

THE ROYAL BURGH
OF
AYR



Seven Hundred and Fifty Years of History

Edited by

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CHAPTER 7

PRE-REFORMATION CHURCH

WILLIAM J. DILLON, M.A.

WHEN the *Melrose Chronicle* briefly mentions, under the year 1197, that William the Lion had built a new settlement (*oppidum*) between the river Ayr and the river Doon, we are at the beginning of the written history of our town. Did the Romans live there? Did the Culdees have a cell? Did St. Ninian or St. Mungo, or St. Columba hallow our district with their presence? These questions are as yet unanswered. All we can be sure of is that the king did organise a community at the site of our modern burgh. Perhaps, already there was a church, but if so there is no known mention of it, although by this date the district was firmly held and meticulously parcelled out in temporal and spiritual lots. For example, the Berwick nuns held Maybole,¹ and Melrose Abbey² already had the adjoining territories of Mauchline, while by 1210 the same monks had the fishings of the Doon, with salt pans and timber next to Greenan Castle.³

The erection charter of our burgh dates back to 1203 and probably from its inception monasteries like Melrose and Cambuskenneth had tofts in the new trading centre.⁴

In the very year, 1221, when the Preaching Friars are arriving in England,⁵ and when the Castle of Ayr is being pledged as part of Johanna's dowry,⁶ Walter the High Steward, lord of the north side of the river Ayr is tempting the Gilbertines⁷ to come from Lincoln and settle next this new castle 'at the place which is called Dalmulin' between the lands of the New Town and the lands of Wallace of Auchencruive. Writing to Roger,

¹ *Carta Monialium de Northberwic*, no. 13, pre 1250

² *Munimenta de Melros*, no. 66

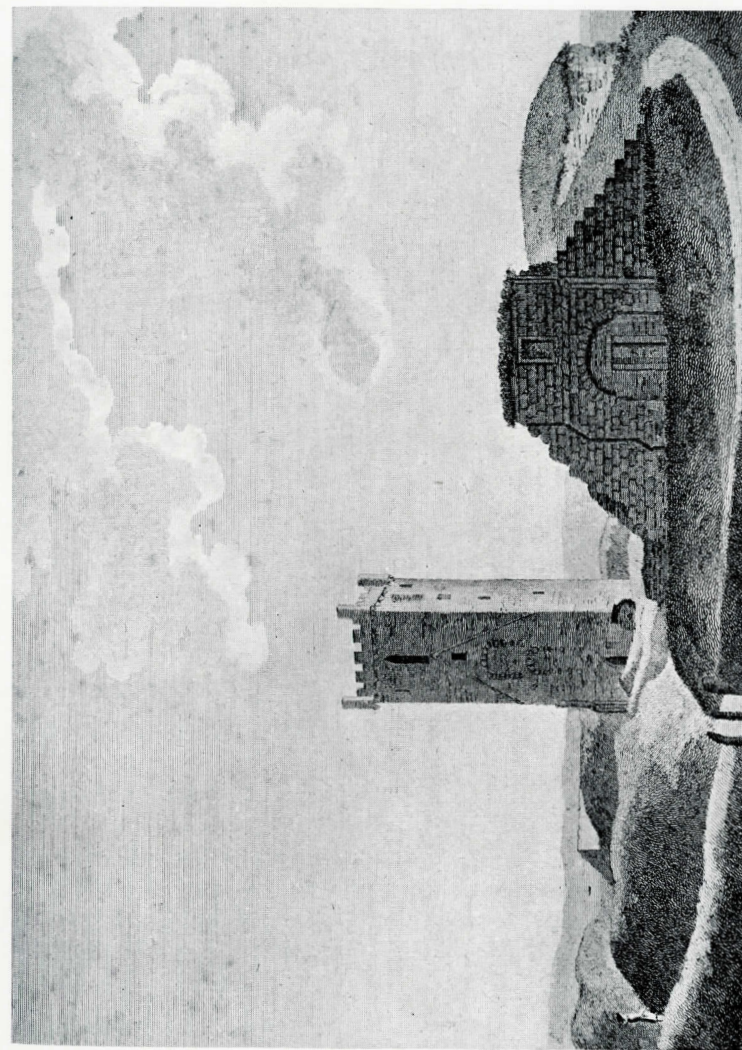
³ *ib.*, p. 34

⁴ *Registrum Monasterii de Cambuskenneth* (Grampian Club), p. 48

⁵ *Charters of the Friars Preachers of Ayr*, p. xix

⁶ *Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland*, no. 808

⁷ *Paisley Abbey Charters*, p. 22



TOWER OF ST. JOHN AND REMAINS OF CITADEL after S. Hooper

the Master of Sempringham, he offers lands, pastures, mills and fishings with the churches of Dundonald and Sanquhar (*i.e.* St. Quivox). It was a rich gift and, for certain, this purely English order came and settled their church of St. Marie somewhere in the district now known as Wallacetown or Dalmilling.¹

Meanwhile, inside the burgh, there is a chapter-meeting held in 1225, so there must be a church.² Proof comes eight years after, when a Papal Commission is inquiring into a dispute between the Paisley monks and Gilbert, son of Samuel of Renfrew.³ The inquiry concerned lands next Old Kilpatrick but, for some obscure reason, the commission holds its second production of witnesses in the parish church of Ayr, one of the judges being Alan, master of the schools of Ayr.

Strangely enough, just at the time when the Dalmilling Gilbertines had decided to sell, for 40 marks per annum, their possessions in Ayrshire to Paisley Abbey,⁴ Ayr burgh was receiving by royal gift the lands of Alloway, Cortoun and Gortcloy⁵ which probably meant there was now a parish church in Alloway. So before the middle of the thirteenth century, Ayr had two parish churches.

Moreover, the friars had appeared in Scotland in the year 1230,⁶ and it is almost certain that Ayr was one of their first three houses. So Dominus Randulphus de Par, Dean of Ayr,⁷ had now the Friars Preachers up the river from him on the other side of the town-brig. There was a close financial relationship—not always happy—between the burgh and these black-robed preachers from St. Katherine's in Mill Vennel, for the king had granted to them £20 yearly out of the town's mills⁸ and there was no escaping payment.

What happened in church circles in Ayr when the town as a strategic shipbuilding centre⁹ had to contend with the forces of King Haco lying off Arran, we know not, but perhaps the tower was added to St. John's at this period, safety measures

¹ John Edwards, *The Gilbertines in Scotland*. MacLehose, 1904.

² *Registrum Episcopatus Glasguensis*, no. 139, p. 117

³ *Paisley Abbey Charters*, p. 168. *Acta. Parl. Scot.*, vol. 1, p. 85-6.

⁴ John Edwards, *The Gilbertines in Scotland*. MacLehose, 1904.

⁵ *Muniments of the Burgh of Ayr*, no. 5

⁶ *Charters of the Friars Preachers of Ayr*, p. xx

⁷ *Munimenta de Melros*, p. 201

⁸ *Charters of the Friars Preachers of Ayr*, no. 4

⁹ *Exchequer Rolls*, vol. i, p. 6

outweighing the beauty of the rose window which had to be built over in the process.

But the old Scandinavian warrior did not have his way, and the blood spilled at the Battle of Largs had not quite dried, when from the south the other grim warrior-king was hammering at the Scots, and Ayr was centred in the storm.¹ Happily for themselves the English monks at Dalmilling had left us in 1238,² and patriotic Cluniacs from Paisley were now in possession of the lands in the Wallacetown area. These same monks had some land in Newton, too, for Adam de Burne in financial desperation had but newly sold to them his property in the 'villa de Newton juxta Are'.³

What happened among such ecclesiastics in Ayr, in the unsettled times of Wallace and Bruce, is not recorded. Every schoolboy knows of the Barns of Ayr and the Friar's Blessing,⁴ but if fact or fiction, who can tell? Even in the midst of the assaults and counter-assaults on the adjoining castle, church life went on, probably with more variety than ever before. In the years before Bannockburn, what a miscellany of historical personages must have visited St. John's—the undecided Bruce, from south of the Doon, the erratic borderer Dunbar,⁵ the Highland sleuth, John of Lorne,⁶ the Norman knights of Aymer de Valence,⁷ and the Celtic crew of the *Mariote* of Drogheda bringing Irish supplies to the English garrison in 'Newcastle-upon-Ayr'.⁸

And after Bannockburn, the pomp and panoply of Bruce's Parliament actually held in the church!⁹ On that fine spring day, St. John's had its most magnificent congregation ever. Royal personages, eight bishops, thirteen abbots, and a motley of priors, deans, earls, barons and knights appeared to swear allegiance to the line of Bruce, and rode off leaving the finest collection of seals that ever graced an Ayrshire document. And what jubilation, too, across the river in Newton where the freemen who had marched so bravely at Bannockburn were now enjoying possession of the 48 royally-given Freedoms!¹⁰

¹ *Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland*. Various references.

² John Edwards, *The Gilbertines in Scotland*. MacLehose, 1904.

³ *Paisley Abbey Charters*, p. 71

⁴ Wm. Robertson, *Ayrshire*, vol. i, p. 71-2

⁵ *Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland*, vol. ii, no. 1293

⁶ *ib.*, vol. ii, no. 1957 ⁷ *ib.*, vol. ii, no. 1959 ⁸ *ib.*, vol. ii, no. 1353

⁹ *Acta. Parl. Scot.*, vol. i, pp. 14, 104 ¹⁰ *Reminiscences of Auld Ayr*, 1864, p. 1

The victors did not forget Ayr. By 1327, three chaplains, paid out of the royal coffers, are saying Mass in Ayr,¹ while the taking of Bruce's heart to Palestine resulted in the endowment of Holy Trinity altar in the church of St. John's.² The friars, too, had their reward, for Bruce confirmed to them the grant of £20 out of the mill-rents, and gave to them the right to have their corn ground without charge and to stand next to the king in priority.³ To the friars came also donations from such stout patriots as the Earl of Wigtown.⁴

Shortly after this—although the patronage of the parish church of St. John's belonged to the king—for some unknown cause the patronage seems to have been transferred to the Melrose monks.⁵ Perhaps it was to help the much-ravaged abbey to recuperate from the cruel wars.

Probably the same war, and its attendant poverty, had caused the burgh to fight a protracted but losing battle with the Black Friars to avoid paying the £20 already mentioned. The struggle had gone to the highest courts in the land before the Duke of Albany settled it in 1406 in favour of the friars who now received in part payment the mills of the town, so that from then until the Reformation they are the Friars' Mills.⁶

A different struggle was perplexing the clergy at St. John's and the burgesses in that neighbourhood, for the menacing, wind-blown sands were blocking the streets, filling the little harbour, and laying bare the bones in the churchyard around the parish kirk. In 1380, Robert II had tried to alleviate their distress,⁷ but with little success, for the Duke of Albany in person had to come in 1425 to narrow the Sandgait against the prevailing enemy.⁸

Another burghal problem was the sheriff who persisted in intruding on the privileges of the burgesses when they were holding their fairs and markets at St. John's day and Michaelmas.⁹

But things of the spirit were not being forgotten and these same busy burgesses found time to introduce a third religious

¹ *Exchequer Rolls*, vol. i, no. 1327

² *Registrum Episcopatus Glasguensis*, vol. i, nos. 274, 275

³ *Charters of the Preaching Friars of Ayr*, no. 5 ⁴ *ib.*, no. 8

⁵ *Munimenta de Melros*, nos. 481, 483

⁶ *Charters of the Friars Preachers of Ayr*, nos. 16-19, 26, 27

⁷ *Exchequer Rolls*, vol. i, p. 6

⁸ *Muniments of the Burgh of Ayr*, nos. 43, 44

⁹ *ib.*, nos. 21, 22, 25, 26

element into the life of the community. This time again it is friars, but this time their garments are grey—the colour of ashes—and their Order is the strictest that the Franciscans could devise. The burgesses themselves invited these brothers of poverty, and in 1474 a convent had been set up alongside the river,¹ probably where the Auld Kirk stands.

Ayr had now reached the maximum ecclesiastical development. As befitted an important royal burgh, it had welcomed at various times all branches of the church. The secular clergy had the parish churches of St. John's and of Alloway. They also had in their care the chapel of Newton, the chapel of Dalmellington,² and the chapel and hospital of St. Leonard's 'outwith the poirt of Ayr'.³ In the burgh the friars had the Dominican Church of St. Katherine, and the Franciscan Church of Greyfriars, while the Red Friars from Fail had a piece of land not far from St. Leonard's.⁴

Near the Auld Brig, a tenement of Templar property held out the privilege of 24 hours' sanctuary to any person in trouble with the authorities,⁵ and there, too, a Templar Court of Justice was held. As already mentioned, Melrose and Paisley Abbeys had various holdings, while a piece of land near the Foul Vennel, called Nunsland,⁶ belonged to the Nuns of North Berwick who had held Maybole church from a very early date.

The Reformed Church would gladly have kept possession of all this ecclesiastical property when the time of change had come, but there were other claimants who were ready to salvage parts of the wreck for their own use. In 1556 John Knox preached at Gadgirth.⁷ Three years later the ex-Franciscan John Willock preached in St. John's itself, and Christopher Goodman appears as the first Protestant minister in Ayr.⁸ Here, just when we have most need of them, the burgh documents go strangely amiss, gaps appear in the town records, and when the *Burgh Accounts* take up the compts again in 1574, the Reformation is complete, and the lands are out of the hands of priests, monks and friars.⁹ By this time 'all tene-

¹ *Chronicle of the Observatine Province*, by Fr. John Hay, 1586

² Rogers, *The Chapel Royal of Scotland*, 1882, p. xxxiv

³ *Reg. Mag. Sig.* (1546/1580), no. 159 ⁴ *ib.*, no. 34

⁵ *Protocol Book of Gavin Ros*, no. 496 ⁶ *ib.*, no. 823

⁷ J. H. Pagan, *Annals of Ayr*, p. 1 ⁸ *ib.*, p. 6

⁹ *Ayr Burgh Accounts*, p. 135. The years 1561/74 have no compts.

ments, lands, houses, churches, chapels, orchards, acres, annual rents, dailsilver, obits, and anniversaries belonging to any chaplainry, altar, or prebend in any church, chapel or college within the liberty or parish of Ayr, and the mills, lands, etc. which belonged to the Friars Preachers or Minorites had been given as a Crown gift to the burgh for the ministry and for the erection of an hospital'.¹

The compt of 1576-77 gives an idea of what came into possession of the burgh.²

The feu of the Blackfriars' Yards	-	-	£3	13	4
The feu of the Greyfriars' Yards	-	-	£2	13	4
The annuals of the Blackfriars	-	-	£18	1	6
The annuals of the Chorists	-	-	£28	9	8

But figures are not a good guide to the period, for the treasurer had difficulty in collecting dues, and many were never paid. The revenues of the old church eventually reached the sum of £81 2s. 9d., rather less than 5% of the treasurer's charge in the first quarter of the seventeenth century.³ As for the buildings of the religious, Blackfriars and Greyfriars were totally destroyed,⁴ and St. John's Church, ceasing to be used in Cromwell's time, passed through various phases until only the old tower remained. So of pre-Reformation Ayr we now possess but little, except the Tower of St. John's, the Auld Brig, the Obit Book, various charters and records, and stubborn place names, like Friarsland, Chapelfauld, and St. Leonard's.

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST'S PARISH CHURCH OF AYR

St. John's Tower, still with us, marks the site of the original parish church of Ayr founded probably at the erection of Ayr into a burgh about 1203. But the tower is only a remnant, and in itself had suffered much reconstruction, until it was finally restored in 1914 through the generosity of the Marquis of Bute.⁵

However, the outline of the complete church can be demonstrated, for its foundations were laid bare in 1891, at which time stones from the ancient floor were taken to construct the

¹ *Charters of the Friars Preachers of Ayr*, no. 65

² *Ayr Burgh Accounts*, p. 140 ³ *ib.*, p. xxxiii

⁴ *Charters of the Friars Preachers of Ayr*, nos. 67, 107-14.

⁵ J. C. Carrick, *Ayr Fort*, 1913, Introductory Dedication

altar in the Episcopal Church.¹ During this excavation it was shown that the tower, ancient as it is, was not part of the original building. The early church was cruciform in shape, with its high altar at the Sandgait end, and a Gothic window set at the opposite extremity to catch the western sun. The addition of the tower, probably at a period of military stress, mutilated this fine window above the west door, and the need must have been imperative for such architectural sacrilege.²

The interior can only be guessed at, but surely it was splendidly in keeping with the importance of this royally-visited kirk with its many altars, its two great bells, its monk-built organ and its band of choristers and clerics chanting the requiem Masses which were so much in demand by the ordinary citizens at the time of the Obit Book. In those far-off days of pageantry and symbolic spectacle, the burghess of Ayr who had donated the small 'annual rent' for an obit Mass thereby assured himself a memorable funeral, with kirk-bells tolling, choir singing his 'dirige', and bellman perambulating to the outmost bounds of the burgh to remind the burghesses to pray for the soul of the departed, and also to call the poor and the leprous³ to attend Mass and receive the funeral alms.

On holy days, and especially on *Corpus Christi*, from the church would start the procession through the streets of the town, cleaned for once of their middens and heaps of offal.⁴ Probably, too, in the churchyard, among the town guns held there in storage, would take place the annual plays and pantomimes where the douce bailies played at Robin Hood and Little John, in company with the Frenchmen hired for the occasion.⁵

Inside the church were many altars dedicated to various saints and served by separate chaplains.⁶ Your funeral Mass was said at the altar specified in the bequest. Choice could be made from the altars of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Blood, the Holy Rood, the Blessed Virgin, St. Andrew, St. Ninian, St. Nicholas, St. Peter, St. Eloi or St. Christopher the Martyr. Each altar had its own appointed chaplain who drew all the revenues attached thereto. Many of these altars had been

¹ See records of Holy Trinity Church, Ayr

² Arch. Mackenzie, *An Ancient Church*, p. 18

³ Paterson, *Obit Book of Ayr*, p. 58

⁵ *ib.*, pp. 84, 90, 100, 102

⁴ *Ayr Burgh Accounts*, p. 20

⁶ Paterson, *Obit Book of Ayr*, p. 42

founded and endowed by outsiders, but the burgh upheld some, and in 1532 the tradesmen of the town had one of their own to 'St. Anna, St. Eloi and other saints, patrons of their respective trades'.¹

Perhaps the most historically interesting altar was that which was founded in 1322 to the Holy Trinity and endowed with ten marks per annum by Simon Loccard of Lee,² who later went to the Holy Land accompanying the heart of Bruce. This annual was paid in Ayr right up to the Reformation, and caused much litigation before and after it.³

The chaplains attached to St. John's had several sources of income. Some were paid a fee by the town treasurer,⁴ most of them had gifts of small rents due from tenements in the town,⁵ some were local and so inherited their patrimony,⁶ while a majority of them drew salaries as lawyers and clerks.⁷ A good many of them were University graduates and the burgh school was staffed from their ranks.⁸

There were so many clerics attached to St. John's that it is well to remember that it was one of the most important churches in Scotland. When there were 25 rectories in the diocese of Glasgow, at the top of the list, taxable equal with Glasgow at £26 13s. 4d. stood our Kirk of St. John's.⁹ Indeed so important was it, that from State records, etc., can be compiled a nearly complete list of its principal clerics.

Because Ayr Parish Church was under the direct patronage of the king, part of its revenues became, about 1502, appropriated to support the Chapel Royal of Stirling when it became a collegiate church. Ayr, at this time, had the chapel of Dalmellington, and so both appear in this grant of James IV to the new college. About 1610, the kirks of Ayr, Alloway, Dalmellington and Dalrymple were still under the Chapel Royal, and there was a top-level struggle going on for custody of them.¹⁰

At the Reformation St. John's did not meet the fate of the 'convents' on the river bank. During the tour of Mary, Queen

¹ Paterson, *Obit Book of Ayr*, p. ix

² *Registrum Episcopatus Glasguensis*, no. 274

³ *Ayr Burgh Accounts*, p. 114

⁴ *ib.*, pp. 78-79

⁵ Paterson, *Obit Book of Ayr*, various obits

⁶ *ib.*, see 'notaries to the premises'

⁷ *ib.*, see 'notaries to the premises'

⁸ *Ayr Burgh Accounts*, pp. 110, 114

⁹ *Registrum Episcopatus Glasguensis*, Appendix 1

¹⁰ Rogers, *The Chapel Royal of Stirling*, p. cix

of Scots, through south-west Scotland in 1563, this ill-fated monarch dined at Eglinton and supped and slept at St. John's, Ayr, before passing on to Glenluce. This stay in Ayr is quaintly recorded in archaic French in the roll of expenses for the tour: 'Lundy, 11me jour, dudit mois, la Roïne disner à Eglinton, soupper et coucher à St. Jehan d'Era.'¹ Thus it can be understood the old parish church was not destroyed. Its fabric was suffered to stand intact, and every year the *Burgh Accounts* show expenditure on repairs to it, from soap for the bell, to the repair of the pillars under the council's loft. At times, large sums were expended on its upkeep, as in 1604 when at least £103 went towards repair.² But when Cromwell's engineers requisitioned the kirk and the graveyard—without any town charter of it—this confiscation spelled the doom of old St. John's. Religion 'flitted' across the town probably to the site of the demolished Greyfriars,³ and the original parish church was deserted, although dissension caused it to be re-occupied for about 18 months ending in 1688.⁴ Around 1736 the stones were used to build a new steeple,⁵ and although the tower survived the demolition it ceased to have any further ecclesiastical history.

Even so, the venerable old relic has attracted many a local historian, and much has been written of it and its wonderful old Obit Book, perhaps nothing better than the little volume, *An Ancient Church*.⁶

THE DOMINICANS, FRIAR PREACHERS, OR BLACK FRIARS

At an unknown date in the year 1230 King Alexander II 'caused to be dedicated' in Ayr a church of the Dominican Friars.⁷ Scotland had eight houses of this great mendicant order set up by the king, and of these Ayr was perhaps the first.

There is no existing erection charter, but from documentary evidence we can be sure that the convent stood at the foot of Mill Street on the south bank of the river, near the Ducat Ford. The Victoria Bridge Works on Mill Brae are a part of

¹ *Scottish Historical Review*, 1921, vol. xviii, pp. 1-13

² *Ayr Burgh Accounts*, pp. 224, 226

³ J. H. Pagan, *Annals of Ayr*, p. 55

⁴ *ib.*, p. 52

⁵ Paterson, *Obit Book of Ayr*, p. xii

⁶ Arch. Mackenzie, *An Ancient Church*

⁷ *Charters of the Friars Preachers of Ayr*, no. 1

the site occupied by the friars' old mills, and part of their ford can still be seen. Of the monastic building which existed from 1230 until 1561 there is now no trace and we have no idea of the size or design of the structure which would be in keeping with continued royal patronage. However, at the decay of their order, all was swept away and the memory of the friars remained locally only in place names such as Friars' Mill, Friars' Croft, Dowcot Ford and St. Katherine's Well for 'seik maidens'.

This Dominican church of Ayr, dedicated to St. Katherine of Siena, stood among fruitful orchards and gardens between the Woodgait and the river.¹ In it were altars to the Trinity² and to St. Duthac,³ while within its cloisters stood the chapel of St. Mary erected by Malcolm Fleming, Earl of Wigtown.⁴ Buried under the choir was the body of Aliis Campbell, wife of Alan of Lauder who gave to the preachers the lands of Dankeith in Symington⁵ which recently, in 1946, came into the hands of another religious congregation, the Passionist Fathers.

St. Katherine's was popular with all sections of the community from royalty to the merchant burgesses of Ayr. Gifts came to the friars from all classes of society. In return, the friars gave prayers, sang Masses and offered the normal facilities for obits. They had many patrons. In 1398 Wallace of Craigie desired to have an anniversary Mass 'as for a professed brother of the order' and requested 'formal letters of brotherhood'. In 1497 the friars are pledged to give a trentale of Masses for royalty⁶ and in 1509 an obit is celebrated for Henry VII of England at the request of King James IV.⁷ Thus the friars were powerful rivals of the parish clergy of St. John, but there is no evidence in Ayr of any dispute.

Apart from religious functions, the priests took their place as citizens in the civic life of the nation and of the burgh. In 1261, Ivo, a Dominican of Ayr, collected the Papal tax for the Crusaders.⁸ During the days of Wallace they were perhaps busy with the Friars' Blessing and although in 1307 they

¹ *Charters of the Friars Preachers of Ayr*, no. 6

² *ib.*, no. 45

³ *Protocol Book of Gavin Ros*, no. 173

⁴ *Charters of the Friars Preachers of Ayr*, no. 16, p. 24

⁵ *ib.*, no. 29, p. 45

⁶ *Obit Book of Ayr*, p. viii

⁷ *Exchequer Rolls*, xiii, p. 360

⁸ W. H. Bliss, *Calendar of Entries in Papal Registers*, vol. i, p. 385

received wheat and barley from the English invaders,¹ in 1328 Bruce confirmed their privileges in the burgh,² while a principal patron was the doughty patriot, Malcolm Fleming, captured at Neville's Cross and for long a prisoner in the Tower of London.³

The church was often the scene of business transactions. In 1404 there the Paisley monks received compensation from the Auchinleck family,⁴ for the mutilation of a monk. Locally, in a pre-banking age, it was much used by the Wallaces of Craigie and the Cathcarts who had many dealings, concerning arbitrations, reversions, and deposits, transacted before the altars of St. Katherine's.

Many local boys must have joined the Order and there is evidence of this in a few of the charters.⁵

The early documents referring to the friars in Ayr make attractive reading. In 1340, the touching donation of Juliana de Ponte, who has to borrow the burgh seal, for she has none of her own, is aglow with kindness and consideration. The gift she leaves to the friars 'when humanly there shall be an end of me' is full of revealing glimpses of medieval Ayr with its alderman, and its long-forgotten streets, the Woodgait and the Cambergait. The I-give-my-all bequest of John de Kilmarnock in 1348 continues the picture. Here the Woodgait and Cambergait are in company with the Doongait, the Seagait and the 'vicus lapidarius'. There is talk of perches, tofts, stone-houses, booths at street corners, byres of bakers and, in the Burrowfield, named lands such as Crukithalf Acre, the Claveri Wells, the Mortlanhill, the Duppoll and Cortoun. Of such things was Ayr in the fourteenth century.

Perhaps the real local history of the friars lies in their ownership of the mills. At first these grain mills belonged to the burgh, which by royal command had to pay £20 (*i.e.* 4,800 silver pennies) annually to the friars.⁶ Later, in 1328, the Dominicans obtained the right to grind free of multure-charges, and the privilege of being first in the queue.⁷ Constant legal battles were waged concerning this royal gift of £20, and at last in 1406 the burgh agreed to pay £10 and give the mills to

¹ *Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland*, vol. ii, no. 1953

² *Charters of the Friars Preachers of Ayr*, no. 3

³ *ib.*, no. 6

⁴ *Paisley Abbey Charters*, p. 389

⁵ *Charters of the Friars Preachers of Ayr*, no. 51

⁶ *ib.*, p. xxxiv

⁷ *ib.*, no. 5

the friars in lieu of the other half.¹ Again, in 1477 there is an exchange and the Black Friars get a 'mylsted at ye heid of ye holmys liand next ye crag neuk'.² Of course the brethren had pledged their oath to be good millers, and to keep the mills and dams in repair, while the burgesses were to get their corn ground at 3d. a boll. The mill-dams supplied more than water-power, for the friars had '2 fishing cruiffis for salmond sitvat upon the dam of said nether miln'.

Later, the town got the mills back. In 1614, the final settlement of church lands gave to the burgh 'the corne milnis of Air over and nether, miln landis astrict, multures, sucken and knaveship of semyn', and perforce, the two salmon cruives.³

After the Reformation, all things belonging to the religious in Ayr went, by gift of Privy Seal, to the town, but the donation speaks not of St. Katherine's Church but of 'the room, place and stance of the Blackfriar Kirk . . . where the same of old was situate'. Such a quotation speaks for itself, as does another in Bailie Osburne's account-sheet of 1603: 'Payit to the men that won the stones in the Blackfriars' yards, £6.'⁴ Since the 'hospital' was a-building about this time, it is probable that many of the stones went for this purpose.

Friars who survived the storm were pensioned for life. Only two Black Friars of Ayr drew the meagre dole of £16, but they set up an amazing record. John Rolland, who was sub-prior in 1557⁵ and who is described in 1568 as 'ald Freir Johne Rollie',⁶ received his pension from the town treasurer until 1582. But the other friar, David Allasoun, was paid his £16 from 1561 yearly until 1617, more than half a century after the destruction of his friary.

THE GREY FRIARS, OBSERVATINE FRANCISCANS, OR FRIARS MINOR

Whereas the parish clergy of St. John have left behind them their Obit Book, and the Dominicans their charters, the Grey Friars of Ayr have left no local records except odd notices of them here and there in the burgh documents. The poverty of

¹ *Charters of the Friars Preachers of Ayr*, no. 27

² *ib.*, p. xxxiv

³ *ib.*, no. 67

⁴ *Ayr Burgh Accounts*, p. 53

⁵ *Charters of the Friars Preachers of Ayr*, no. 62

⁶ Account of the Sub-Collectors for 1568 (*Thirde of Benefices*)

this Order is perhaps the best explanation of this lack; and the fact that the convent disappeared so completely leaving only a well still issuing into the river, has led to confusion among local historians.

In 1586 an exiled friar of the Observatines staying in Cologne wrote a chronicle of that Order.¹ The sixth convent was erected in Ayr, he states, and continues: 'On the west coast of the kingdom of Scotland lies the ancient town of Ayr. When the fragrant report which spread abroad concerning the friars who had come to Glasgow, reached the ears of the inhabitants of Ayr, they did not rest until in the year 1474 they possessed a completed monastery for the friars.' In 1481, the Pope on the petition of the Bishop of Dunkeld agreed to their building a habitation with church, altars, a little belfry, cemetery, dormitory, refectory, gardens, etc. The site donated was between the Blackfriars' place and the Auld Brig, and it is thought the Auld Kirk now occupies the exact spot. We do not know the name of the church—though probably it was St. John's—nor yet of any altar in it, while of the friars we can name only a few. This is not surprising. The Observants were the strictest of all the mendicant orders. They did not desire property, so they had no lands in and around Ayr as had the Black Friars. Their livelihood came from begging, from donations, and from working their own yards and gardens. They expressly cultivated their acres, developing fruit, flowers and herbs, so that here, at least, in Ayr in 1500 would be gardens for support and repose. Their church was to be simple and austere with no spire or steeple, just 'strong walls and the roof of a barn'. Had the climate permitted, a wooden church would have sufficed. The work of the friars was focused on the poor, especially the lepers and pest-stricken, and thousands of brothers died during years of plague.

Royal bounties for small amounts came to Ayr Grey Friars from James IV, 'Protector of Observance' self-styled, and they seem to have had at least two bolls of barley yearly from the Exchequer. In 1506, King James donated to the Grey Friars of Ayr, a chasuble of red chamlot 'with cors of slicht gold' and 6½ ells of 'Bertane clait' to make an alb, costing in all slightly

¹ Father John Hay, *Chronicle of the Observatine Province of Scotland*, 28th January 1586

over £5. He also gave '18 unce silver to be ane chalice to thaim' and it cost him 36/- to have it made up.

Besides these frequent bequests from Royalty, the convent received eight small local legacies consisting mainly of a few shillings or half-a-mark. In a peculiar bequest, Gilbert Kennedy of Balmaclanochan, who was killed at Fauside in 1548, left to them a debt of 40/- due to him. Gavin Dunbar, Archbishop of Glasgow, bequeathed them £10, as did Hew, the first Earl of Eglinton. Their most generous patron was Egidia Blair, wife of John Kennedy of Baltersan (who does not know their old tower-stump on the road near Maybole?) which lady, in her testament drawn up 'at her dwelling-house of Balter-syne' on the last day of August 1530, bequeathed £40, and on the day of her burial, '2 pairs of blankets, three bed-rugs, and one bed-cover of needlework'.

The burgh which had caused them to come to Ayr, gave them an annual bounty out of the common good. Whereas the Dominicans received money, the Franciscans were given wine and salt,¹ both common imports at that time from France to Ayr. But the donations were not big, the boll of salt costing 18/- and the hogshead of wine about 70/-. So whatever the Grey Friars of Ayr were, they were not idle rich.

A great deal of the commercial life of auld Ayr was centred in these convents, prior to banks and lawyers' offices. The Cathcart family did most of their business at Greyfriars and entrusted the warden with custody of many of their documents. The papers were in safe hands, as can be seen in 1532 when the macer passed from Edinburgh with letters from the Lords of Council to the Grey Friars of Ayr 'anent ane instrument pertaining to the sisters and heirs of Carleton'.² The warden, Friar Rae, was cited to deliver the said deed 'massit in paper and closit under the chapter sele to be producit befor the said Lordis'.³ Again, in 1520 Adam Reid of Stairwhite deposits papers in a box with the warden of Greyfriars 'for the sake of more secure custody'. Such transactions give us notice of a few of the friars, e.g. William Lang and David Wardlaw (1518) John Paterson and J. Watson (1520).

In 1509 we get a notice of local boys in the Order. Two

¹ *Ayr Burgh Accounts*, p. 114

² Wm. Moir Bryce, *History of the Scottish Grey Friars*

³ *ib.*

brothers, belonging to Ayr, whose father has newly died, meet in the refectory of the Friars Minor.¹ Thomas Layse has joined the Grey Friars, whilst his brother Andrew wears the black robes of the Dominicans. Thomas is the elder son, but as a Grey Friar 'he renounced all his father's lands as being dead to the world'. So these lands would probably go to the Dominicans in Mill Vennel.

In 1543 a Franciscan preacher precipitated a riot in Ayr.² From Edinburgh came letters authorising the reading of the Scripture in English. When the new law had been proclaimed at the market-cross, Friar John Routh declaimed an inflammatory sermon against this innovation, and a street riot followed. Friar John was clapped in the Tolbooth. His friends led by the young Master of Montgomery from Eglinton made a sortie against the Tolbooth to rescue him, but the 'town's friends' resisted successfully and were entertained with twenty-four shillings worth of wine.³ Of course the preacher was haled before the Governor at Glasgow, escorted by two bailies and two sergeants, which cost the burgh another £5.⁴ But wait—on whose side were the magistrates? They fed the friar well, they got him a horse for 14/-, they bought him hose and a doublet for another 22/6, and at his departure they tipped him 44/-, and the burgh treasurer continued his hogshhead of wine to the Grey Friars for nigh on another twenty years.

At the Reformation, the friars and the convent disappeared. There were no pensioners among the Franciscans. It is most likely that some Ayr friars sailed into exile with the Franciscans who left Leith in 1560 for the Low Countries, where they were to face a second banishment. The friar lands consisted of not more than four acres which eventually fell to the town. J. H. Pagan says 'Greyfriars lay as it had fallen till 1604, in which year the stones were employed by the town for the building of an hospital'. But in 1546 William Cambell of Skeldon had a grant of a 19 years' lease of one acre of the Grey Friars' yards and of 'all and haill the stanis of the place, kirk and houssis of the saidis Grey Freiris quhairever the samin may be apprehendit'.⁵ So presumably the 'quarrying' had already begun.

¹ *Charters of the Friars Preachers of Ayr*, pp. 75, 81

² *Ayr Burgh Accounts*, p. 90

³ *ib.*

⁵ *Reg. Mag. Sig.*, 7th February 1566/7

Moreover there is an unexplained entry in the treasurer's compt for 1586-87 which runs, 'to the twa personis that was in the luggis of the Greyfriars, £2'.¹ Could it be that the lodges were still habitable, and that the two persons were former Franciscan Friars allowed to live on there?

However, in 1652 Cromwell's citadel necessitated the burgh's having a new kirk.² So the magistrates chose the stance of the old friary.³ The yards of the friars were to become the new cemetery,⁴ and the kail growing therein was to be promptly removed. Then the churchyard was levelled off, planted with trees, and enclosed within a dyke. And in this manner, the Auld Kirk of to-day was reared on 'the room, place and stance of the Grey Friars Kirk'.

¹ *Ayr Burgh Accounts*, p. 157

² J. H. Pagan, *Annals of Ayr*, p. 55

³ *ib.*, p. 55. But there are critics who suspect that the Franciscan Priory was elsewhere.

⁴ J. H. Pagan, *Annals of Ayr*, p. 55

CHAPTER 8

CHURCH FROM THE REFORMATION TILL
THE END OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

REV. ARCHIBALD MACKENZIE, B.D., F.S.A.Scot.

IN THE absence of contemporary records it is not actually known how the people of Ayr received the change from the old order to the new at the Reformation, but we may believe that the times were on the whole peaceful. We do know that some time prior to the Reformation Ayrshire held strong Protestant sympathies, largely due to the influence of the Lollards of Kyle. Thus the ground was in a measure prepared for the coming of George Wishart to the town in 1545 when he preached the doctrine of the reformed faith at the Cross of Ayr. Two years later John Knox visited the district and preached in the town church of St. John the Baptist. That these two stalwarts of the Reformation should appear in Ayr might seem to indicate that the ancient burgh was at the time a bastion of papacy. Doubtless they came to rally the large body of the people whose sympathies were with the reformers. In 1559 there appeared John Willock, a former friar of the Franciscan monastery in the town, who had become a convert to the reformed faith and, nothing daunted, he preached in the Church of St. John. This so stirred the wrath of Archbishop Beaton of Glasgow that the then abbot of Crossraguel, Quentin Kennedy, was instructed to deal with the heretic. The redoubtable Willock, however, challenged Abbot Kennedy to meet him in St. John's Church, but the meeting never took place. The Queen Regent then gave orders that Willock and others should appear before the High Court of Justiciary, but failing to obey they were denounced as rebels. As the tide of Protestantism rose its course was directed towards the Church of St. John, where altars, images and all the appurtenances of Romanism were swept away. As well as the twelfth century Church of St. John the Baptist there were also the monastery

of the Black Friars, founded in 1230, situated where Turner's brewery afterwards stood, and the monastery of the Grey Friars, founded in 1472, on the site of which stands the present old church which was built in 1654. Besides the two monasteries there was also the chapel of St. Leonard, which was situated somewhere in the neighbourhood of the present St. Leonard's Church. There were other Roman Catholic properties in the burgh, *e.g.* Templelands, Newton and St. Quivox, and Alloway Kirk. The monasteries were vacated and demolished but St. Leonard's Chapel survived for a time. In October 1593 the burgesses of Ayr at a public meeting in the Tolbooth made open profession of their Protestant faith and expressed their determination to defend it according to the principles of the Reformation. That there was no violent convulsion following upon the Reformation may be seen in several ways. In the Obit Book of the Church of St. John there appears the obit of one who—if the date can be trusted—died in November 1599, nearly forty years after the Reformation. There it is inscribed by the hand of a recording priest of the pre-Reformation church. We also find from the *Burgh Accounts* that the town obeyed Government instructions by paying pensions to certain of the friars of former days. Again we find as an item of stipend paid to John Porterfield who came as Protestant minister in 1580 the revenue from the Holy Rood altarage. Certain pre-Reformation practices died hard, such as Sunday markets and holiday-making on Sundays, which called for the Town and the Kirk to take measures for ensuring attendance at public worship and seemly observance of the Sabbath. The Kirk Session records of Ayr begin in December 1604 and one of the first entries refers to penalties for violation of the Sabbath.

The old order then had gone and it was necessary to call a Protestant minister. In 1559 there came Christopher Goodman from Geneva where he had been colleague to John Knox; in all likelihood Knox had to do with the appointment. Thus it was that Ayr was one of the first eight towns in Scotland to have a Protestant minister. Goodman was brought to Ayr by Richard Bannatyne, a native of the town who had acted as secretary to John Knox. Mr. Goodman was little more than a year at Ayr when he was translated to St. Andrews.¹

¹ In the *Burgh Accounts* at this time there is an item regarding Mr. Goodman:

After his departure eight years passed before there was a settled ministry at Ayr. Owing to the shortage of qualified ministers the services in many of the churches were conducted by laymen called readers. Of such was the above-mentioned Richard Bannatyne. At last, in 1568, came James Dalrymple to a charge the emoluments of which were anything but lucrative. To begin with the actual stipend was £100 Scots but in 1573 this was increased to £149 6s. 8d. because of his appointment by the Crown to the additional charge at Alloway. It is true there were the endowments of the monastic houses which vested in the provost and magistrates but these were largely used in connexion with the hospital, payment to a reader at Alloway, session clerk, precentor and church officer. Thus there was little left for the minister of the parish. To this meagre stipend the town added in 1576 £39 10s. for one and a half year's stipend, and each year until his death £26 5s. 8d.

Of the ministry of Dalrymple at Ayr we know nothing. In 1580 he died leaving a widow and several children. He was succeeded by John Porterfield who applied for the additional living at Stewarton on the grounds of the inadequacy of stipend, but this was disallowed. Plurality of livings was at the time common and Porterfield had already held the charge at Kilmaronoch in Dunbartonshire and also that at Ardrossan. In 1571 Porterfield was appointed titular Archbishop of Glasgow, but he held that exalted and somewhat spurious position for one year only. In the records of the burgh he is styled as 'Chaplain of the Rude Altar' presumably because he received as part of his stipend the revenue belonging to that altar.¹

There is a strange inconsistency in the ministry of Porterfield. It was largely due to his influence that the town adopted certain measures for suppressing unseemly behaviour on the Sabbath, yet at the close of the afternoon service the minister was in the habit of joining his parishioners at the bow-butts in the Burrowfield!

From Kirkcudbright there came Mr. John Welch in 1600

¹ For black clothes to the minister, £4 17s.; for a canvas gown to him, £1 16s.; for shirts, £3; for black silk buttons for his coat, 5s.; for bread and wine for the communion, £2 14s. 8d.

¹ In 1613 the town paid 32s. 8d. towards 'the annuallis of the auld minister's hous John Porterfield in the Sangait waist'. Also 'part payment of a mare promised him to transport his gear to Ayr £23 13s. 4d.' From time to time other items ranging from £10 to £40 were paid him by the town's treasurer.

as 'helper and aid' to Mr. Porterfield. In 1604 Welch succeeded to the charge. When he came to the town with his wife, who was Elizabeth, the younger daughter of John Knox, and his family, no rented house could be found for him.¹ Later Welch came to live in a house in the High Street, behind which was a garden, the scene of much of the prayer-life of the man. Welch began an evangelising work, which at the time was sorely needed in the town. Apart from the rude and rough behaviour of the inhabitants generally, there was much strife amongst the county families, waged by their respective servants whenever they chanced to meet. When Welch found any of these feuds in progress he would rush into the fray and separate the combatants himself, carrying no weapon but wearing a helmet so as to protect his head from blows. Then he would bring the contending parties together at a table which he had brought out to the street, on which food was placed. He would then offer prayer and bring about reconciliation by making them eat a common meal. The strange proceedings were concluded with the singing of a psalm.

In 1596 King James had begun to encroach on the liberties of the Scottish church and the clergy were roused to indignation. When minister at Kirkcudbright Welch had preached from the pulpit of the High Kirk in Edinburgh a sermon directed at the king. In consequence of this he was outlawed but was later indulged. When he came to Ayr his continued fearless attitude towards the arbitrary proceedings of the king led to his banishment to France on 7th November 1606. In 1622 his health having greatly failed he was permitted to return to England but not to Scotland. He died in London in March of that year and was buried in the churchyard of St. Botolph, Bishopsgate.

¹ In 1601 the town's treasurer paid 'to Baillie George Masoun for mail of his bakhouse occupied by the minister Mr. John Welche for the Whit. term, £13 6s. 8d.' This, however, was only a temporary shelter as we find later a payment made by the town to George Lockhart of Glenyards for the mail of his house in Ayr for the same purpose for Mart. 1601 and Whit. 1602, £33 6s. 8d. His stipend was £266 13s. 4d. While imprisoned at Blackness this stipend was paid to his wife. Part of the stipend was tiend comprising so many bolls of meal and malt, and in the minister's absence, the tiend stipend was paid each year to his great friend Hew Kennedy. When sentence of banishment was passed on him we find in the town's accounts: 'To Mr. John Welsche, the town's late minister, in France, £200.' These items are of interest as showing the town's great regard and affection for their minister. But at best these were lean years for the ministry at Ayr.

It was during the ministry of Welch that an extraordinary wave of religious revival swept over the community, occasioned by a threatened visitation of the plague. It was at this time (1602) that the practice was begun of the town's minister having prayer with the Council before the election of magistrates, a practice which continues to the present day. In 1606, and prior to Welch's banishment, plague did actually break out and extraordinary scenes were witnessed when public prayer and confession of sins became the order of the day.

For three years after Welch's banishment there was no minister at Ayr until George Dunbar came from Cumnock. By this time Episcopacy had laid its hand upon the Scottish Church and Dunbar was inducted after the form prescribed by the bishops. He offended the Privy Council by his praying for the exiled John Welch and was placed in ward at Dumbarton. His successor was William Birnie, who had been minister at Lanark and was also a friend of John Welch. He was apparently a moderate in his views, as the king in 1612 appointed him Dean of the Chapel Royal at Stirling. His ministry was uneventful and he died in 1619.

Although a second charge had been founded at Ayr as far back as 1567 the position had never so far been filled. Now to this second charge Mr. Dunbar was appointed on his release from confinement in 1613. On the death of his colleague, Mr. Birnie, Dunbar was appointed to the first charge. He became more bold than ever in his defiance of Episcopal interference with the liberties of the Church and the Court of High Commission took proceedings against him. In 1622 he was deprived of his charge and again placed in ward, this time at Dumfries. Greatly daring, he broke from his confinement and returned to Ayr where he continued to preach. Ignoring a summons to return to his ward at Dumfries he was in September 1625 banished to Ireland, now an old and a poor man with a large family. He took farewell of his kirk-session in April of that year.

The Archbishop of Glasgow nominated to the charge at Ayr a Mr. Thomas Foster, but the kirk-session and the people generally refused to accept him. The fact of his having been nominated by the ecclesiastical powers of the time seemed to place a financial obligation upon the town's treasury. In the *Burgh Accounts* for 1623/24 a payment of £426 13s. 4d. Scots is made

to him 'who should have been minister here, and had got his presentation to that effect at the direction of my Lord Archbishop of Glasgow for his right thereof'.

A call was then given to William Annand, minister at Falkirk, who was in sympathy with the Episcopate. In September 1624 a payment was made out of public funds 'to John Osbourne, younger, for riding twice to Falkirk anent bringing Mr. William Annand, minister, to Ayr'. There would appear to have been associated with him a Mr. Andrew Millar who is referred to in the session records of 9th June 1628 as 'Mr. Andrew Millar his colleague minister'. Of this Andrew Millar we have, however, no record. He may possibly have been only a reader. The introducing of ritualistic practices by Mr. Annand was his ultimate undoing. A distinguished visitor to Ayr, Sir William Brereton, heard complaints against him 'because he doth so violently press the ceremonies, especially in kneeling at the communion; whereupon upon Easter day last, as soon as he went to the Communion Table, the people all left the church and departed, and not one of them stayed, only the pastor alone'. The climax was reached in 1637 when he attempted to introduce Laud's Liturgy into the service of the church. After having defended its use before the Synod of Glasgow he received a rough handling in the street and at length mounting his horse returned to Ayr where the people resolved 'never more to receive him within their pulpit'. He ultimately left the parish and found sanctuary in Edinburgh. The Liturgy of Laud was the occasion of the signing of the National Covenant in Greyfriars Churchyard, Edinburgh, on 28th February 1638. Annand tried to retract and actually put his signature to the Covenant but he was ultimately unanimously deposed by the General Assembly of the Church. The National Covenant bears the signatures of Robert Blair, William Fergushill, William Adair, and William Annand, all styled 'Ministers of Ayr'.

It was at this time that the stern discipline exercised by the kirk would seem to reach its peak. It was Israel's iron age. In the session records of the time we read of offenders, some indeed on trifling offence, being punished by 'incarceration in the Tolbooth', standing at the cross 'with the spur in the mouth', 'put into the iron chair with a paper on his head', 'put in the

stocks for a great space', 'put in the iron belt', 'banishment from the town'. A formidable variety of punishments indeed to be given by the kirk.

From the Monkton and Prestwick session records of this time it is clear that Newton was in the parish of Prestwick and consequently those who lived on the Newton side of the river and had been worshipping in the church at Ayr, were forbidden to forsake their own church at Prestwick as they were 'parocheners of Prestick'. Neither sacraments nor burials nor marriages were to be had other than at their own church, which was the kirk of Prestwick. A similar injunction was given to those who while living on the Newton side were within the parish of St. Quivox and should attend that church.

Mr. Annand was succeeded at Ayr by Mr. Robert Blair in 1639. Like Mr. Goodman he remained for only a year when he also received a call to St. Andrews. Both charges at Ayr were now vacant and without delay Mr. John Fergushill was translated from Ochiltree to the first charge. He was a native of Ayr, his father being David Fergushill of Cunningpark, who had for several terms been provost of the burgh. At the commencement of his ministry Mr. Fergushill had 'the help and supply of Mr. William Adair, brother of Sir Robert, laird of Kinhilt, and a former officer in the army'. He was appointed to the second charge but when Mr. Fergushill died in 1644 he succeeded him in the first charge. Mr. Adair's ministry was long and eventful. These were troublous days for the Church of Scotland which regarded Episcopacy with suspicion: they were days which included 'the killing times'. The church was in the field and militant; and the town of Ayr with her minister was in the forefront of the strife. For four years Adair had been labouring alone and considerable difficulty had been experienced in procuring a colleague because of the light in which Adair, 'protector' that he was, had come to be regarded. He was one of those ministers who had been present at Mauchline Moor and had been charged before the Committee of Estates as 'traitors'. He was also present with the Scottish forces at the battle of Dunbar. Two years later Cromwell had his citadel built at Ayr within which was included Adair's kirk, the old pre-Reformation Church of St. John the Baptist, now used by the English soldiers as an armoury. A temporary

place of worship for the congregation was found in the Grammar School of that time and this continued as the place of worship until the present church was built in 1654. Towards the cost of the church the sum of 1,000 merks (£600) was paid out of Commonwealth funds, and the site on which the church was built was that of the Greyfriars Monastery. It is of interest that the twelfth century Church of St. John remained sufficiently intact, after the Cromwellian troops had gone, to serve once more as a place of worship from 1687 till 1689. Adair had seen the citadel built, abandoned and dismantled. Nor would he have any regrets when he recalled the occasion on which several of the soldiers invaded a kirk-session meeting at which he was moderating and rightly recorded his protest against such an encroachment.

These were times when the church in Scotland kept a watchful eye on witchcraft, and in spite of what is alleged by some, there is no evidence that Adair was any more watchful than others. One Janet Smylie had been imprisoned for witchcraft but had died in prison. Naturally the town consulted with Adair as minister regarding the disposal of the body. His advice, which was acted upon, was that the body be drawn on a sledge to the foot of the gallows and burned. That is the farthest the minister ever went in the matter of burning of witches.

In 1655 a colleague was at last found in William Eccles who was in the Stranraer Presbytery. He was son of John Eccles of Kildonan, a man of influence in the shire, whose name figures in national affairs. In January of the following year Mr. Eccles was 'ordained and admitted to the ministry in this place'.

By 1662 Episcopacy was once again imposed on the Scottish Church and the king claimed supremacy in matters ecclesiastical as well as civil. To bring about this change a ruthless hand was employed. Mr. Eccles was amongst those ministers who refused to be reordained according to the requirements of Episcopacy and was accordingly deprived of his living. Such was the esteem in which he was held by the townspeople that the magistrates desired him to comply with the Archbishop's requirements and remain with them. To Eccles, however, it was a matter of principle and he continued under the sentence of deprivation until 1672, when he was granted indulgence

and was appointed to the second charge of Paisley Abbey. In the following year he was fined by the Privy Council for not observing the anniversary of the restoration of the monarchy. Persisting in his attitude, his indulgence was withdrawn and he became one of the 'outed' ministers of the church. Mr. Adair likewise refused to conform and while he was allowed to remain in his ministry at Ayr he was forbidden to preach outside the bounds of his parish. The excitement in the town at this time was intense and all civil authority in conflict with the popular mind was defied. The Market Cross and the Tolbooth figured in many an angry scene.

Mr. Eccles was succeeded by Mr. George White who was of the Episcopal persuasion. The magistrates, who were largely the puppets of the state, were now the patrons and had subscribed to the Privy Council's declaration against covenants and the like. They were an unpopular body and Mr. White's coming was largely ignored by the people; 'the curate' was just not wanted. Seldom do we find both Mr. Adair and Mr. White present at kirk-session meetings, and the attendance of elders was reduced to a minimum.

For some time Mr. Adair had, as we have seen, been suspect and in 1668 he had been for a time suspended from the ministry because of his leanings towards the men of the Covenant; on a petition from the town council to the Archbishop of Glasgow he was reinstated on the grounds of his 'peaceable deportment during his silence'. His reinstatement by the Archbishop might seem as if he had declined from his former zeal, but events were to show that he was still Presbyterian at heart.

By 1672 measures were harsh and those who supported the Covenant were imprisoned. Tolbooths and prisons were full and amongst those in the Tolbooth in Ayr was Alexander Peden 'the Prophet'. From time to time money was given out of kirk-session funds for his sustenance while in prison. Everywhere the people continued to neglect the church and the ministrations of 'the curates' as they were called, and conventicles became more and more common. Ayr shared fully in the prevailing spirit. To enforce the will of the Privy Council the 'Highland Host' were sent throughout the west and some of these troops were quartered at Cunning Park, which at that time belonged to the kirk-session. Conventicles were every-

where suppressed and the men of the Covenant were hunted, harried and shot at. These days were called 'the killing times'.

During this period Mr. Adair was moderating at his kirk-session meetings—when these were held. At this time the neighbouring parish of Alloway, for which the ministers at Ayr were responsible, was, together with other Ayrshire parishes, made a prebend of the Chapel Royal at Stirling, and in 1677 Mr. Adair and Mr. White were presented by Charles II to the prebends of Ayr and Alloway. The actual annexation of Alloway to Ayr as an ecclesiastical charge took place in 1690. In 1679 Mr. White was transferred to Maryculter, and another colleague was sought for. A move was made to get Mr. Eccles, who himself was willing to come, but the Privy Council refused permission. In May 1682 another Episcopal nominee was found in the person of William Walterstone.

What was known as the Test Oath had been imposed upon all in offices of trust calling for recognition of the king's authority over the affairs of the church. Mr. Adair refused to take the oath and was once again suspended. Continuing in his refusal he was deposed from his ministry on 11th December 1682, and died two years later in his seventieth year. He is buried under the shadow of the church which he had built. For his many services to the community he was twice made an honorary burgess of the town.

The Test Act met with general disapproval in Scotland, particularly in the west, and the people became the more hostile to it when, as was the case at Ayr, on the ports of the town were fixed the stricken heads of covenanters. The heritors of Kyle, Cuninghame and Carrick were summoned before a court that was held in the church between 29th September and 27th October 1684. Some of them were confined in 'the body of the kirk' as it is styled in the records; others were placed in 'the aisle', while the remainder were assembled in the Tolbooth. The Test Oath was given them and those who were willing to accept it were dismissed, while those who refused it were sent to different places of imprisonment. Realising the futility of its arbitrary proceedings the court dismissed them on exorbitant bail.

In the existing circumstances it is not to be wondered at that the people neglected public worship and had small regard for

the observance of the Sabbath. The town council were alive to the need for an improvement in respect of these matters. Consequently it was decided in 1686 that the magistrates and council should attend church in a body. To begin with they assembled at the town buildings and later at the Fish Cross, and thence they proceeded to divine service. This practice continued until well into the nineteenth century when it was abandoned. A vestige of the old-time custom, however, still remains, when at the annual 'kirking of the council', the provost, magistrates and council, accompanied by the town officers, proceed to church from the Town Hall.

After Mr. Adair's deposition, Mr. Alexander Gregory, who had been minister at St. Quivox, was transferred to Ayr in 1683 as minister of the first charge, both ministers being now of Episcopal persuasion. At Ayr, as elsewhere, church matters were in a sorry state and the people cold-shouldered 'the curates' and called for the return of their 'outed' ministers, whom they regarded as their lawful pastors. In 1687 King James was forced to grant an Indulgence which allowed these deposed ministers to return to their parishes, though as yet not to their churches. At Ayr the old and unused Church of St. John was acquired as a place of worship called 'ye meeting house'. Hither the great bulk of the people resorted for worship; a new kirk-session was formed, and Mr. Eccles was brought back as minister of the flock. For a year and a half there thus functioned at Ayr two separate ministries. In the present Old Church there were the two Episcopal clergymen, Gregory and Walterstone, and in 'ye meeting house' there was Mr. Eccles. The inevitable at length happened.

The Revolution of 1688 marked the defeat of the tyranny of kings and councils of state and brought back Presbyterianism as the settled church government of the Scottish Kirk. Ayr was not slow to take action. On January 14th 1689 the kirk-session record reads: 'no session this day, nor sermon, nor collection last Sabbath, both the ministers being discharged to preach by ane armed party of hillmen upon their perill'. Thus 'the rabbling of the curates' at Ayr had begun and that is the last mention of Gregory and Walterstone so far as their ministry here is concerned. In May of the same year Mr. Eccles, the kirk-session and his congregation left 'ye meeting house' and

established themselves once again in their rightful spiritual home in the Parish Church.

In 1692 Mr. Eccles was still ministering to the parish alone and some time was yet to elapse before a colleague was found for him. At last in January 1694 Mr. Patrick Liston was 'through diligence and the Lord's blessing' found willing to come. The magistrates and council, no longer elected at the royal pleasure, together with the kirk-session and parishioners prosecuted the call before the Presbytery and a settlement was duly made. In the meantime the first charge had become vacant by the death of Mr. Eccles and a colleague had to be found for Mr. Liston. At length a call was given to Mr. John Hunter, probationer, who was inducted to the second charge in February 1696.

Our narrative thus far has covered the periods of the Reformation, the Covenant, the Commonwealth and the Revolution settlement. They were days which saw radical changes and ruthless ways. Towards the close of the seventeenth century we enter upon more tranquil times. No longer was there any call for men like Welch, Adair and Eccles. Thus it is that the succeeding ministers of Ayr, while faithful in the discharge of their duties, were less spectacular in their life and ministry, and we have but to record them in the course of our narrative. As we have seen, one of the characteristics of the post-Reformation church was the exercise of a strict discipline over the behaviour of the people. One is glad to find that the iron age of Israel was past and that no longer did an excess of zeal in this respect characterise the Scottish church. There was still discipline but within moderation. After the Revolution Settlement the people were less disposed to submit to ecclesiastical coercion in the observance of the Sabbath. In an endeavour to prevent them promenading the streets and fields on the Sabbath evenings the kirk-session in 1698 began evening services.

In February 1700 there was no meeting of kirk-session as Mr. Hunter was attending the General Assembly and Mr. Liston was taken ill. By 10th June he had died and Mr. Hunter was appointed to the first charge. A colleague was found for him in Mr. Ebenezer Veitch, who underwent his trials by the Presbytery and was inducted to the second charge on 17th May

1703. Three years later, in the month of December, Mr. Veitch died in Edinburgh when attending the General Assembly and was buried in the Greyfriars Churchyard. During his ministry a great service of thanksgiving was held in the church at Ayr, as elsewhere, on the occasion of the victories of Marlborough at Blenheim and Ramillies. Gibraltar also had been captured. Again, one hundred years later when the boom of the guns at Trafalgar had ceased, a great service of thanksgiving was held in Mr. Auld's day for the famous victory of Nelson. And so throughout this long period under review there were times at which the church rose to the occasion.

A successor to Mr. Veitch was found in Mr. Andrew Fullarton, minister at Falkirk. He came to Ayr in 1708 but his ministry was a short one. In January 1712 a successor was sought for but it was not until 1716 that Mr. John McDermid, minister at Dalmellington, was 'transported' by the General Assembly to the charge at Ayr. The Presbytery then fixed the date of his induction and on the 26th June 'after prayer and reading the former minutes, Mr. McDermid having been admitted minister of this place was received by the magistrates and members of session in face of the congregation in suitable and becoming manner'.

A thorny matter had at this time to be dealt with. The magistrates and town council had assumed the right to dispose as they considered best of the mortification made by Queen Mary in 1567 of the revenues, lands, etc., belonging to the monasteries of the Grey Friars and the Black Friars at Ayr. The session claimed that they had a joint right with the town council in the intrusions and a lengthy dispute took place; in so far as stipend was involved the Presbytery agreed with the kirk-session, but the town proved their case and continued to dispose of the revenues and properties. As late as 1927 the town out of the Queen Mary mortification paid part of the stipend to the minister of the second charge. Thus the town council acquired the right to be consulted on the appointment of a minister. Accordingly we find that when Mr. McDermid died in 1745 it was decided to do nothing regarding the filling of the vacancy until after the election of the magistrates. In more recent times the town council has taken no part whatever in the election of the ministers of the town.

During these many years Mr. Hunter had been minister of the first charge and saw the coming of Mr. William Dalrymple as minister of the second charge in succession to Mr. McDermid in July 1746. Mr. Dalrymple, like his predecessor, was a native of Ayr. Mr. Hunter was minister at Ayr for sixty years and when he died in 1756, he was father of the Church of Scotland. Although long, his ministry was largely uneventful. He came into unenviable prominence during the General Assembly of 1727 when, in the course of a speech, he said 'if one should call his Majesty King George a rogue and a villain'. Although he was speaking hypothetically such words were an offence to the High Commissioner who rose and stopped him. Mr. Hunter apologised but the Assembly caused him to be rebuked from the chair by the Moderator.

The hours of divine service had undergone many changes. There used to be daily services morning and evening, but this was discontinued about 1650. These services began at seven o'clock in the morning and lasted for about two hours. The ordinary Sunday service began at eight o'clock. The first bell rang at six to rouse the people from their slumbers; then just before eight o'clock the second bell was rung summoning the people to church. The Sunday morning service lasted two and a half hours. Preparation for a Communion Sunday was the occasion for a service on the preceding Thursday and Saturday. The Monday following the Communion was a service of thanksgiving. The arrangements for a Communion were much as they are to-day; formerly both elders and deacons had their different duties to perform in what was then known as 'the order of the house'. During Mr. Hunter's time at a communion season in September 1698 the offerings of the people at the various services are of interest. From the session minute of the time we find the following:

COLLECTION FOR THE POOR

					Scots
on Thursday being Fast Day	-	-	-	-	£10 11 04
Saturday	-	-	-	-	16 19 02
Sabbath	-	-	-	-	52 15 08
Monday	-	-	-	-	16 15 08
Thursday and Sabbath after	-	-	-	-	13 04 00

From the total there was given to the poor £35 08s. ood. and

to the extraordinary poor (*i.e.* specific cases) various amounts varying from £00 10s. 00d. to £04 16s. 00d.

For some time it had been the practice to consult the convenience of the town council in the matter of fixing a date for Communion. When a convenient date had been decided upon intimation was made from the pulpit. The dean of guild had some of the seats temporarily removed so as to make room for the table at which the Communion was received by the people. The elders were instructed to get their rolls ready and 'the order of the house' was arranged, which included collecting the tokens, serving the bread and wine, 'to take care of the little house', distribute tokens in the session loft to strangers, and to keep the doors.

On the death of Mr. Hunter on 12th February 1756, Mr. Dalrymple became minister of the first charge. In 1779 the University of St. Andrews conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Divinity. He was Moderator of the General Assembly in 1781. He married Susannah, a daughter of his late colleague, Mr. Hunter. It was Dalrymple who baptised Robert Burns, by whom he was held in great esteem. The poet immortalised him as 'Dalrymple mild' in the poem, 'The Kirk's Alarm'.¹

The Parish Church was no longer the only church in the parish. The first Secession had taken place and there came into being the Burgher and Antiburgher Churches. In 1755 an Antiburgher congregation was formed in Ayr. Their church was built in King Street in 1770 and the first minister, Mr. John Clarkson, was appointed two years later. This church at first was of the Associate Synod but ultimately became a church of the Original Secession body. The church in which this congregation worshipped after 1900 was situated at Craigie Road and has lately become the Civic Theatre.

In 1797 a Burgher congregation was formed and two years later a church was built in Wallace Street. Mr. William Shaw was appointed the first minister in 1801. From 1860 this con-

¹ It was during Dalrymple's incumbency that John Murdoch, 'schoolmaster in Air' was dismissed by the magistrates and council. Murdoch had been the friend and teacher of Burns. Upon his leaving the town he requested a certificate from the kirk-session, which was refused on the grounds that he had slandered the minister, which indeed was the cause of his dismissal by the town council. When the matter was being considered by the kirk-session, Dr. Dalrymple was moderating, but being himself involved in the dispute he left the chair and his place was taken by Mr. McGill.

gregation worshipped in what is now known as Darlington New Church in Main Street.

The Parish Church continued to give a lead in all that was for the welfare of the community. In November 1756 we find the kirk-session conferring with the magistrates regarding a Poor House, and in its foundation the church played a leading part. The kirk-session agreed to pay yearly one hundred pounds sterling towards its support. There were thirty-three directors of whom eight were chosen from the kirk-session.

Mr. James Dick was presented by the magistrates and town council to the vacancy in the second charge, whereupon the kirk-session objected to this high-handed action, and claimed the joint right of patronage. The matter was taken to the Presbytery and a prolonged controversy followed which ended in the Presbytery upholding the claim of the kirk-session. Mr. Dick was inducted in 1757 but his ministry was less than a year, and he was succeeded in 1758 by Mr. Robert Ferguson whose ministry at Ayr was under two years. In 1761 Mr. William McGill was appointed to the second charge.

As we have already seen, since the beginning of the seventeenth century Newton was within the ecclesiastical parish of Monkton and Prestwick, and the people of Newton were expected to worship in the Monkton Kirk. This continued until 1777 when a chapel of ease was erected by the Newton Freemen at Newton-on-Ayr and was raised to full status three years later as a separate parish. Mr. William Peebles was called as its first minister in 1778.

At this time the controversy was at its height between the 'Evangelicals' and the 'Moderates' in the Church and both of the ministers at Ayr were regarded as belonging to the 'Moderates' or 'New Lights' as they were called. Mr. McGill, who had been writing and publishing treatises on various theological themes and had received the Doctorate of Divinity, became strongly suspect. At length the church became alarmed because of some of his views, particularly on the Atonement. The whole matter was given wide publicity and strong action was taken by the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr—a fact which caused Burns to write his poem 'The Kirk's Alarm'. Dr. Dalrymple and the entire session upheld Dr. McGill, who had married a niece of his colleague, and who in the end made such explana-

tions and retractions as were deemed sufficient. Mr. Kirkwood Hewat, quoting Chambers as his authority, speaks of Dr. McGill as an eccentric: 'he never smiled but often set the table in a roar by his quaint remarks. He was inflexibly regular in the distribution of his time, studying so much every day, and taking a walk at the same hour in all kinds of weather. He played at golf a whole twelvemonth without the omission of a single weekday except the three in which there are religious services at the time of the communion.' Dr. Dalrymple died on 28th January 1814 in the 91st year of his age, and the 68th of his ministry. He resided for some time at Mount Charles. The ministries of Hunter, Dalrymple and McGill were remarkable in point of time. Respectively they were 58, 68 and 46 years, making a total of 172 years, which must surely be a record in the history of the church. When Napoleon was contemplating an invasion of Scotland, Dalrymple, when addressing a body of volunteers, spoke words remarkably Churchillian in character: 'In the event of an enemy landing on our shores, the young men will be found to go forth with bayonets of iron and muskets of wood, and the young women shall go forth to animate them.'

In 1800 Mr. Robert Auld came as assistant and successor to Dr. McGill and on the death of the latter on 30th March 1807 he became minister of the second charge.

Towards the close of the period dealt with in this chapter there falls to be recorded the early days of churches of other denominations in the town of Ayr. The first attempt to form an Episcopal congregation was in 1743. The first of these services was held in the house of Mr. David Kennedy, uncle of Sir John Kennedy of Culzean. The officiating minister was Mr. Robert Forbes who was then the Episcopal minister at Leith. In January of the following year another such service was held in the house of Convener Anderson 'in Lady Dunduff's Close'. In May of the same year another Episcopal clergyman arrived in the town in place of Mr. Forbes, the Reverend James Falconer. Such services, however, were of a sporadic nature and we hear nothing more of them until 1776. The silent years were those in which stringent laws were in force relating to the Presbyterian form of worship of the Church of Scotland as the Established Church. By 1776 Mr. William Fitzsimmons was

the officiating minister and others followed until the incumbancy was settled and regularised in 1832. 'The Chapel' in which the congregation now met was in the upper floor of a building originally used as a granary.

A church of the Moravian Order was begun in Ayr in 1765 by an Irishman, Mr. John Caldwell, and by 1778 a congregation was officially constituted. Two years later this congregation was worshipping in their own church in Mill Street. The church with its little burial ground may still be seen. There was also a minister's house and a school. The Methodist body had in 1790 a temporary place of worship in what was then known as Carrick Vennel. Later they had their own church. Then in 1766 an Antiburgher congregation numbering ten persons was formed. Their church was built in 1770 and the first minister was the Reverend John Clarkson who was ordained in 1772. By 1799 old wounds were beginning to heal and in that year a United Burgher congregation built a place of worship in the town.

Towards the close of the eighteenth century the 'moderates' were in power in the Church of Scotland, and soon we have the rise of an opposing section in the church known as the 'Evangelicals'. This famous controversy, however, which had its repercussions in church life in Ayr, takes us beyond our period.

Books and Records consulted:

Ayr Burgh Records

Pryde, *Ayr Burgh Accounts* (1534-1624)

Kirk-Session Records

Rev. Jas. Young, *John Welch*

Pagan, *Annals of Ayr*

Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanæ

Mackenzie, *William Adair and his Kirk*

Murray Lyon, *Ayr in the olden times*

CHAPTER 9

THE CHURCHES AFTER 1800

JAMES J. FOWLER, M.A., AND REV. J. STRATHEARN McNAB, M.A.

Roman numerals refer to the List of Churches, p. 154

General reference for Church of Scotland: *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, vol. 3 (1920), vol. 8 (1950)

The following abbreviations are used in footnotes:

AKS: Ayr Parish *Kirk Session Minutes* (MS)NKS: Newton-upon-Ayr *Kirk Session Minutes* (MS)AFKS: Ayr and Wallacetown Free *Kirk Session Minutes* (MS)AFDC: Ayr and Wallacetown Free *Deacons' Court Minutes* (MS)Cox: *Practice and Procedure in the Church of Scotland* 1948FC: *Annals of the Free Church of Scotland 1843-1900*Small: *History of the Congregations of the United Presbyterian Church 1733-1900*. 1904Mackelvie: *Annals and Statistics of the United Presbyterian Church*. 1873Scott: *Annals of the Original Secession Church*. 1886Green: *Encyclopaedia of the Laws of Scotland*Howie: *A Historical Account of the Town of Ayr*. 1861Hutton: *A History of the Moravian Church*. 1909Ross: *History of Congregational Independency in Scotland*. 1900Swift: *Methodism in Scotland*. 1947Yuille: *A History of the Baptists in Scotland*. 1926AA: *Ayr Advertiser*AP: *Ayrshire Post*MM: *Minutes of Managers, etc.*, Morison Congregational Church (MS)OSA: *Statistical Account*NSA: *New Statistical Account*

INTRODUCTION

IN our survey of the Churches in Ayr from the beginning of the nineteenth century we have been presented with several problems which we must first of all consider. The possibility of assessing spiritual values, what to select from amongst such diverse material, the weight to be given to differing tradition and practice, the limits within which we must work, and the scope of our enquiry—these are questions to which an answer has to be given.

The period was one of rapid change and, while there is no doubt that there was progress in science, standards of measurement in religion are not easy to apply and the spiritual pulse of an age that is past is hard to take. All that can be done is to note certain external changes and perhaps to interpret hints of spiritual attitudes.

Reconciling the claims of many congregations and various denominations has been no easy matter. As, however, the great bulk of the church-going population has belonged during this period to one or other of the Presbyterian branches, as during most of it the Church of Scotland had a very intimate connexion with the Town Councils of Ayr and of Newton-upon-Ayr, and as the same Church, being recognised by law, impinged upon the life of the inhabitants at many points, it has seemed natural to base a large part of our survey and many of our generalisations on Presbyterian, and particularly pre-union, Church of Scotland practice.

In carrying out our intention certain factors beyond our control have influenced our treatment of the subject; the records available, their accessibility, the time at our disposal for consulting both them and knowledgeable individuals—all have helped to shape our course. On the other hand we have decided, save for a passing reference, to deal exclusively with what are generally recognised as churches, thus leaving out of our survey such bodies as the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A., the Salvation Army, the Brethren, the Wooden Kirk and similar missions, and the newer sects that appeared in Ayr in the twentieth century, though some of the older organisations have played a considerable part in the religious life of the community (xxix).

In the great national events and movements of our period the Ayr churches took their part, but there is no event of outstanding interest in itself. The century and a half that we deal with saw one major division and two large reunions: the Disruption of 1843¹ and the Unions of 1900² and 1929.³ Both

¹ Briefly the Disruption was due to the encroachment of the Court of Session on what was regarded as the spiritual sphere. As measures aimed at removing difficulties were declared invalid, one-third of the ministers saw no other way of obtaining spiritual independence than by giving up the connexion with the State, and renouncing their emoluments. With their followers they formed the Free Church of Scotland. See FC.

² Most of those who seceded from the Church of Scotland in 1733 and in 1761

reunions left dissenting minorities in Ayr, and all three happenings, curiously enough, affected in the main the Newton and Wallacetown side of the River Ayr.

THE PLANTING OF KIRKS

General Survey. The most obvious change in Ayr during our period is the multiplication of churches, due mainly to three causes: the great increase in population, church division, and the inflow of people, many of them not of Scottish race and not brought up in the Scottish religious tradition. The religious make-up of the population at the end of the eighteenth century can be estimated, but only roughly, owing to the shifting of the town's boundaries and insufficiency of data. The population of the area at present covered by the town would seem to have been about 7,000. Of these more than 6,500 belonged to the Church of Scotland, about 160 to the Antiburghers and about 70 to the Episcopalians, while Methodists, Moravians, Burghers, Cameronians and Roman Catholics were either a mere handful or no more than represented.

At the centre of Ayr there had stood for centuries its only church, but by 1800 Ayr, Newton and Wallacetown had six organised congregations and five church buildings proper—Ayr Parish (i), Newton-upon-Ayr Parish (ii), both with their churches where they stand to-day; Moravians in Mill Street (xx), Antiburghers in George Street (vii), Burghers in Wallace Street (viii), and the Methodists meeting probably somewhere in Carrick Street (xxi).

During the next fifty years there were added: two Church of Scotland Churches (i, iii) (one an additional building only), one each of Independent (or Congregational) (xxiii), Methodists (xxi), Relief (ix), Roman Catholic (xxii), Reformed Presbyterian (or Cameronian) (xiv), Episcopal (xix), and two Free Churches (xi-xii). Baptists and members of the Evangelical Union now appeared, but had no church buildings (xxvi, xxiv).

formed in 1847 the United Presbyterian Church, which in 1900 united with the Free Church of Scotland (see n. 1 *ut supra*). A minority of the Free Church did not enter the Union and retained the title (see p. 131, n. 2).

³ The Church of Scotland and the United Free Church of Scotland united in 1929 under the former title. A minority of the U.F. Church objected to any form of state connexion and, remaining outside the Union, were known as the U.F. Church (Continuing).

By the end of 1900 there were further additions: three to the Church of Scotland (iv, v, vi), two to each of the Free (xiii, xv) and Baptist Churches (xxvii, xxviii). A new United Presbyterian (x) and another Congregational body had come into being (xxv), but had no church, while a Baptist Church and the Independents had ceased to exist. The revival of 1859-60 brought the Brethren, whose first converts were baptised on Newton shore; and somewhat later the Salvation Army and a Hebrew congregation appeared. There were now twenty-five churches.

The first half of the twentieth century saw four new churches built: United Free (for the U.P. congregation already formed), United Free (Continuing) (xvii), Church of Scotland (xviii), and an Original Secession one (for the Antiburgher congregation), which last ceased to be used as a church on the congregation being dissolved. The recently formed Congregational Church and the Free Church minority (xvi) took possession of churches vacated by their original congregations, and a Church of Scotland congregation had to give up its own building. The congregations of the Methodists and the Moravians ceased to exist, and their churches were put to other uses. As a result of all this there were now twenty-one churches.

To trace in greater detail this planting of the churches is to get a good idea of several aspects of the town's history and development. We shall follow this 'Church Extension' as far as possible in historical order, beginning with the parent stem.

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

Ayr Parish (i). The Church of Ayr, dating back to 1654, was found, by the beginning of our period to be too small to meet the needs of the large Church of Scotland population. There was already a pressing need, when the discontinuance of services at Alloway made it necessary to provide for worshippers from there, and it was to meet this that the New Church was built. In 1837 we are told, 'there is no want of church accommodation at present'; again, 'there is no lack of unoccupied seats in the New Church'¹; and Dr. Dykes at his jubilee recalled that, when he came to Ayr in 1854, the New Church was 'exceedingly empty'. In 1951 the First and Second Charges

¹ NSA

were united and only the 'Auld Kirk of Ayr (St. John the Baptist)' retained for use, the New Church being allocated to another congregation.

Newton-upon-Ayr Parish (ii). The Church of Newton-upon-Ayr, for long under the vigorous leadership of the Rev. William Peebles, had started as a chapel of ease in the united parish of Monkton and Prestwick, from which it was disjoined in 1779,¹ the present church in Main Street, now known as Newton Old, having been built two years previously. Throughout its history Newton has tended to belong to the evangelical side of the Church, and that from an early date; three years after the formation of the parish the Session were joining in protest against patronage; two years later they were again doing so, but with caution, for they did not want popular election of ministers either.² It is no wonder then that, when the Disruption comes, their successors almost all join the Free Church. The gap in the Session records—there was no meeting of Session between 3rd May and 5th October 1843—tells something of the church's plight. The minister, the Rev. James Stevenson, had preached a farewell sermon on 'Ichabod! the glory is departed', and the following Sunday, when some forty worshippers appeared, it looked as if the glory had departed. The congregation however soon revived to make the church the best-filled one in town—and no wonder with preachers like Caird and A. H. K. Boyd.

Wallacetown (iii). By the beginning of the nineteenth century Wallacetown in the parish of St. Quivox had become a considerable community of some 250 families. According to the parish minister, Mr. McQuhae, these consisted of miners, retired farmers, mechanics who were free of the laws of Ayr incorporated trades, West Highlanders and immigrants from Ireland. 'When it is considered', he remarks, 'that the inhabitants are a mixture of English, Irish and Highlanders, with the original feuars, who were natives of the county of Ayr, it will be found

¹ *NKS*, 22nd May 1780. A Chapel of Ease was under the minister and session of the Parish Church. It was usually built by subscription and had to provide stipend for its minister, who could not draw on any part of the teinds of the parish it was in. Its minister was not a member of Presbytery. See also *FC*, p. 2.

² In violation of the Act of Union of 1707, patronage was introduced into the Church of Scotland by Act of 1712. General Assemblies and the Church protested in vain, and the various secessions may be traced to the effects of this Act. It was repealed in 1874. Green; *FC*; *NKS*, 3rd Feb. 1783 and 24th Feb. 1785.

that there is as much peace and decency of behaviour among them as can well be expected.'¹ But the Parish Church of St. Quivox was three miles away and so, for the convenience of the people of Wallacetown, a chapel was built by subscription and opened in 1836. In the early years a certain proportion of the communicants were non-residents, 'who sought spiritual ministrations in Wallacetown rather than in the two parochial churches of the town of Ayr'.² The third minister was the Rev. William Grant who, elected in January and ordained in April 1843, left the Established Church at the Disruption. It is interesting to note that, after Mr. Grant's ordination, Dr. Auld, the minister of the first charge in Ayr, entered his dissent to the adding of Mr. Grant's name to the roll of the Presbytery, presumably because Mr. Grant was minister of a chapel of ease and not of a parish church,³ which it became only thirty-one years later.

Alloway (iv). Alloway had been a separate parish but, at the beginning of the nineteenth century it had already been united to Ayr for many years. Services were still being held there but very soon were stopped, the distance from Ayr being—according to the notions of the time—not too great for church attendance. Almost fifty years later services were resumed and a mission chapel was built, opposite the churchyard gate, in spite of protests from Burns clubs, who said the chapel would spoil the view of the Monument. The modern parish of Alloway was then disjoined from Ayr. In 1891, during the ministry of the Rev. Samuel Dill, who was Moderator of the General Assembly in 1912, the church was considerably enlarged.

St. James's (v). To meet the needs of a small community which had grown up in the north end of Newton parish, a chapel of ease was built in Prestwick Road. In 1904 a new parish, called St. James's, was created from this area.

St. Leonard's (vi). About 1886 the southern end of the town was being rapidly built up and it was felt there was need of a church for this area. At one time there had been, on the lands of Slaphouse, a chapel and a hospital of St. Leonard, of which there was then no trace.⁴ A new church was built, taking its

¹ *OSA* ² *AFKS*, Introductory Statement

³ *AA*, 20th Apr. 1843; see *FC*, p. 2 (Chapel Act 1834); Green (1927), vol. 3, para. 740

⁴ *OSA*

name from the ancient foundation, and the parish was disjoined in 1892. In 1911 the present beautiful chancel was added and a hall was built.

THE SECESSION CHURCHES

Let us now consider those churches which broke away from the Church of Scotland in the eighteenth century and which came together again with it in the twentieth.

Eighteenth century Dissent had expressed itself in the Church of the Seceders and in the Relief Church.¹ The Seceders did not long remain a unity but split first into the Burghers and Antiburghers,² and both these divided into Old Lights and New Lights.³ At the beginning of our period Ayr had both an Antiburgher and a Burgher Church.

Antiburgher (vii). The first Seceder Church in Ayr was the Antiburgher Church. From 1755 the Antiburghers in Ayr had been supplied with sermon, 'at which time it was difficult for them to obtain a piece of ground on which to erect a tent'. The members had originally been part of the Kilmaurs congregation and had had their first church on the site of what is still known as the Seceders' Graveyard, at the east end of King Street, but by the beginning of our period they were occupying the building in George Street at present used by the Morison Congregational Church.⁴ When a section of the Antiburgher Church united in 1820 with a section of the Burgher Church, and in 1852 when the majority of the United Original Secession Church united with the Free Church, the Ayr congregation

¹ Ebenezer Erskine championed the rights of the congregation against the Assembly in the matter of appointing ministers. He formed with others of like views the Associate Presbytery in 1733. Thomas Gillespie had refused to take part in the ordination of a minister presented to a church, but unacceptable to the congregation. With others he formed the Presbytery of Relief in 1761.

² All burgesses in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Perth had to take a certain oath, which was interpreted in different ways. The Burghers held it was lawful to take it, the Antiburghers that it was against their conscience to do so. In 1747 the Associate Synod split into these two parties.

³ The main difference between the Old Lights and the New Lights was in their attitude to Church and State. The Old Lights thought each had a duty towards the other and upheld 'the duty and warrantableness of civil rulers employing their authority in an active support of the interests of religion and the Kingdom of Christ, and in promoting reformation'. The New Lights denied that civil rulers as such had anything to do with religion. Their representatives later on were known as 'Voluntaries'. Scott, ch. iii, iv. The Burghers divided on the question in 1799, the Antiburghers in 1806.

⁴ Scott, p. 257 f; *OSA*, vol. xxi, Dr. McGill says the church was in Wallace Street. This must be a mistake; the Burgher one was there.

did not deviate from its course but continued as part of the Synod of Original Seceders. In 1901 they moved into a new church, built at the junction of Content Avenue and Craigie Road, and called it the 'Robertson Memorial' after their most outstanding pastor, the Rev. John Robertson. He was a man of wide interests, a large heart and unfailing energy who, on more than one occasion, received the thanks of his fellow-townsmen of all denominations for his pastoral and missionary work.¹ Rigid adherence to older customs and modes of thought—there was never any Sunday School, for example—did not appeal to the younger generation, and the congregation was dissolved several years ago. For a time the church buildings stood empty but are now used as a Civic Theatre and as a clinic.

Burgher (viii). The original Burgher Church is in Wallace Street and is occupied to-day by the Wallace Street E.U. Congregational Church. The Burghers in Ayr had been in the habit of attending the Burgher Church in Tarbolton, and in 1797 thirteen of them petitioned the Burgher Presbytery of Kilmarnock for sermon. They became a separate congregation and two years later they built their first church. In 1847 they became part of the United Presbyterian Church,² and thirteen years later they moved into a new church at the corner of Main Street and North Harbour Street, where they still worship. With a change of site came a change of name to Darlington Place, and as such they entered the United Free Church³ and finally the Church of Scotland.⁴ The Newton and Wallacetown districts being over-churched, an opportunity was taken in 1948 of uniting this congregation with Wallacetown South (xiii), Darlington being used as the place of worship and Wallacetown South as halls.

Relief (ix). The Church of Relief was not represented in Ayr till 1814, when a number of people found themselves dissatisfied with the doctrines and discipline to be had in the Old Church. 'The days of Welsh had been succeeded by those of

¹ Scott, p. 580

² In 1820 the Associate Synod (New Light Burghers) united with the majority of General Associate Synod (New Light Antiburghers) to form the United Secession Church, which, in 1847, united with the Relief Church to form the United Presbyterian Church

³ See p. 123, n. 2

⁴ See p. 124, n. 3

McGill. The preaching of the gospel had given place to a negative theology.¹ But they did not desire to go to the extremes of the Secession Churches over the water. So they took steps to have a Relief Church formed. We hear of them worshipping in the granary of the Fort Brewery, in the Theatre, in a hall in Dalblair Road, and sometimes in the Burgher and the Independent Churches. Having raised a sufficient sum—5% interest was paid on subscriptions of £5 and over—and in spite of some opposition from the Town Council they built in 1816 a church in Cathcart Street, which was attended by people from six or eight parishes.² They entered the unions of 1847, 1900 and 1929. In 1950 the church building became unsafe and in the following year was vacated. As we have already seen, on the union of the first and second charges of Ayr (i) the New Church was no longer required by the united charge and was generously placed at the disposal of Cathcart Street Church.

Trinity U.P. (x). Towards the close of the nineteenth century the United Presbyterian Church was eager to extend its influence in Ayr, and the Presbytery saw two possible openings—one in a working-class district to the north of the river, where there had recently been a large increase of population, and another, to which they gave preference, in the new residential district to the south, a choice which somewhat annoyed St. Andrew's Free Church, not only because the latter had already built in the district, but also because the closing stages in the negotiations for the union of the parent bodies had been reached. The new congregation, known as Trinity, started in a hall, built in 1898 at the junction of Midton Road and Carrick Park. It consisted of twenty-four members, most of them from Darlington Place and Cathcart Street Churches.³ Four years afterwards the church, built at the same spot, was opened for worship. Two of its former ministers have been Moderators of General Assembly—Dr. Alexander in the Presbyterian Church of England in 1934, and Dr. Forgan in the Church of Scotland in 1940.

Wallace Street U.P. (xxiv). The United Presbyterian Church (later the United Free Church) had again for a short time a

¹ Rev. G. Copland in *Jubilee Services in connection with Cathcart Street U.P. Church, Ayr, 12th Nov. 1865*, p. 1

² Mackelvie, p. 407

³ Small, pp. 332-3

congregation in Wallace Street—the Evangelical Union Church, whose story is told along with the other Congregational Churches (p. 139).

THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

The biggest secession suffered by the Church of Scotland was the Disruption.¹ The parish of Ayr, where Dr. Auld and Mr. Cuthill did not leave the Established Church, was very little affected, but in Newton and in Wallacetown the effects were serious.

Newton-on-Ayr Free (xi). The Rev. James Stevenson with seven of his eight elders and almost the whole of his congregation left to form the Free Church of Newton. Until their church in Main Street, a little to the north of the Parish Church, was ready in December 1843, they worshipped in the Independent Chapel in River Street. In 1863 a new church was built on the same site as the first one. This church was destined to be the scene of an extraordinary incident forty-two years later. Newton Free Church had been part of the United Free Church for four years, when the House of Lords gave the decision on property and funds of the Free Church which was to set all Scotland in a ferment.² As a result of this decision, the adherents in Ayr of the Free Church minority (i.e. those who did not enter the Union) (xvi)³ claimed what we now call Newton New and secured an interdict against the congregation worshipping there. So on a July Sunday morning in 1905 the U.F. congregation met outside the locked gates of their church and then left for their service in the Town Hall. The Free Church minority service was due to take place in the church at 12 noon. By half-past eleven a vast crowd had gathered around the gates and, with the arrival of the worshippers, became aggressive,

¹ See p. 123, n. 1

² The decision had the effect of making the minority (about 28 ministers and their followers, mainly in the Highlands), who did not enter the Union with the U.P. Church, the legal owners of all Free Church property and funds—there were about 1,100 congregational properties alone. In making this decision the House of Lords was going against the unanimous decision of the Scottish Courts. The minority argued, among other things, that an established church was a principle of the Free Church and that by uniting with a 'voluntary' body (see p. 128, n. 3), like the U.P. Church, the majority were no longer in the Free Church. Orr, *The Free Church of Scotland Appeals*, 1904. Parliament then passed an Act which set up a Commission to allocate the properties and funds between the majority and the minority. Green.

³ See p. 123, n. 2

hissing and knocking off the hats of those entering the church. By the time the Free Church service—attended by about 130 people—ended there were some four or five thousand people, not only the rascal multitude but many respectable-looking folks, assembled in Main Street. When the worshippers came out, rotten eggs and other missiles were thrown, ladies had their hats torn off, and before order could be restored the police had to draw their batons. An eye-witness described the incident as 'a saddening spectacle and a disgrace not only to those who took part in it, but to the whole town and our valued nineteenth century civilisation'.¹ Two years later the United Free congregation resumed possession of the building.² The church, however, seemed to be destined to be a scene of conflict—not this time in the physical sense, but of ideas—for it was from Newton that the leaders of the Continuing Church came in 1929 (xvii).³

Ayr and Wallacetown Free (xii). In Wallacetown the energetic Rev. William Grant left the Church of Scotland with five of his six elders, eight of his nine managers and the great majority of his congregation. They had hoped to retain their buildings but did so for only a few weeks after the Disruption, being interdicted the week before the preparation Sabbath for their communion, which had to be celebrated in Alexander's Woodyard. Services were held in various places in Wallacetown—inside and outside of Wallacetown Academy and in the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Meantime, at the request of individuals in the parish of Ayr and with the sanction of the Free Presbytery, evening services were conducted there in the open air. For the winter a wooden building was erected on the west side of Alloway Place, and this the congregation used as a place of worship till their church was opened in Sandgate in November 1845.⁴ Agreeably to the wishes of the Free Church authorities, the Deacons' Court and the congregation had decided to build on the south side of the river, but also resolved that the interests of Wallacetown should not suffer.⁵ It is worthy of note that 'Wallacetown' in the title of the congregation does not disappear till 1853, when the Wallacetown mission

¹ *AA*, 13th Apr., 22nd and 29th June, 6th July 1905

² *AA*, 30th May 1907

³ See p. 124, n. 3

⁴ *AFKS*, Introductory Statement

⁵ *AFDC*, 6th, 9th, 13th Feb. 1844

was about to become a full charge.¹ On the death of Mr. Grant in 1876 the pulpit was filled by the Rev. C. G. McCrie, a grand-nephew of the historian of the Reformation and the biographer of Knox and Melville. In 1907 Dr. McCrie was Moderator of the General Assembly of the United Free Church and, when a move on the part of the Church of Scotland for the re-union of all the Presbyterian Churches was not being regarded in a friendly fashion, it was he who had the courage and wisdom to assert that an approach from the Church of Scotland would meet with a cordial welcome. The congregation entered the Unions of 1900 and 1929.

Wallacetown Free (xiii). Newton-on-Ayr Free Church (xi) had carried on in the Wooden Kirk, Limond's Wynd (on the site of the Co-operative Halls), a mission which, becoming a full charge in 1854, took the title of Wallacetown Free Church. Six years later a church was built on the south side of John Street. Towards the end of 1889 there was a difference between the senior and the junior minister, and a large number of the office-bearers felt that the junior minister had been disrespectful to the senior one. Not satisfied with the Presbytery's action in the matter, nine elders and six deacons, followed by about 150 members, withdrew from the congregation, to become ultimately St. Andrew's Free Church (xv).² In spite of this large secession Wallacetown continued to exist and entered the unions of 1900 and 1929. In 1904, known as St. John's, it united with Martyrs' United Free Church (xiv) and received certain members from Wallace Street United Free Church (xxiv).³ In 1948, as Wallacetown South, it united with Darlington Place (viii), and the church in John Street became halls for the united congregation.

Martyrs' Free Church (xiv). A congregation came into the Free Church in Ayr in 1876, on the union of the majority of the Reformed Presbyterian Church with the Free Church, and took the title of Martyrs'. The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ayr—successors of those who did not accept the Revolution Settlement of 1690, and known variously as Cameronians, Society Men and Macmillanites—had been attached to the

¹ *AFKS*, 2nd Mar. 1853

² *AA*, 17th, 24th, 31st Oct., 28th Nov., 12th, 19th Dec. 1889

³ *Small*, p. 332; *Ross*, p. 241; *AA*, 22nd, 29th Sept. 1904; *AA*, 1st, 15th June 1905 (court action)

Kilmarnock Reformed Presbyterian congregation till 1830, though separate supply had been granted two years earlier. They had been worshipping in Content Street till 1832, when they moved into the church they had built at the junction of George Street and John Street.¹ The congregation (xvi) at present worshipping in this church must not be confused with the R.P. or Martyrs' one which, as we have seen, united with St. John's (xiii) in 1904 and is therefore part of Darlington New Church (viii). After 1904 the church was used as a meeting place for the Sunday School of Wallacetown United Free Church until May 1907, when it was handed over to the post-1900 Free Church.²

St. Andrew's Free Church (xv). The last addition to the undivided Free Church was the result of the Secession from Wallacetown Free Church (xiii). The secessionists, originally called Wallacetown Artillery Hall Congregation, because their place of worship prior to the building of the church was the Volunteer Hall in Newmarket Street, met first in Martyrs' Free Church and then in the River Street Halls, where the roll, after the first appeal, is given as 100 members and 54 adherents.³ The Free Church did not look with favour on the Secessionists and on one occasion some of the latter proposed withdrawing their petition for sanction as a new charge in connexion with the Free Church, but the proposal was defeated.⁴ The Secessionists, however, eventually secured recognition as a preaching station, on the condition that they would go to a part of the town then building—the Park Circus district. In 1891 the charge was sanctioned and became St. Andrew's, the name of Scotland's patron saint, also perpetuating the memory of the beloved and respected first minister of Wallacetown Free Church—the Rev. Andrew Rowand—who had died in the previous year. Just a week after his ordination in the following year, the Rev. William Hay, the first minister, called his office-bearers together and, rejecting the 'brick hall' idea, put forward by a representative of the Deacons' Court, said he

¹ Couper, *Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland*, 1925, pp. 9, 54

² See p. 131, n. 2

³ AA, 17th, 24th, 31st Oct., 28th Nov., 12th, 19th Dec. 1889

⁴ Minute Book of Secessionists from Wallacetown (MS), among St. Andrew's Deacons' Court records, Committee meeting of 25th Nov. 1890. Voting was 11 to 4 with one dissent recorded.

had come to build a church and would be disappointed if one was not built within eighteen months. To show that he was in earnest he then intimated that his subscription was £50. In little over the eighteen months the church in Park Circus was built and opened for worship. Early in 1896 the debt was cleared off and a start was made with the hall, the debt on which was cleared by 1903.¹

THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND—POST 1900

Ayr Free Church (Martyrs') (xvi). We turn now from the main stream of the Free Church. Not all the members of the Free Church were carried into the union of 1900, and among the first signs that the union was not to be acquiesced in by some in Ayr was an interruption during the sermon in Newton United Free Church in September 1904. In the course of March 1905 a Free Church congregation, which met in the Wallace Tower, was being formed. At first the intention seems to have been to claim, in virtue of the House of Lords decision of 1904, the buildings of the West U.F. Church (xii)² but, as we have just seen, the Free Church congregation claimed and occupied for about two years Newton U.F. Church (xi), when the Commissioners allocated to them the building of the former Martyrs' Free Church, which they still occupy (xiv).³

THE UNITED FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND (CONTINUING)

Ayr United Free (xvii). The great Union of 1929 did not fail to leave a minority, the United Free Church (Continuing), who did not see their way to enter the re-united Church of Scotland.⁴ In October 1929 a congregation was formed. It worshipped to begin with in the Y.M.C.A. Hall, High Street, and in 1930 moved to the church it had built in Kirkholm Avenue.⁵

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND—POST 1929

Lochside (xviii). The first effort of the re-united Church of Scotland at church extension was in the Lochside area, where a large corporation housing development had taken place.

¹ Notes by late Hugh Thomson, first Clerk to St. Andrew's Church Deacons' Court and latterly Clerk to Session. (Typescript in possession of his son, Mr. W. D. Thomson, Ayr.)

² AA, 15th Sept. 1904; 9th, 23rd Mar. 1905

³ See p. 131, n. 2

⁴ See p. 124, n. 3

⁵ AP, 4th Oct. 1929, 4th Apr., 8th Aug. 1930

The foundation stone of a hall was laid by Sir Charles Fergusson, Bart., in 1934. A church was then built and both church and halls were dedicated in 1940. Five years later Lochside was given full status.¹

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN SCOTLAND

Holy Trinity (xix). The two oldest streams of dissent were, of course, the Cameronians and the Episcopalians. We have already dealt with the Cameronians (xiv). Apart from the seventeenth century, when Episcopacy was for a time established by law, the earliest reference we have come across to Episcopalians in Ayr is in 1743.² From then on we have lists of clergy—probably occasional preachers—until, about a quarter of the way through the nineteenth century, we hear of a congregation being formed. At one period they used the Barrack hospital as a chapel. Then they leased premises in Content Street, vacated by the Reformed Presbyterians,³ and finally moved to Fullarton Street, where in 1838 they built a church, over which the present one was erected. Though those mainly responsible for the present congregation seem to have been families belonging to Ayr or its neighbourhood, we are told in 1837 that the congregation consisted of 400 souls, of whom the great majority were 'poor Irish'.⁴ With the growth of the congregation and as it attracted English residents, English educated Scots and others, its character has completely changed. It has engaged in mission work in Wallacetown (St. John Baptist in James Street) and in Maybole. The most outstanding clergyman and the real founder of the church was the Rev. W. S. Wilson, who became Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway.⁵

THE MORAVIAN UNION

Ayr Congregation (xx). The first of the churches which do not belong to the main stream of Scottish religion is the Mor-

¹ *Presbytery of Ayr Records*, 3rd Oct. 1934, 29th June 1945, per Rev. J. F. McCallum, clerk.

² A. J. Merson in an article 'Episcopacy in Ayr' (*AP*, 1927). Reprint in Carnegie Library, Ayr.

³ Howie, p. 53; McCarter, *Ayrshire and Directory of Ayr*, 1832, p. 160

⁴ A. J. Merson in an article 'Episcopacy in Ayr' (*AP*, 1927). Reprint in Carnegie Library, Ayr.

⁵ *Scottish Episcopal Year Book*, 1950-1, p. 190; *AA*, 8th Nov. 1900; *AP*, 27th Mar. 1932

avian Church. This body, going back through Herrnhut in Saxony to Bohemia and Moravia and the reformer Hus, had a great missionary record and an influence out of all proportion to its size.¹ One of its ideals was the uniting of all shades of Christians in a 'common devotion to a common Lord',² and therefore its members often remained members of the local parish church. It was through Ayrshire families settled in Ireland that Moravian influences came to Ayr in 1765. Using the Society in Ayr as a centre, societies were set up in Irvine and Tarbolton and preachers went out to over forty places as far apart as Annan and Edinburgh. Ayr was formed into a congregation—the only one in Scotland—whose church still stands in Mill Street, though the congregation ceased to exist in 1916 and the buildings were sold by the Union in 1945. The services were of the usual Moravian type and we read of 'Lovefeasts' and 'Footwashing' (last recorded in 1818). Relations with other churches in Ayr were cordial and the minister preached regularly in some of them on behalf of Moravian Missions.³

THE WESLEYAN METHODIST CHURCH

Ayr Methodist (xxi). Methodism was introduced into Ayr in 1785 by a soldier, who was a lay preacher. The first meeting place was a stable, probably the place the Methodists are said to have had in Carrick Street. Next year the first minister, Duncan McAllum, called by Wesley the 'North Star',⁴ was appointed and from then on, with three small breaks near the beginning, there was a regular succession of ministers till 1907.⁵ In 1813 a church—one of Valentine Ward's chapels—was built at the corner of Charlotte Street and Fort Street. Of the financial details of the building one fact has come down to us: between 1819 and 1835 Ayr drew £937 5s. for the reduction of capital debt from the fund for distressed chapels.⁶ Though Scotland as a whole proved a great drain on the finances of Methodism, Ayr flourished from time to time and, in the

¹ Hutton, pp. 200-2, etc.

² Hutton, p. 367

³ Hutton, pp. 317, 324, 442-3; reprint from *Kilmarnock Standard*, 27th June 1903; 4-page, Xmas 1900, *Moravian Church, Ayr* (printers, H. Henry Ltd.) in Ayr Carnegie Library

⁴ Swift, p. 38

⁵ Notes by Rev. Wesley F. Swift, Leeds. (Typescript in possession of Mr. J. J. Fowler, Ayr.)

⁶ Howie, pp. 20, 36; Swift, pp. 54, 73, 88, 90, 92

middle of the nineteenth century, it was said 'except Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Perth, and perhaps Ayr' the best thing to do with Methodism in Scotland was to put it up for auction!¹ In the eighties a decline set in which nothing could arrest and the congregation ceased to exist about 1909, the church being sold in 1916 as a workshop.² For most of the period there was an Ayr Circuit; at other times the pulpit was supplied from Glasgow.³

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

St. Margaret's (xxii). With the influx of new residents to Ayr the Roman Catholics had been increasing at a high rate, for we are told in 1790 there were none in Ayr and only two in Newton.⁴ In 1822 a mission was started, meeting in the Boar's Head Close in a hall belonging to the Incorporation of Hammermen. In 1826 *St. Margaret's Church* was built in John Street by the Rev. William Thomson, an Aberdeenshire man of long vision and sound judgment; for when he built this church, capable of accommodating 650 people, his congregation consisted of a mere handful of poor labourers, chiefly brought over from Ireland for the laying of the railway and to meet the fast-growing demands of industrialism. Originally the area covered by the Ayr Church extended to Stranraer, but Troon, Annbank, Maybole and Prestwick, for example, have now parishes of their own, and a new church is to be built at Dalmilling, where once stood the pre-Reformation convent of *St. Mary*.⁵

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES

Ayr Independent (xxiii). This was the oldest Congregational Church in Ayrshire and came into being as the result of the labours of a Mr. Penman in 1804. The first minister, Alexander McLean, was ordained four years later and remained for

¹ Swift, pp. 70 and 89. To cover deficiencies Ayr and Kilmarnock Circuit drew £1,471 between 1811 and 1835.

² Valuation Rolls for Burgh of Ayr, 1908-17

³ Swift, pp. 43, 65. In the Ayr Circuit one preacher had to cover Kilmarnock, Maybole and Girvan. Also Rev. W. F. Swift's Notes *ut supra*.

⁴ OSA

⁵ MS notes by Rev. Monsignor McHardy, m.c., who holds a receipt given by the Hammermen, dated 13th Aug. 1825. Howie, pp. 51-2. The late Mr. J. C. Dickson, Ayr, informed us that the Hammermen's halls were in the Close between 48 and 50 High Street. He did not know where the Boar's Head was, but a reference in *AA*, 23rd Jan. 1845, suggests the Close was between 48 and 50 High Street.

twenty-seven years.¹ On the site now occupied by Darlington Church Halls in River Street the church was built about a year after the formation of the congregation.² This church probably belonged to the 'later Independency' which had its origin, in the closing years of the eighteenth century, in the evangelistic movement associated with the brothers Haldane.³ Never very strong numerically the 'Tabernacle', as it was sometimes called, ceased to meet about 1878.¹ In the following year the heir of the last surviving trustee conveyed the property to the Congregational Union,⁴ who sold it to Darlington Place U.P. Church.²

Wallace Street Evangelical Union (xxiv). This church was constituted by the Rev. James Morison, Kilmarnock, in 1844 as part of the Evangelical Union.⁵ They met first of all in a dwelling-house, then in a hall and finally in the Corn Exchange. Subsequently they purchased in Wallace Street the Wallace-town U.P. Church buildings, which they still occupy. At the end of the nineteenth century, when the majority of the Evangelical Union Churches united with the majority of the Congregational Union Churches, Ayr stood aloof. The financial position was somewhat difficult and matters were not improved by the existence apparently of two factions, one of which left to form the Morison Congregational Church (xxv). At the beginning of 1898 the E.U. Church in Ayr decided unanimously to enter the United Presbyterian Church and, as Wallace Street, entered with that body the United Free Church.⁶ Proposals were made to unite the three United Free congregations in Wallacetown, but the majority of the Wallace Street congregation turned the proposal down and decided to revert to the position before 1898. They carried the property with them and were admitted to the Congregational Union.

¹ Ross, pp. 241, 246; McCarter, *Directory*, 1832, p. 158

² Title Deeds held by Darlington New Church

³ Ross, pp. 41-2

⁴ With a scheme for relieving necessitous Independent Churches the Congregational Union of Scotland came into being in September 1812. As from 1st January 1897 a new Congregational Union, consisting of the existing Congregational Union and of the Evangelical Union (see note 5 *ut infra*), was formed. There were remnants on both sides and, to add to the confusion, they each retained their titles. Ross.

⁵ Because of differing views on the doctrine of the Atonement the Rev. James Morison, Kilmarnock, and three other ministers left the United Secession Church (see p. 129, n. 2). Along with their congregations and with those expelled from the Congregational Union for holding similar views, they formed the Evangelical Union in May 1843 (see note 4 *ut supra*).
⁶ See p. 123, n. 2

The minority remained in the United Free Church and some, if not all, joined in the formation of Wallacetown U.F. Church.¹ The Wallace Street E.U. Church has the unique distinction of being the only church in Ayr that has had a woman minister.

Morison Congregational (xxv). This church, as we have just seen, took its origin in the Wallace Street E.U. Church (xxiv), when 45 members formed themselves into a church in the Volunteer Hall, Newmarket Street, in March 1897, and became members of the Congregational Union.² Three years later they agreed to purchase the Original Secession Church in George Street, which they occupy at present.³ Though with small financial resources and often burdened with debt, the church showed, under the leadership of the Rev. A. H. McConnachie, considerable energy in social and temperance work, and in 1911 opened in Limond's Wynd what was called the 'Institute'.⁴ At first the venture was very successful but by 1918 had become a drag on the church funds and was disposed of to the Kilmarnock Equitable Co-operative Society.⁵ In 1905 an abortive attempt at union with Wallace Street E.U. Church was made. Almost exactly seven years later there was 'a general talk on the isolated position of our church, some members of the Court being of the opinion that we should at the earliest possible opportunity become connected with the Congregational Union or even the Presbyterian denomination'. In the course of the next year a proposal to unite with Wallace Street was turned down by a large majority, and the whole matter came to an end when it was pointed out that, by the title deeds, the property would go to the Congregational Union, if the church joined another denomination.⁶

THE BAPTIST CHURCH

Ayr Baptist (1837) (xxvi). Closely allied to the Congregationalists in forms of church government are the Baptists. In

¹ Small, p. 332; Ross, p. 241; *AA*, 22nd, 29th Sept. 1904; *AA*, 1st, 15th June 1905 (court action); *AA*, 1st June 1905 gives date of acquisition of Wallace St. Church as 1866; Mrs. King, an original member of the Morison Congregational Church

² *MM*, 28th Mar. 1897; Small, p. 332 says 45 members, the *MM* give 46 names, two of which are identical

³ *MM*, 30th July 1900

⁴ *MM*, 8th Aug., 12th Sept. 1911

⁵ *MM*, 30th July, 8th Nov. (? Sept. or Oct.) 1918

⁶ *MM*, 6th, 7th, 14th Apr., 8th June 1905; 9th, 14th Apr., 13th Aug., 10th Sept. 1912; 18th, 24th Mar. 1913; 16th June 1901

1837 the Home Mission of the Baptist Union removed their centre for itinerary work from Saltcoats to Ayr, and a church of ten members, who met first in a house and then in the Black Bull Inn in River Street, was formed, the candidates being baptised in the River Ayr. After about thirteen years it passed out of existence.¹

Ayr Baptist (1886) (xxvii). The second Baptist Church in Ayr—and the original of the present one—came into existence when a small body, meeting in Alexander Smith's house in Content Street, decided to form themselves into a church. When Pastor John Horne, a noted and widely respected preacher and temperance advocate, was called as first minister, the congregation was worshipping in the Free Gardeners' Hall. They moved to the Old Liberal Rooms in Sandgate and then to Fort Street to the Queen's Rooms (Theatre), which after a few months they purchased, renamed the 'Temple' and have continued to occupy. The prosperity enjoyed under Pastor Horne's ministry ceased with his departure and in 1904, in order to preserve the church to the Baptist Union and to allow of a new start, it was deemed advisable to dissolve the church. It was re-formed three years later² and from that day has gone steadily forward, taking a full share in all evangelistic work.

New Prestwick Baptist (xxviii). In 1887 John Young, one of the original elders of Ayr Baptist Church, started a series of meetings in his own house, and out of these the New Prestwick Baptist Church was formed two years later. In 1900 the church was built in Prestwick Road opposite Woodfield Avenue.³

THE CHANGING CONCEPT OF A NATIONAL CHURCH

The one question that, above all others, dominated the life of the churches in the nineteenth century was the relationship between Church and State, and the solution of to-day, acceptable to the greater part of our generation, has been slowly and

¹ Yuille, pp. 205, 276. 'Hitherto' (a typescript in possession Secretary Ayr Baptist Church) states, 1837 Church due probably to Rev. Geo. Barclay, Kilwinning and Irvine, whose son-in-law, Dr. Leechman, often preached in the Theatre in Ayr.

² Yuille, p. 206. Horne was visiting Ayr on returning home from Spurgeon's College, London, when arrangements were made for him to preach in Wallacetown Parish Church. It was then he was asked to be pastor. ('Hitherto'.)

³ Yuille, pp. 211-2 and 286

painfully evolved from the conflict and contention of that period. At the beginning of that century the Churches of the Establishment (i, ii), each on its own bank of the river Ayr, dominated the scene, and their kirk-sessions as courts of the realm,¹ wielded such power in ecclesiastical matters—and the division between ecclesiastical and civil was somewhat ill-defined—and were so much administrative organs of local government, that the reader of to-day, who has no intimate knowledge of church records, may well feel surprised and astonished on learning the facts.

Nowhere are the powers of the session seen more clearly than in the exercise of 'discipline' and, in such matters, there is little to choose between the established and the dissenting churches, for when necessary, cases were referred from one to the other, there even being on record the referring to the Roman Catholic Church of a guilty party, who claimed to belong to that communion.² By the end of the nineteenth century and still more by the end of the first half of the twentieth, the position had been radically altered. Just as by the beginning of our period, sentences of the 'lesser excommunication'³ were ceasing to be pronounced and offenders—practically all of them accused of offences against morality—were no longer appearing before the congregation⁴ so, by the end of the nineteenth century, appearance before the session had become an infrequent occurrence, and in our day has ceased altogether.⁵ No longer would a woman having, as she was in 1856, 'been found guilty of, and imprisoned for, resetting stolen goods', appear before the session to be 'rebuked and exhorted to repentance, and absolved from the scandal'.⁶ No longer are cases for the establishment of paternity brought before the session to be decided by them or referred to the civil courts; nor is an accused man likely now to apply to the session, after a lapse of more than eight years, to have his name cleared of the charge against him.⁷ Though, in theory at any rate, powers of discipline remain much as they were, a less legal attitude of

¹ Green, vol. 3 and Suppl. 1 (1949)

² *AKS*, various from 1834-94, particularly 7th Dec. 1846; 3rd May 1847; 4th Feb. 1856. *NKS*, 3rd Apr., 1st June 1820; 1st Apr. 1830; 2nd Feb. 1832. Scott, ch. ix.

³ *NKS*, 3rd Sept. 1807, 4th Feb. 1808

⁴ *AKS*, 1834

⁵ *AFKS*, 18th July 1843; *AKS*, 1894

⁶ *AKS*, 7th Apr. 1856

⁷ *AKS*, 7th Dec. 1846; 1st Mar. 1847; 6th June 1847

mind, a more private and intimate method of dealing with guilty parties,¹ a rise in the standard of social behaviour generally, better police supervision and a transfer of duties to civil courts and officials, have helped to make a large part of what used to be the work of a session either undesirable or unnecessary, while religious toleration, the appearance of churches outside the Establishment, and the rise of bodies, either hostile or indifferent to any church, make strict supervision of the whole community by the old methods impracticable.

In 1800 the Sessions of the Parish Churches were still carrying out functions which the legislation of the past hundred and fifty years has gradually transferred to popularly elected bodies.² The Church had always regarded the care of the poor as one of its duties and, at the Reformation, had specifically assigned their care to its deacons.³ In the parish of Ayr there had for long been co-operation with the magistrates in the performance of this duty, and the two were often, but not invariably, joint trustees for charities.⁴ In 1839 after a report on the great increase in the number of the poor and an enquiry 'into the causes of this evil, and the means of correcting it', a specially called meeting of kirk-session and Ayr magistrates decided by a majority that the funds from Alderman Smith's and Mr. Dick's mortifications and the sums collected at the two sacraments should, for a period at least, be disbursed by a committee of nine, on which the magistrates had one and the session not less than three representatives.⁵ We therefore find in May 1840 that 'after deducting the subscription to the Dispensary, and the usual sums to the Bellringer and Kirk Officer' from £23 8s. 4½d., which represents the sacrament collections, the balance is paid over to the Committee of the Directors of the Poorhouse.⁶ The importance that both Church and State

¹ Cox, ch. iv

² Poor Law (S.) Amendment Act, 1845; Local Government (S.) Act 1894; Education (S.) Act 1872

³ Acts of the Apostles, 6; 1st *Book of Discipline*, ch. x; 2nd *Book of Discipline*, ch. 8; Mair, *Digest of Laws* . . . 1904, pp. 146-7; Cox, ch. iii. Rev. A. Mackenzie in *AP*, 23rd Sept. 1932 and *AKS*, from 1834, show that there were no longer deacons in Ayr Parish, their duties being performed by the elders; *NKS*, from 1780, no deacons are mentioned; in Free Church given greater powers, scope of duties extended—see Acts 1843 and 1844; *AFKS*, 16th, 31st Dec. 1843; *AFDC*, 29th Jan., 29th July 1844; Scott, p. 168.

⁴ *AKS*, from 2nd July to 6th Aug. 1838; also 3rd June 1839

⁵ *AKS*, 2nd Sept. 1839

⁶ *AKS*, 11th May 1840

attached to the Church's part in the care of the poor is evident from the records; the very first business recorded by the Session of Newton on its formation was to enquire as to the existence of a fund for the poor¹; the record of the first meeting of the same session after the Disruption contains a copy of a minute of meeting of the 'Heritors, Proprietors and Kirk Session', held on 29th May 1843, when that meeting accepted the demission of the outgoing minister and seven elders from the charge of 'the parochial poor devolving on them in that capacity', i.e. as minister and elders respectively of the Established Church²; again, at the first meeting of the Session of Ayr and Wallace-town Free Church the only business recorded, apart from the fixing of the date of the sacrament, was the signing in triplicate of the Act of Demission, whereby the five elders renounced and abdicated 'whatsoever status, right, or privilege we may have hitherto held as Elders by reason of the Establishment of the Church', and the appointing of 'a duplicate thereof to be transmitted to the legal Administrators of the poor in this parish', i.e. of Wallacetown in St. Quivox.³ With a change in the law we find in 1846 Newton electing seven members of session to the Parochial Board but, presumably in view of their diminished responsibility, resolving 'to retain all the church door collections after the electing of the new Board'.⁴ At the same period we find the Ayr session, whose collections were much greater and who administered charitable bequests of considerable value, appointing six from its number 'not being members of the Board from property in terms of the Poor Law Act',⁵ and authorising its treasurer to pay the balances as at 14th May 1847 to the Parochial Board—£44 2s. 4d. from church door collections, and £188 15s. 6d. from rents and other funds.⁶ That this part of the Church's duty was done with care and discretion would seem to be borne out by the action of the Ayr Session in 1891, when they learned that a woman had died 'leaving a considerable amount of money', and when they suggested to her agents that there should be returned to them £20 'of the money paid to her and to her sister in error'.⁷ With the coming of the Parish Councils in 1895, sessions ceased to

¹ NKS, 21st May 1780² AFKS, 4th July 1843³ AKS, 13th July 1846⁴ NKS, 5th Oct. 1843⁵ NKS, 7th Sept. 1846⁶ AKS, 3rd May, 6th June 1847⁷ AKS, 7th July 1891

be concerned in the administration of the poor law¹ and, though still mindful of the duty of a National Church towards the people of the parish, tended to concentrate on the relief of the poorer members of their own congregations, relief which was often given in the form of coal, and at least on one occasion in meal.²

The importance which the Church attached to the education of the young³ we shall merely mention in passing, as the subject of schools is dealt with elsewhere (p. 212). With the coming of compulsory education in 1872 the schools which both the Church of Scotland and the Free Church of Scotland had considered it their duty to maintain, were handed over without recompense to the popularly elected school boards.⁴ Of other church schools, the Moravian ceased to exist before the boards arrived, the Episcopal disappeared in the early years of this century, and only the Roman Catholic exists to-day, forming in accordance with the 1918 Act part of the national system.

If the Church was active in what is now the sphere of the State and of Local Government the converse is also true, for both Parliament and Town Council, not to speak of the Law, played in ecclesiastical affairs during the whole of the nineteenth century and for the first thirty years of the twentieth, a part, albeit a diminishing one, which would to-day be regarded by many as unwarranted interference. Such an opinion has however been of gradual and fluctuating growth. Though objecting to State interference, specifically in spiritual affairs, none of the Presbyterian Churches had separated from the Church of Scotland because of opposition to the national recognition of religion; and 'Voluntaryism', or the unjustifiableness of a state church, whose growth was stimulated by the successful experience of the United Presbyterian Church in having to provide for itself, was a new idea in the nineteenth century.⁵ Out of this idea there arose just after the middle of the century,

¹ Local Government (S.) Act, 1894² AKS, 11th Jan. 1847; 1st Feb., 28th Dec. 1857; 6th Sept. 1870; 9th Jan. 1872 (254 carts of coals were distributed—deficit of £7 7s. 6½d. taken from Gordon Bequest); NKS, volume with Poor Fund Income and Outlays from 1837 on, 20th Dec. 1891³ 'For as the youth must succeed till us, so aucht we to be cairfull that thei have the knowledge and eruditoun, to proffit and confort that whiche aucht to be most deare to us, to wit, the Church and the Spouse of the Lord Jesus.' (1st *Book of Discipline*, quoted in Laing, *Knox*, vol. ii, p. 209.)⁴ Education (S.) Act, 1872; AKS, 4th Mar. 1890, election of a member to the Ayrshire Educational Trust⁵ Scott, chs. iii and iv

in the Free Church as well as in the United Presbyterian, an agitation for the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland, an agitation which continued for about forty years. Such an agitation naturally provoked a reaction and in 1882 we find the first of several references to it in Ayr Parish Session minutes—the Moderator's pastoral letter on the subject. Later £5 towards the expenses of a meeting is paid on behalf of the Old and New Churches; £50 is promised to a proposed fund of £10,000 for Church Defence; and the Ayr branch of the Church Defence Association is stated to consist of 52 members—the combined Sessions of Ayr.¹

Let us however return and consider the nature of the relationship and its effect in practice. Until the repeal of patronage in 1874 the Crown, the Town Council of Ayr and the delegates of Newton had the sole right, with one exception, of presenting ministers in the Parish Churches. In 1827 the magistrates, Council and other delegates without more ado presented the minister for Newton²; in 1850 a committee of Ayr Town Council and of Session took the preliminary steps in appointing an assistant and successor in the second charge, of which Council and Session were joint patrons³; just over three years later, however, not a joint committee but a committee elected by the 'Heads of families connected with the Church', and presided over by the Provost, made the recommendation for the second charge⁴; the first charge having become vacant in 1862, and being in the presentation of the Crown, the session sent to the local members of parliament an extract minute, in which they 'most respectfully' requested the Secretary for the Home Department to 'have the great kindness, to confer upon the congregations of the said Parish of Ayr the privilege of recommending to her Majesty' a clergyman to fill the vacancy.⁵ All that has now passed away and for over seventy years congregations of parish churches, like those of the free churches, have played a decisive part in the choice of a minister.⁶

¹ *AKS*, 3rd Oct. 1882; 6th Apr. 1886; 5th Aug., 2nd Sept. 1890. Ayr Parish Session petition to parliament against the disestablishment of the Irish Church (21st Apr. 1868).

² *NKS*, 29th July 1827

³ *AKS*, 9th, 16th Mar., 17th June 1850
⁴ *AKS*, 23rd Jan. 1854; a meeting of the congregation nominated a minister and recommended him to the patrons (9th Oct. 1871)

⁵ *AKS*, 1st Sept. 1862

⁶ Cox, pp. 217-27

In the course of the period under review there has been a complete change in the ownership of, and the liability for, the fabric of the parish churches, so that since the union of 1929 buildings, which were formerly the property of the heritors and were kept up by them, have now passed to the Church itself.¹ Even before that, however, Ayr Parish Session had been endeavouring to gain greater control over its buildings and seating than it had when the minister called a meeting to consider how to give effect to a resolution of the Town Council 'to grant sittings in the two Parish Churches, partly gratuitous, and partly at a low rate, for the poorer classes of the Community',² or when the session could not grant the use of the Old Church for a concert of sacred music 'on account of the greater part of it being private property', and did not offer any objection to the use of the New Church as the 'Council had already granted the use of the church for that purpose'.³ Agreements with Ayr Town Council, the sharing of repairs, the entering into negotiations with the proprietors 'whereby the management of the Galleries may pass into the hands of the Session', the gifting of a pew by the owner or the purchase of one for £27 10s.—all point to the Church's desire for the control of the fabric.⁴

CHANGES IN OUTLOOK AND CUSTOM

What a change has taken place in church life in these one hundred and fifty years! Not only are there many more church buildings, but the whole shape and atmosphere of ecclesiastical life have altered. The words of a former minister of Cathcart

¹ Church of Scotland (Property and Endowments) Acts, 1925 and 1933

² *AKS*, 1st June 1835

³ *AKS*, 21st Feb., 7th Mar. 1859

⁴ *AKS*, 22nd Apr., 6th, 21st May 1873 and 6th July 1880 deal with agreement with town and other parties interested in subjects in trust under Queen Mary's Charter; 4th June, 3rd July, 4th Sept. 1877, session to pay town £20 in return for seat rents formerly collected by town; 22nd Oct. and 6th Nov. 1843, town, Trades, Merchants and Sailors Societies contributed to the subscription being asked for heating Old and New Churches and lighting Old; 7th May 1860 session approve expenditure up to £10 on repairs; 3rd Oct. 1865, town to be informed of proposal to install gas in New Church; 7th May 1878, negotiations for the galleries in Old Church; 6th Apr., 6th July 1880, Dr. Dykes gifts pew; 5th July 1881 and 1st Sept. 1885, pews purchased at £20 each; 3rd May 1887, seat purchased for £27 10s.; Proprietary Rights in Pew Action against Ayr Session in *AP*, 28th June 1912. Reluctance of heritors to make provision for religious needs of a parish is seen in *APKS*: 'So far back as 1821 an unsuccessful attempt had been made to obtain the co-operation of the Heritors of the Parish of St. Quivox in the erection of a Chapel of Ease for the District of Wallacetown . . .' It was erected in 1836.

Church¹ indicate that even the first half of the nineteenth century saw a vast change: 'Sabbath schools, libraries, missions to the heathen, home missions, temperance societies, church extension, ragged schools, the operations of Biblewomen—all these have either originated or been greatly developed within half a century.' How the wind was blowing can be judged by his reference to 'certain tendencies abroad which are to be watched with great earnestness if not with sharp suspicion, tendencies with regard to the question of the inspiration of scripture, of the nature of the Atonement, of the duration of future punishments, of the observance of the Sabbath²—the questions in a word, raised by the Broad School of the day. Besides there is that well known desire for change of forms in prayer and praise and for the introduction of instrumental music, which needs to be very closely questioned as to whether it is the allowable demand of the improved feelings and taste of a more refined age or the carnal craving for a ritualistic system of religion.'

It is not possible in this survey—if indeed it is possible at all—to trace through the pulpits of Ayr the change of accent (and perhaps also content) in the Church's proclamation. Many things have happened in the theological world between 1800 and now; McLeod Campbell's teaching had a mighty effect on the pulpits of the land; the Cairds and Robertson Smith exerted a revolutionary influence; and the revival of Reformation theology in recent days has had its effect.

Within our period the forms of worship have changed considerably. Services no longer last for two hours and, except in Roman Catholic and Episcopal Churches, are confined almost entirely to Sunday. The afternoon service has been replaced by the evening one,³ and sermons are much shorter. Choirs have made their appearance and, except in the Free Church, the precentor has given way to the organ, while congregations no longer stand during prayers or sit during the singing.

The musical part of the service has been the occasion of

¹ Rev. W. Morrison in *Jubilee Services in connection with Cathcart Street U.P. Church, Ayr, 12th Nov. 1865*, pp. 18, 19

² *AKS*, 8th June 1837, petition to parliament against Sunday travelling on railways; *AFKS*, 8th Oct. 1849, memorial to Postmaster General against Sunday mails

³ *AKS*, 5th Oct. 1886, evening service in Old Church instead of afternoon; *AA*, 29th Sept. 1904, Wallacetown Parish made this change previous Sunday

much bitter controversy in the Presbyterian Churches in Scotland. At the beginning of our period only metrical psalms and paraphrases were in use, and there was much concern to have the musical part of the service worthily carried out. In the Free Church of Ayr (i.e. Sandgate) the congregation was not satisfied with its praise and it was suggested that the precentor should be sent to Edinburgh for instruction, but the Deacons' Court decided to bring in a teacher of music instead.¹ In 1868 the Session of Ayr Parish agreed to a request that the congregations of the Old and New Churches should stand during the singing and kneel during the prayers. In 1871 a memorial was presented by a number of members of the New Church about the propriety of introducing instrumental music. A harmonium formed the thin edge of the wedge, and by 1874 the New, and four years later the Old, Church had their organs.² Things moved more slowly in Ayr Free Church. The harmonium had to serve its apprenticeship in the hall and not till 1893 was it introduced into the church, to be followed by a pipe organ three years later.³ A desire to diversify the praise led to the introduction of hymns into the services in Ayr Free Church in 1884 and a year later into those of the Old and New Churches, but it was only in 1892 that the members of St. Andrew's Free Church provided themselves with hymn books, the new minister taking it for granted that 'we had been singing hymns'.⁴ To-day in most Presbyterian Churches anthems are sung by the choir, in some prose psalms are in use and the Apostles' Creed is said, and a greater care is exercised to make the service complete, containing all the essential elements of the act of worship.

A considerable change has taken place in the arrangements for the celebration of the Lord's Supper in Presbyterian Churches. At the beginning of our period it was customary to have a half-yearly Sacrament, but each celebration involved four days, on all of which there was preaching—a Fast and Preparation days before, and a Thanksgiving day after it.⁵ The

¹ *AFDC*, 9th Sept., 4th Nov. 1845; 20th Apr. 1846

² *AKS*, 5th May 1868; 2nd May, 8th June 1871, etc.; 4th Feb., 30th Sept. 1873; 12th May 1874; 5th Feb. 1878

³ *Book of Sandgate*

⁴ *Book of Sandgate*; *AKS*, 3rd Nov., 1st Dec. 1885; the late Hugh Thomson's notes (St. Andrew's Church) *ut supra*

⁵ *NKS*, 27th, 29th, 30th June, 1st July 1805

number of services was gradually reduced until to-day there is usually the preparatory service on the Friday preceding the Communion and the Thanksgiving on the Sunday evening. There has however been an increase in the number of celebrations in the year, most Ayr churches now having either quarterly communion services or three in the year. The metal token has been replaced by the communion card, delivered by the elder of the district; unfermented wine and individual cups have made their appearance; the communicants no longer move up to specially fitted communion tables, singing a line of a psalm or a paraphrase as they do so, but have the elements served to them in the pews.¹

With the activities of churches becoming more diversified, church halls began to appear. In 1868 Ayr Parish held a bazaar for a Mission House, which developed into what are now known as the Carrick Street Halls. To-day no church is counted properly equipped that has not at least a hall.² What is now considered desirable for the accommodation of the multifarious societies associated with the Church is seen in the suite and halls of Lochside Hall-Church. The danger to-day is that the minister be withdrawn too much from the study and the preaching of the Word, not to 'serve tables' but to supervise organisations, and in a fussy busyness neglect his real business.

THE CHURCH AS A BUILDING

Let us now take a glance at the kind of buildings erected as places of worship. Not many beautiful churches were built during the first half of the nineteenth century, but the second half of the century saw an awakening of interest in ecclesiastical architecture and during that period some pleasing and even beautiful churches were built in Ayr. Reformed theology does not countenance 'holy' places, but as the century advanced there developed a greater regard for the buildings devoted to the worship of God, and a demand was made for greater seemliness in their appointments. In plan, the Old Church appears to have copied the old Church of St. John the Baptist, but this

¹ AKS, 11th Dec. 1866; 5th Oct. 1875; Anderson, *Sparks from an Old Anvil*, Stephen and Pollock, Ayr (2nd impression, 1920), p. 37

² AKS, 20th Sept. 1867; 4th Aug., 1st Sept. 1868, etc.; Ayr Free Church started building a hall in 1878 (*Book of Sandgate*)

cruciform arrangement had fallen out of favour by the time of the nineteenth century expansion. The rectangular preaching station was in fashion and slight variations of this were provided by the Relief, the Methodist, the Cameronian, Wallacetown, Ayr Free Church and others. The first Newton Free Church apparently followed the pattern of Ayr Old Church, but it proved unsatisfactory as a building. When another church was built in its place, it followed the plan then in vogue. The Gothic revival was having its influence and people began to think that no church was really a 'church' unless it had pointed windows and buttresses. Really fine structures belonging to this period are St. Leonard's, St. Andrew's, Holy Trinity and Trinity, both St. Andrew's and Trinity having been designed by the same architect.¹ Because of its situation and its lack of tower and spire, the work of the eminent R.A., who designed Holy Trinity, is not seen to advantage from the outside, and one has to enter before being able fully to appreciate its comeliness and fine proportions.² But the notion that a church must be imitatively medieval has now passed and the functional idea prevails, though at the moment excessive building costs allow it to be seen only in the restricted form of the Hall-Church at Lochside.

There has been a change also in the attitude of the people towards their churches. At the beginning of our period there was little interest shown, even in the primitive matter of keeping the church decent and clean. Dr. Dykes, speaking of 1854, said, 'The two churches, as I remember them, were very different from what they are now. The Old Church . . . was, as I first knew it 50 years ago, very picturesque and interesting, but it was in a rough and uncomfortable state. There was no flooring in the area, the pews resting on the earth, with foot-boards in front to enable the sitters to keep their feet off the ground. Even the galleries were only partially floored. The old wooden ceiling had become so defective and unsightly that it had been covered over with canvass; but this only made matters worse, for the canvass had in places given way.'³ Newton Church was in the same state. Even after the days of

¹ *Ayr Observer*, 30th Sept. 1902

² J. L. Pearson, R.A., London; *AA*, 8th Nov. 1900

³ Rev. Thomas Dykes, D.D., at his jubilee celebrations—Ferguson, *Reminiscences of Auld Ayr*, 1907, p. 36

Caird, a writer recalls how 'if we dropped any personal belonging, we had to grope for it on mother earth, only a small portion being boarded over for convenient foothold'.¹ The passage of the years brought a change. Not perhaps more godliness, but a greater refinement and a sense of fitness led to the beautifying of the sanctuary.

But not all the changes in the interior arrangement of the churches were improvements. When pipe organs were introduced they were often given a place that might make them appear to be high altars of Protestantism, and a horrible act of vandalism was committed in the Old Church in 1878. 'The fine and characteristic old pulpit of the Auld Kirk, with its sounding board and enclosure pen was removed . . . destroyed . . . to make room for a much begilt organ.'² (The pulpit has now been restored and, with the organ brought from the New Church, was dedicated in January 1952 as a memorial to those who fell in the Second World War.)³

CONCLUSION

The hundred and fifty years of the period we have had under consideration brought many changes, as we have seen. With the increase in population has come an increase in the number of church buildings. With the introduction of Irish labour there has arisen a Roman Catholic community. With the aid of English influence and springing from the remnant, who desired what they termed the 'decency and beauty of liturgical worship', there has grown up in the Covenanting West an Episcopal Church. The once burning question of Church and State having receded into the background and with greater toleration of opinion in matters which do not enter into the substance of faith, the contention and divisions of the early years have given place to a series of unions, that have practically restored the broken body of Presbyterianism. The Congregationalists and Baptists have held their ground. Newer sects have brought to Ayr something of the diversity of American religion. If public worship makes less demand on the time of the church member, the Church has entered fields of activity

¹ Anderson, p. 9; see p. 150, n. 1

² The late J. A. Morris, architect, Ayr, in *The Auld Toon o' Ayr*, Stephen and Pollock, Ayr, 1928.

³ *AA*, 24th, 31st Jan. 1952

unknown and undreamt of in the earlier years. Popular education and the spread of culture have led to more care and greater reverence in forms of worship, and to a desire for the beautiful in buildings and their furnishings. These are in essence the changes we have recorded as we looked back over the years to 1800.

LIST OF CHURCHES

DENOMINATION
Designation

Remarks

Offshoots
or (in cases of union)
Title under which
continued

* Indicates graveyard adjoining church

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i. CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

Ayr Parish

Lineal descendant of pre-Reformation Church of St. John the Baptist. *Old Church built 1654. Alloway Parish annexed 1690. Collegiate Charge. 1567-1951
1810 New Church built in Fort St. adjoining the Academy
1860
1886 Services at St. Leonard's
1892
1929 Union with the U.F. Church

Alloway Parish (iv)

St. Leonard's (vi)

Church of St. John the Baptist—Old and New Churches

Auld Kirk of Ayr (St. John the Baptist)

1951 First and Second Charges united. New Church given up to Cathcart Church (ix).

ii. CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

Newton-upon-Ayr Parish

Disjoined from Monkton and Prestwick in 1779. *Church erected 1777.

1843 Minister and majority congregation join Free Church
1885 Chapel of Ease, North Newton
1904 North Newton disjoined as
1929 Union with U.F. Church
1951 Take over Wooden Kirk Mission (xxix)

Newton-on-Ayr Free (xi)

St. James's (v)

Newton Old

iii. CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

Wallacetown Chapel

Part of the Parish of St. Quivox.

1834 Chapel of Ease to be built by Feuars and Householders of Wallacetown and Content
1836 Chapel built; District assigned to it
1843 Minister and majority congregation join Free Church

Ayr and Wallacetown Free (xii)

*Wallacetown Parish
Wallacetown North
Wallacetown*

1874 Disjoined from St. Quivox
1929 Union with U.F. Church
1949

iv. CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

*Alloway Chapel
Alloway Parish*

Ancient Parish of Alloway annexed to Ayr 1690. Services at Alloway discontinued 1810.

1858 *Mission Chapel built
1860 Parish disjoined from Ayr
1929 Union with U.F. Church

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v. CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

*North Newton Chapel
St. James's Parish*

1885 Chapel of Ease built in Newton Parish
1904 Parish disjoined from Newton Parish
1929 Union with U.F. Church

vi. CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

*St. Leonard's Chapel
St. Leonard's Parish*

1886 Chapel of Ease built in Ayr Parish
1892 Parish disjoined from Ayr
1929 Union with U.F. Church

LIST OF CHURCHES—*continued*

DENOMINATION <i>Designation</i>	<i>Remarks</i>	Offshoots or (in cases of union) Title under which <i>continued</i>
* Indicates graveyard adjoining church		
vii. (GENERAL) ASSOCIATE SYNOD <i>Antiburgher Church</i>	Supply of sermon 1755. Disjoined from Kilmaurs 1770 and first *church built, corner King St. and George St. Second church (now occupied by Morison Congregational) built 1779.	
GENERAL ASSOCIATE SYNOD OF PROTESTORS	1806 Appear to have adhered to the New Light Branch	
ASSOCIATE SYNOD OF ORIGINAL SECEDERS <i>Original Secession Church</i>	1820 Do not enter Union with Associate Synod (Burghers)	
UNITED ORIGINAL SECEDERS	1827 Union with Constitutional Associate Presbytery (Old Light Antiburghers)	
<i>Robertson Memorial O.S. Church</i>	1842 Union with Synod of Original Burgher Seceders (Remnant)	
	1852 Do not enter Union with Free Church	
	1901 Vacate church in George St. and enter new one, corner Content Ave. and Craigie Rd.	
	1944 Congregation dissolved. Town purchased buildings, since converted into Civic Theatre	
viii. ASSOCIATE SYNOD <i>Burgher Church</i>	Applied for sermon 1797. New Lights. Church built 1799 (now occupied by E.U. Congregational Church).	
	1801 First Minister inducted	
UNITED SECESSION SYNOD <i>Wallacetown U.S. Church</i>	1820 Union with General Associate Synod (Antiburgher New Light)	
UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND <i>Wallacetown U.P. Church Darlington Place U.P. Church</i>	1847 Union with the Relief Church	
UNITED FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND <i>Darlington Place U.F. Church</i>	1860 Vacate building in Wallace St. and occupy new church, corner Main St. and N. Harbour St.	
	1900 Union with Free Church	
CHURCH OF SCOTLAND <i>Darlington Place Darlington New</i>	1929 Union with Church of Scotland	
	1948 Unite with Wallacetown South Church (xiii)	
ix. RELIEF CHURCH	1814 Applied for sermon. Meeting in granary in Content	
	1816 Church built at corner Cathcart St. and Fort St. First minister ordained	
UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND <i>Cathcart St. U.P. Church</i>	1847 Union with United Secession Church	
UNITED FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND <i>Cathcart St. U.F. Church</i>	1900 Union with Free Church of Scotland	
CHURCH OF SCOTLAND <i>Cathcart St. Church Cathcart Church</i>	1929 Union with the Church of Scotland	
	1951 Vacate church in Cathcart St. and enter the New Church, given up by Session of Old and New Churches (i)	

LIST OF CHURCHES—*continued*

DENOMINATION <i>Designation</i>	<i>Remarks</i>	Offshoots or (in cases of union) Title under which <i>continued</i>
* Indicates graveyard adjoining church		
X. UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND <i>Trinity U.P. Church</i> UNITED FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND <i>Trinity U.F. Church</i> CHURCH OF SCOTLAND <i>Trinity Church</i>	1898 Hall erected, corner Midton Rd. and Carrick Park 1899 Congregation formed 1900 Union with Free Church 1902 Church built 1929 Union with Church of Scotland	Wallacetown Free Church (xiii)
xi. FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND <i>Newton-on-Ayr Free Church</i> UNITED FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND <i>Newton-on-Ayr U.F. Church</i> CHURCH OF SCOTLAND <i>Newton New Church</i>	1843 Minister and most of congregation leave Newton-on-Ayr Parish Church (ii). Worship in Independent Chapel. Build church adjacent Parish one on the north side. 1854 Mission disjoined 1862 Church rebuilt 1900 Union with the United Presbyterian Church 1905 Interdicted. Worship in Town Hall. Ayr Free Church take possession of church (xvi). 1907 Allocated church by Commissioners. Resume possession. 1929 Union with Church of Scotland	
xii. FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND <i>Ayr and Wallacetown Free Church</i> <i>Ayr Free Church</i> UNITED FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND <i>Ayr U.F. Church, West</i> CHURCH OF SCOTLAND <i>Sandgate Church</i>	1843 Minister and most of congregation leave Wallacetown Chapel (iii). Use church until interdicted. Worship in woodyard and R.P. Church in Wallacetown, then in Wooden Church, Alloway Place. 1845 Church built in Sandgate 1853 Wallacetown district provided for. 1900 Union with United Presbyterian Church 1929 Union with Church of Scotland	Wallacetown Artillery Hall Cong. (xv)
xiii. FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND <i>Wallacetown Free Church</i> UNITED FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND <i>St. John's U.F. Church</i> <i>Wallacetown U.F. Church</i> CHURCH OF SCOTLAND <i>Wallacetown South Church</i>	1854 Mission disjoined from Newton Free Church (xi). Worshipped in Wooden Kirk (site of K.E.C.S. Hall, Limond's Wynd). 1860 Church built south side of John Street 1889 Large secession of Office-bearers and Congregation 1900 Union with United Presbyterian Church 1904 Unite with Martyrs' U.F. Church (xiv) and certain members Wallace St. U.F. Church (xxiv) 1929 Union with Church of Scotland 1948 Unite with Darlington Place Church (viii) Church becomes halls for united Congregation (Purchased by Brethren 1952; now Victoria Halls)	
		Darlington New Church (viii)

LIST OF CHURCHES—*continued*

Offshoots
or (in cases of union)
Title under which
continued

DENOMINATION
Designation

Remarks

* Indicates graveyard adjoining church

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xiv. REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

Did not accept Revolution Settlement 1690. Known as
Cameronians. Title of Reformed Presbytery 1743. At-
tached to Kilmarnock Congregation.

1828 Separate supply granted. Worshipped in Content St.

1830 Disjoined from Kilmarnock. First Minister ordained.

1832 Church built, corner George St. and John St. (now
occupied by Ayr Free Church (xvi))

1876 Union with Free Church of Scotland

FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
Martyrs' Free Church

UNITED FREE CHURCH
OF SCOTLAND
Martyrs' U.F. Church

1900 Union with United Presbyterian Church

1904 Unite with St. John's U.F. Church (xiii) and others
(xxiv) to form
Church used as halls for the united Congregation.
(Building allocated to Ayr Free Church, 1907 (xvi))

Wallacetown U.F.
Church (xiii)

xv. FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
*Wallacetown Artillery Hall
Congregation*
St. Andrew's Free Church

1889 Secessionists from Wallacetown Free Church (xiii)
meet in Darlington Halls, River St. and finally in
Volunteer Hall, Newmarket St.

1891 Charge sanctioned

1893 Church built in Park Circus

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UNITED FREE CHURCH
OF SCOTLAND
St. Andrew's U.F. Church

1900 Union with United Presbyterian Church

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
St. Andrew's Church

1929 Union with Church of Scotland

xvi. FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
Ayr Free Church

1905 Members of Free Church who did not enter Union
with U.P. Church form a Congregation and meet in
Wallace Tower. Referred to as 'Wee Frees'. Granted
interdict and occupy Newton U.F. Church (xi).

Ayr Free Church (Martyrs')

1907 Allocated Wallacetown U.F. Church Halls (former
Martyrs' Church) (xiv) by Commissioners and vacate
Newton U.F. Church

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xvii. UNITED FREE CHURCH OF
SCOTLAND (CONTINUING)
Ayr U.F. Church (Con.)

1929 Members of U.F. Church who did not enter the union
with the Church of Scotland form Congregation.
Meet in Y.M.C.A., High Street.

1930 Church built in Kirkholm Ave.

UNITED FREE CHURCH
OF SCOTLAND
Ayr U.F. Church

1934 In accordance with agreement with majority of U.F.
Church, 'Continuing' dropped five years after union

xviii. CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
*Lochside Church Extension
Charge*

1934 Presbytery of Ayr authorises Charge in Lochside
district. Hall built and opened for worship in
Murray St.

1940 Church and Halls in Murray St. dedicated

1945 Granted full status

Lochside Church

LIST OF CHURCHES—*continued*

DENOMINATION <i>Designation</i>	Remarks	Offshoots or (in cases of union) Title under which <i>continued</i>
xix. EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN SCOTLAND <i>Holy Trinity Church</i>	Occasional Preachers from 1743 1826 Congregation forming. Worship in Barracks Hospital. 1832 Chapel prepared in Content St. Incumbency established. 1838 First Church built in Fullarton St. 1847 Mission in Maybole 1888 Chancel (of new church being built on site of old one) dedicated 1893 Mission of St. John Baptist, Hall in James St. 1900 Nave and aisles of new church dedicated 1904 Mission Church of St. John Baptist opened 1908 Consecration of present church	
xx. MORAVIAN UNION <i>Ayr Congregation</i>	Ayr a centre of evangelistic work 1765. Society formed 1768 and malt kiln bought in Mill St. 1778 Congregation formed. *Church built on site malt kiln 1780 1816 House on south side church purchased and used as school 1820 Large room added above church 1874 Church renovated 1898 Part gallery removed	
	1916 Congregation ceased to exist. Evangelistic Meetings held in premises 1945 Premises sold by Union	
xxi. WESLEYAN METHODIST CHURCH	Society started in a stable in 1785. First preacher appointed and Ayr Circuit formed 1786. 1813 Church built, corner Charlotte St. and Fort St. 1891 Alterations and improvements 1907 End of last minister's appointment 1909 Congregation ceases to exist 1916 Building sold as workshop	
xxii. ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH <i>St. Margaret's Church</i>	1822 Mission started. Met in hall, Boar's Head Close. 1826 *St. Margaret's Church built in John St.	
xxiii. CONGREGATIONAL <i>Independent Chapel or Tabernacle</i>	1804 Church formed 1805 Church built in River St. near foot Garden St. 1808 First minister ordained 1878 Church ceased to exist 1879 Building conveyed to Congregational Union 1886 Sold to Darlington Pl. U.P. Church (viii)	
xxiv. EVANGELICAL UNION <i>Wallace St. E.U. Church</i>	1844 Church formed. Met in a house, then in Corn Exchange 1865 Acquired Wallacetown U.P. Church in Wallace St. (but see p. 140 n. 1) 1897 Remained with remnant Evangelical Union Some members secede to form . . .	Morison Congl. Church (xxv)

continued overleaf

LIST OF CHURCHES—*continued*

DENOMINATION
Designation

Remarks

Offshoots
or (in cases of union)
Title under which
continued

* Indicates graveyard adjoining church

xxiv *continued*

UNITED PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
Wallace St. U.P. Church

1898 Received into U.P. Church

UNITED FREE CHURCH
OF SCOTLAND
Wallace St. U.F. Church

1900 Entered union with Free Church

CONGREGATIONAL UNION
OF SCOTLAND
Wallace St. E.U. Church

1904 Left United Free Church and entered Congregational Union. Minority remained with U.F. and entered Wallacetown U.F. Church then forming . . .

Wallacetown U.F. (xiii)

xxv. CONGREGATIONAL UNION
Morison Congregational Church

1897 Seceded from Wallace St. E.U. Church. Worshipped in Volunteer Hall, Newmarket St., then in Masonic Hall, Nile Court.

1901 Purchased Original Secession Church in George St. (vii)

xxvi. BAPTIST UNION
Ayr Baptist Church

1837 Church formed with ten members. Met in Black Bull Inn, River St.
c. 1850 Ceased to exist

xxvii. BAPTIST UNION
Ayr Baptist Church
(The Temple)

1886 Church formed. Met in Free Gardeners' Hall, in Old Liberal Club, Sandgate.

1887 Met in Queen's Rooms (theatre), which purchased and converted into present church

1889 Member starts new church New Prestwick Church (xxviii)

1904 Church dissolved to make a new start
1907 Church re-formed

xxviii. BAPTIST UNION
New Prestwick Baptist Church

1887 Meetings in house of a member of Ayr Baptist Church

1889 Church formed from Ayr Baptist Church

1900 Church built in Prestwick Rd., opposite Woodfield Ave.

xxix. *Other Religious Societies.* Among these are: The Christian Brethren (c. 1860); Wooden Kirk (1881-1951), see ii above; Salvation Army (1884); Hebrew Congregation (c. 1880); Y.M.C.A.; Y.W.C.A.; Seamen's Mission; Catholic Apostolic; Christian Science; Spiritualist Association; Nazarene; Psychic; Elim; Pentecostal