you will favour me with your company at dinner on that day.

I am, Rev. Sir, your faithful and humble servant,

(Signed) T. L. Ossory.

#### Plan of the Meeting

"To interpret and explain the New Testament, beginning by the Gospel of St. Matthew, and going through four chapters at least, at each meeting.

Each person to come prepared to expound the original Greek, and acquainted with such commentaries as he can procure, according to his convenience and means.

The explanation to be followed by a lecture on the chapter that shall have been expounded; which lecture the Bishop is to prepare.

To conclude with an inquiry into the principal events, and the principal agents of the several ages of the church, beginning by the first age.

The meeting to be held in the Cathedral Library (which is open for the convenience of those who wish to consult whatever books may be found there proper for the occasion) and to dine with the Bishop."



Minutes of the Clerical Association of the diocese of Ossory, instituted December 5th, 1800, under the patronage of Dr. Hugh Hamilton, Lord Bishop of Ossory. (Madden, Life of Roe, p. 77)

"We, the undersigned clergymen of the Established Church, impressed with a deep sense of the nature and importance of the MINISTERIAL OFFICE, and earnestly desirous to improve ourselves in that knowledge which is so necessary to the attainment of the great ends of our holy profession, and to preserve in our minds a constant and habitual attention to its duties, have resolved, with the divine assistance, to form ourselves into a SOCIETY for these purposes; and in order thereto

"Resolved, first - That we will meet at Kilkenny on the first Friday of every month, and attend divine service.

"Resolved, secondly - That an appropriate sermon shall be preached by one of our members, chosen in regular succession.

"Resolved, thirdly - That immediately after divine service, we shall retire to the vestry room, and proceed to the discussion of such subjects as shall have been fixed by the president, at the former meeting. That our discussions shall be confined to the great and fundamental doctrines of Christianity, as contained in the ARTICLES, HOMILIES, and LITURGY of our CHURCH, and the works of such pious and Christian writers as have adhered to those landmarks of our religion, established by the wisdom of our venerable REFORMERS; and that all speculative points, not necessary to our wisdom and salvation, be avoided.

"Resolved, fourthly - That we communicate to each other the means which we have found most conducive to the successful discharge of our ministry, and whatever else may appear to us in any manner calculated to advance the interests of religion; and in order to remind us of the solemn nature of the office we have undertaken, that the ordination service be occasionally read by the president, who shall open and close the meeting with PRAYER.

"Resolved, fifthly - That our meetings be open to all our brethren of the Established Church, who may wish to attend.

"Resolved, sixthly - That we occasionally communicate, by our secretary, with "The Association for discountenancing Vice, and promoting the practice of Religion and Virtue", and with societies similar to our own in other parts of the kingdom, for mutual improvement and advantage.

(Signed)	Edward Pidgeon	Hans Hamilton
	James A. Ker	Robert Shaw
	George Carr	Peter Roe
	Hans Caulfield	John Robinson
	Henry Irwin	Samuel Downing
	C. M. Doyle	Samuel Thos. Roberts
	Thomas Maunsell	Edward Price
	B. Duncan	Thomas M. Vigors
	M. D. Madden	Edward Carr
	Joseph Townsend	Michael Goslin
	Henry Flood	William Napper
	George Watters	



Names of persons who met at the Banking House of the Rt. Hon. David La Touche and Co., on the 29th November, 1809, when it was

Resolved - "That a Society for the encouragement of Sunday Schools in Ireland is necessary, and would be highly beneficial." The persons present formed themselves into a Society for the purpose, namely:-

Alexander Boyle, Esq., in the Chair

Rev. Dr. Stopford	Dr. Isaac D'Olier, LL.D.
Rev. James Whitelaw	Martin Keene, Esq.
Rev. B. A. Mathias	Andrew Mazeire, Esq.
Rev. Thomas Kelly	Vicars Boyle, Esq.
Rev. James Bennet	Richard Boyle, Esq.
Thomas Parnell, Esq.	Robert Newenham, Esq.
Jas. Digges La Touche, Esq.	William Beilby, Esq.
P. A. Singer, Esq.	

At the adjourned meeting, the following Committee was elected: All the above, with the following -

Rev. Dr. McDowel	Mr. Leonard Ogilby
Rev. John Crosthwaite	Mr. John Guinness
Rev. William Thorpe	Mr. Arthur Keene
Rev. Moore Morgan	Mr. John Kingston James

Above details from Urwick, pp. 102-103.

See R. J. Martin, p. 106.

T. F. Freeman, p. 136.

Fellen, Real. History of Ireland, III. p. 225.

Population

One of the important points to be considered is the vast and unparalleled increase in the population in the first half of the 19th century. At the end of Elizabeth's reign (1608) the population was estimated at not more than 700,000, and before the 1641 Rebellion at 1,456,000 - doubled in 40 years.

Year	Estimated Population	
1672	1,100,000	
1695	1,034,102	At Wm. III's coming about 1 million.
1702	1,320,008	
1712	2,099,094	End of Anne's reign, risen to 2 million
1725	2,317,374	
1754	2,372,634	
1767	2,544,276	Hearth-money collectors.
1777	2,690,556	ibid.
1778	Geo. III 3,000,000	Young, <u>Tour in Ireland</u> (2nd ed. 1780) II
1785	" 2,845,932	Hearth-money collectors. (p. 354.
1790	" 3,750,344	Beaufort, <u>Memoir of a Map of Ireland</u> (1792)
1791	4,206,612	Hearth-money collectors.
1791	3,850,000	Beaufort, op. cit. p. 142.
1804	5,400,000	Census Commissioners, 1821, Report of Commissioners, 1925, VI, p. 7.
1804	5,395,436	Newenham, T. <u>Progress and magnitude of pop- ulation of Ireland, 1805</u> , p. 134.
1813	5,937,856	Incomplete Census (amended), Report of Commissioners, 1822 XIV, pp. 737-8.
1821	6,801,827	Census.
1831	7,767,401	Census.
1841	8,175,124	Census.

To the 1841 population there was in addition nearly half a million Irish residing in England and Scotland, and as well a large yearly emigration which from 1831 till 1841 has been 403,459. It is interesting to note that the population doubled from 1777 in 27 years - a generation approximately; but that it took ten years longer to repeat the increase the next time, i.e. from 1804 till 1841.

1731 - 2,010,221 - made up of 1,309,768 R.C. and 700,453 Protestants.  
(Burke's *Hibernia Dominicana*, p. 28)

1733 - Estimate 3 Papists to 1 Protestant - Frazer's Life of Berkeley, p. 205.

1732 Hearth-money collectors, 105,501 Protestant families  
281,401 popish families.

1729 1,200,000 R.C., 469,644 Protestants (Arthur Dobbin).

See R. J. Martin, p. 166.

T. W. Freeman, p. 15.

Killen, *Eccl. History of Ireland*, II, p. 243.



APPENDIX D (2)

1861 Census	R.C.	C. of I. Protestants	Presbyterians
Ulster	966,613	391,315	503,835
Leinster	1,252,553	180,587	12,355
Munster	1,420,076	80,860	4,013
Connaught	866,023	40,595	3,088
Total	4,505,265	693,357	523,291

A.D.	R.C.	Episc.	Pres.	Meth.	Jews	Others	TOTAL
1861	4,505,265	693,357	523,291	45,399	393	31,263	5,798,967
1881	3,960,891	639,574	470,734	48,796	472	53,796	5,174,306

Population and Number of Houses in several Cities and Towns in Ulster, for 1821, 1831, and 1841.

Name of Towns	1821		1831		1841	
	Popul.	No. of Houses	Popul.	No. of Houses	Popul.	No. of Houses
Belfast	37,277	5,494	53,287	8,700	75,308	12,875
Newry	10,013	1,489	13,071	2,257	18,907	3,620
Derry	9,313	1,252	13,251	1,513	16,196	2,419
Downpatrick	4,123	787	4,784	897	8,812	1,710
Dungannon	3,243	498	3,515	652	3,801	675
Armagh	8,493	1,189	9,189	1,540	12,112	2,051

See J. T. Ball, The Reformed Church of Ireland, 1890.

Ireland, in proportion to its cultivatable surface, was too densely peopled, as is seen in the following chart, based on the Census Returns, 1841:

Counties, exclusive of Towns of 2,000 upwards	Arable land		Rural Popl	Persons per sq.ml. arable land	Total Area		Persons per sq.ml. total area
	Acres	Sq.Mls.			Acres	Sq.Mls.	
<u>Ulster</u>							
Antrim	503,288	786.39	256,352	326	743,269	1,161.36	221
Carrick- fergus	12,483	19.5	5,494	282	16,571	25.89	212
Armagh	265,243	414.44	211,893	511	327,298	411.4	414
Cavan	375,473	586.68	234,914	400	476,858	745.09	315
Donegal	393,191	614.36	290,022	472	1,192,964	1,864.01	156
Down	514,180	803.41	323,807	403	610,284	953.57	339
Fermanagh	289,228	451.92	150,795	334	456,985	714.04	211
L'derry	318,282	497.31	197,622	397	517,036	807.87	245
Monaghan	285,885	446.7	191,301	428	319,453	499.14	383
Tyrone	450,286	703.57	298,498	424	805,930	1,259.27	237
Total	1,407,539	5,324.28	2,160,698	406	5,466,648	8,541.64	253
Leinster				247			202
Munster				332			212
Connaught				335			217

Comparing the population of Ireland with that of England and Scotland, for the same year, 1841, we find

	England and Wales	Scotland	Ireland
Cultivated acres	28,749,000	5,265,000	13,464,300
Total acres	37,994,400	19,738,930	20,765,342
Square Miles	47,960	30,842	32,445
Population	15,906,741	2,620,184	8,175,238
Persons per Sq. Mile	272	86	251

It is to be borne in mind that England and Wales could be described best as an industrial nation, Whereas Ireland was mainly agricultural. Looking at the population of Europe about the same time, we see that the number of inhabitants to the square mile was: Austria 138, Denmark 93, France 161, Norway 9, the Papal States 158, Portugal 97, Spain 67; while that of the United States of America was only 14.



## 63 New Churches and Rebuilds

NEW

Belfast: Duncairn	West Church, Ballymena
Clifton Street	2nd Broughshane
Gt. Victoria Street	Hill Street, Lurgan
Elmwood	Railway Street, Lisburn
Belmont	(Sloan Street)
Dunmurry	Moville
Albertbridge	Cornasass, Cootehill
Carrykeel, Donegal	Jonesboro', Newry
Moyniagh (Belleville)	Katesbridge
Maze	2nd Raphoe
Kells	Thomas Street Methodist,
Waterside, Derry	Portadown.
Portrush Methodist	Bannside, Banbridge
Tandragee Baptist	Ballymena Baptist
Donaghey Congregational	Omagh Methodist
Donegal Methodist	Derryall Primitive Meth.
Derrylee Wesleyan	Edenderry Wesleyan
Derryall Wesleyan	Annacloan Parish
Corcraun Wesleyan	

REBUILDS and GALLERIES

Bunorana	Ballymagrane
Redrock	2nd Keady "with a gallery for
Ballymena Methodist	the poor"
Carland	1st Dungannon
Fitzroy	2nd Dungannon
1st Portglenone	Gt. Victoria Street Baptist
Donegall St. Congregational	Ahoghill Parish
Rathfriland R.P.	Portrush Pres.
Derryanvil Methodist	Portrush Parish
Shankhill Parish, Lurgan	Drumreagh
Mosside	St. James', Ballymoney
Ballylinney	Kilbride
Ballynure	3rd Armagh
Banbridge Baptist	Donacloney

APPENDIX F

Six Presbyteries taken at random, for Catechising

DUNGANNON:		DERRY:	
Lr. Clenanees	No	Crossroads	-
2nd Dungannon	Yes	2nd Derry	-
Castlecaulfield	No	Burt	No
Pomeroy	No	1st Derry	Yes
Ballyreagh	-	3rd Derry	No
1st Dungannon	No	Malin	Yes
U.P. Clenanees	Yes	Noville	Yes
Carland	No	Fahan	-
Eglisk	No	Monreagh	Yes
Minterburn	Yes	Carndonagh	Yes
Toy	-	Ballyarnott	Yes
Ballymagrane	No	Knowhead	No
		4th Derry	-
		Buncrana	No
		Inch	Yes
		Raphoe	-
COLERAINE:		CARRICKFERGUS:	
Aghadowey	Yes	1st Ballyeaston	Yes
Ballywillan	Yes	2nd Islandmagee	No
1st Dunboe	Yes	1st Islandmagee	No
2nd Ballyrashane	Yes	1st Larne	No
Macosquin	Yes	Ballycarry	No
2nd Garvagh	Yes	Cairncastle	No
Portstewart	No	Ballylinney	-
1st Ballyrashane	Yes	2nd Larne	No
Dunluce	Yes	1st Carrickfergus	No
Moneydig	Yes	Raloo	No
Crossgar	Yes	Kilbride	No
Ringsend	Yes	Ballynure	No
1st Garvagh	Yes	2nd Carrickfergus	No
Portrush	Yes	Ballyclare	No
1st Coleraine	No		
2nd Dunboe	Yes		
3rd Coleraine	Yes		
2nd Coleraine	Yes		
ARMAGH:		BALLYMENA:	
Redrock	Yes	Clough	Yes
2nd Keady	Occasional	Glenwherry	Yes
Caledon	No	1st Portglenone	Occasional
Clare	No	Cullybackey	No
Loughgall	No	Glenarm	No
3rd Armagh	No	1st Ballymena	Yes
Benburb	No	N'Crommelin	No
Vinecash	Yes	O.C. Randalstown	Yes
1st Keady	Yes	Connor	Yes
Portadown	Occasional	1st Ahoghill	Yes
Knappagh	No	Cloughwater	No
1st Markethill	No	Buckna	Yes
Drumminnis	No	3rd Ballymena	Yes
Richhill	No	2nd Antrim	Yes
Cladymore	No	2nd Killymurry	-
Ahorey	Yes	Broughshane	Occasional
1st Armagh	No	Cushendun	-
Tartaraghan	No		
Tassagh	No		
2nd Armagh	No		
		Total Congregations	97
		Total Replies	87
		Total 'Yes'	40
		Total 'No'	43
		Occasional	4

Conclusion: Catechising falling into disuse.

Details extracted from the various Presbytery Minutes.



APPENDIX G

Students, Licentiates and Ministers without Charge		
Year	Students	Licentiates
1841	51	57
2	35	78
3	37	79
4	32	82
5	31	104
6	37	92
7	33	81
8	20	82
9	21	84
1850	17	87
1	13	98
2	10	91
3	9	87
4	3	83
5	8	70
6	3	82
7	1	72
8	4	77
9	3	73
1860	7	64
1	11	54
2	4	46
3	6	43
4	12	38
5	7	44
6	11	59
7	15	66
8	12	56

Figures from General Assembly Minutes, Vols. I, II, III.

APPENDIX H

Govt. Returns of distilled spirits retained for consumption in Ireland		
1859 retained	5,748,534 gallons	
1860 do.	4,714,358	
1861 do.	4,286,398	Extracted from 1866
1862 do.	3,977,024	Temperance Report,
1863 do.	3,862,937	Pamphlet 455.
1864 do.	4,090,109	
1865 do.	4,157,241	

APPENDIX I

Coaches and Cars to Belfast from Ballymena		
'Royal Mail' at Adair Arms	each morning 3 a.m.	6 per week
do.	each afternoon 2.30	6
'Perseverance' from Kennedy's,	at 6 a.m.	6
'Fair Trader' Mon. Wed. Fri.	at 2.30 p.m.	3
'Van'	each day at 4 p.m.	6
All go through Antrim, i.e. via Connor-Kells.		27 per week
I. Slater, National Commercial Directory of Ireland, p. 362		
Post Chaise Companion, sect. 56, 1803, states that road from Manchester 1846		
Ballymena to Antrim passed through Connor-Kells.		

## Belfast Presbytery re Open-Air Preaching (Hanna) 1857.

On 25th September, 1857, the Belfast Presbytery met to discuss Open Air Preaching. The meeting called at the signed request of Dr. Cooke, Dr. Morgan, Dr. Killen, the Rev. Wm. Johnston, and the Rev. Jas. Speers (a minister without charge in the Presbytery).

After Private session, they returned to public debate and passed these resolutions:-

"(1) That the preaching of the Gospel in the open air as well as in our churches has been customary during the entire history of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

"(2) That this custom we hold to be founded on our Lord's commission and on apostolic practice.

"(3) That we are resolved by all legitimate means to maintain for ourselves and transmit to posterity our<sup>1</sup>- this right which we have hitherto uninterruptedly enjoyed.

"(4) That whilst we are so resolved we nevertheless feel conscientiously bound as ministers of the Gospel of peace to do all in our power even in the exercise of our rights and the performance of our duties so as to live as in giving no offence in anything that the ministry be not blamed, see 2 Corinthians 6th Chap. 3rd verse.

"(5) That under the existing circumstances of this town we do affectionately entreat our brother Mr. Hanna, as a matter of Christian expediency - I Cor. 6, 12 - to desist from open air preaching till in the mercy of God a reasonable time be afforded for excited passions to cool and subside, an event which we hopefully anticipate, because until within these few weeks no organized obstruction or annoyance was experienced by any of our ministers during their open air services in any part of the town or country.

"(6) That we do most earnestly remonstrate with our brother as to the language he has occasionally employed in letters to his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant and also to the local magistracy.

"(7) That a Committee be appointed to confer with Mr. Hanna in reference to these resolutions, (Hanna is not noted as being present in the roll of the Presbytery) and that they be and hereby are authorized to take such measures as shall to them appear desirable for maintaining by appeal either to the Executive to the Legislature or otherwise the constitutional and christian privileges of this Church.

"The Committee to consist of the Moderator (Nelson), Dr. Cooke, Dr. Edgar, Dr. Morgan and Mr. Macnaughtan."

Extract from Belfast Presbytery Minutes, 25th September, 1857.

Minutes of Reformed Presbytery  
 Strath Congregational Church  
 1st Abeghill Presbyterian Church  
 3rd Ards  
 1st Broughshane  
 Blyth  
 1st Carrvagh  
 2nd



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Banbridge  
Ballymena  
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Coleraine  
Comber  
Derry  
Down  
Dromore  
Dungannon  
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- Eglis                         **ibid.**
- 1st Garvagh                 **ibid.**
- 2nd " "                     "                     "

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