

**RELIGION AND LIFE, 1793-1865 : A STUDY IN
THE SOCIAL AND THE RELIGIOUS HISTORY
WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF THE PRESBYTERY OF
CUPAR**

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Presbytery of Cupar

A Thesis prepared by James Laird



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I declare that the thesis entitled 'Religion and Life 1793 -1865' has been composed entirely by myself and is a record of research carried out by me. It has not been accepted in any previous application for a higher degree.

I was admitted as a research student under Ordinance General number twelve at a meeting of the Faculty of Divinity on 1st May 1969 and at a further meeting of the same Faculty I was admitted as a candidate for the degree of Ph.D. under Resolution of the University Court, 1967, number one, with retrospective effect to the date of my admission as a research student.

Apart from the research for this thesis I have undertaken no other course of higher study or research.

SUMMARY

The population of the parishes under the supervision of the Presbytery of Cupar increased continually until 1851 and until 1841 an ever larger proportion of the inhabitants of the area found employment in the textile trade. Food prices were subject to fluctuation but while wages on the whole tended to rise the remuneration of textile workers deteriorated. Politically the Reform Act of 1832 was widely supported in the area which was transformed by it from a tory to a whig stronghold but dissatisfaction with that legislation created widespread support for the chartist movement among the unenfranchised.

In 1793 the Established Church dominated the area through its nineteen Kirk Sessions but the congregations of the Secession & Relief Churches increased in number and the union of these denominations created a body with only a few less congregations than the national church while the appearance of the Free Church made the establishment the place of worship of a minority group. Membership of these three sects was drawn from all classes of society.

All the denominations engaged in the rebuilding of churches, the architecture of which became increasingly elaborate as the nineteenth century advanced and architects of national fame were employed in their design. The internal equipping and appearance also underwent change as aids to comfort and beauty and revised ideas regarding the celebration of the sacrament of communion were incorporated into their structure. The financial provision for the parish churches fell on the heritors and was controlled by statute but in other denominations the generosity of the members provided for all the needs of the church.

The rejection of the Westminster Confession of Faith's definition of the relationship between church and state eventually led to an attack on the Established Church's position in relation to the civil law and

particularly to the legal provisions for the financial support of that body. Concurrently with this attack a dispute within the establishment over the law of patronage led to the Disruption of 1843. Other disputes took place but the period was also marked by two important unions, that of the New Lights of the two branches of the Secession Church and of the United Secession and Relief Churches.

Ministers and elders of all denominations shared a common background although the method of their election differed, dissenters generally being chosen by popular election, while in the parish churches the popular voice only became important after 1830. The functions of the church also underwent change. While worship followed generally the pattern set out in the Directory of Worship communion practice underwent modification and discipline relaxed appreciably. During the period, too, the responsibility for the provision of poor relief and the supervision of education was removed from the church which became a purely religious body.

INTRODUCTION

The area supervised by the Established Church Presbytery of Cupar is, even today, one in which agricultural work predominates. Nevertheless, it includes four royal burghs and many villages both large and small. At the close of the eighteenth century the principal sources of employment there were farming and hand-loom weaving with their allied trades. The dominant ecclesiastical body was the Established Church of Scotland and although congregations of other denominations existed in a few of the parishes none were sufficiently strong to challenge its hegemony.

As the eighteenth century closed the area was experiencing a period of change affecting the entire country, which heralded the replacement of agriculture as the basis of the national economy by manufacturing industry. Major innovations were also being introduced in farming methods and a definite attempt was being made to increase the production of the land by the development of new techniques concerned with land reclamation and improved methods of husbandry. Such modernisation involved a considerable capital outlay which, while it resulted in returns of produce unimaginable to earlier generations, also encouraged the organisation of agricultural work on a capitalist basis. Socially the successful farmer became increasingly a person of middle class affluence, while the majority of those who earned their living from the land were, or came to be, simply wage-earners.

The linen industry, which was largely based on the towns and villages, was also undergoing change. Hand-loom weaving which had provided those who followed the loom with a modest living in the earlier eighteenth century experienced an increased demand for its products as the nation prospered and consequent inventions ensured a supply of thread which became ever less expensive. In consequence in the 1790s hand-loom weavers were recognised to be a confident and prosperous section of society. Nevertheless, as the economic changes continued their position underwent drastic change until by the 1830s many found themselves on the edge of destitution.

All this was accompanied by a rapid increase in the population, which in combination with the industrial upheavals then taking place had far reaching effects on the social life of the community. In some of the parishes under the supervision of Cupar Presbytery the number of inhabitants multiplied while in others the population remained static. Increased prosperity and an increased number of resident made the establishment of new institutions a possibility while the appearance of a strata of society whose affluence was no longer dependent on the inheritance of land created a new group anxious to establish themselves outside of commerce and industry to which they owed their position. While the church benefited from the increase in wealth it also found responsibilities imposed on it as the contrasts of wealth and poverty were accentuated. How the church organised its resources and into whose hand it gave the stewardship were matters likely to have an important bearing upon its future.

The changes which affected the economic basis of society were gradual but widespread and they took place in a society where, after 1789, popular political thought was influenced by radical ideals which owed their origins to events in France. Although the extremes which were seen in France were sufficient to dampen the ardour of many radicals in Britain the aims which became prominent at this time remained in the minds of men to provide a continual undercurrent in the political life of the country and not least of North Flife. The narrow franchise of the eighteenth century and the closed corporations of the Scottish burghs enabled the Tories to maintain a long domination of Scottish political life. In the unreformed parliament the land-owning interest being strongly represented the policies of successive governments favoured farmers and this annoyed those who suffered from high agricultural prices and encouraged them to direct their resentment at the political means by which this was achieved as well as all who might be thought to support its maintenance. This political radicalism as it developed in the nineteenth century inspired men and women to question the older order. In this review the church and the old religious verities were required to

establish their authority in a world where efficiency was measured by new standards.

The following work represents an attempt to observe the life of the church in all its branches in the parishes over which the Established Church Presbytery of Cupar exercised its superintendence noting not only the changes which occurred but also those areas in which the status quo was maintained. The large volume of material providing information about these parishes made it necessary to restrict the number of parishes for which the records were studied. Those chosen were Auchtermuchty, Cupar, and Newburgh which being three of the royal burghs represent the urban life of Cupar district. The Parish of Strathmiglo has as its principal centre the village of the same name but also includes three smaller villages and it was selected to represent the parishes in which life revolved round just such a community, while Kilmany and Dunbog were parishes in which there were no large villages and where the principal occupations were agricultural. The Parish Of Collessie was also included since it seemed to represent the kind of society which the coming of the railway changed most dramatically. Within its bounds a railway junction was established and by the end of the century it had been divided into two parishes Collessie and Ladybank.

Commencing with the year in which Britain was drawn into the Revolutionary Wars with France and ending with the eve of the second Reform Act the period coincided with the development of a new political outlook and a new type of industrialised society in which the church occupied a much less important place. These years were those in which North Fife experienced the birth pangs of a society which has survived into the twentieth century and their effect on the ecclesiastical life of area was of crucial importance for the future of the church.

I SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

(a) Population

The population of the County of Fife throughout the period under review was continually increasing. As can be seen in the table in the appendix the population had grown from a total of 93,743 in 1801 to 155,021 in 1861. The population of the parishes which lay within the bounds of the Established Church Presbytery of Cupar did not individually follow this trend.

The populations of the parishes of Creich, Dunbog, Flisk, Logie and Moonzie fluctuated within narrow limits showing no pronounced trend, while the population of the Parish of Kilmany declined throughout the period falling from 787 in 1801 to 656 in 1861. (appendix) The residents of all these parishes felt that they were members of a numerically declining communities. At Dunbog in the 1830's the decline was attributed to the disappearance of a village and the absorption of small farms. (1) Elaborating on this, Leighton in his 'History of the County of Fife' published during that decade comments:-

"Within memory there was a large village which is now entirely disappeared." (2)

Elsewhere it is reported that where there had been three or four farms there was by the end of the 1830's only one. (3) The same tale is told of Kilmany. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the parish minister attributed the decline during his ministry to the enlargement of farms, while his successor writing after the close of the 1830's attributed the continuing decline to the universal introduction of threshing mills. (4)

In contrast with what was happening in the small rural parishes the remainder of the parishes within the presbyterial area were experiencing a significant increase in population. The Parish of Auchtermuchty, which included with the burgh of that name the village

of Dunshelt, had its numbers increased from 2,060 in 1801 to 3,704 in 1851. (Appendix) During the same fifty years the Parish of Cupar, which as well as the Royal Burgh included the villages of Springfield and Glaidney Cotton, increased in population from 4,463 to 7,427. (Appendix) Events in the Parish of Newburgh followed a similar pattern, but there the expansion spread to the neighbouring Parish of Abdie which contained Mount Pleasant, a suburb of Newburgh. (Appendix) Indeed, at Abdie the population more than doubled and this increase was attributed to its proximity to Newburgh. (5) The pattern was repeated in those parishes where the villages had no burghal status. Strathmiglo, whose parish bounds included the villages of Gateside, Burnside and Newbigging had its population increased from 1,629 to 2,509 during the first fifty years of the nineteenth century. (6)

About 1840 the increasing population of Cupar attracted the attention of its Parish minister who attributed the increase partly to the fact that the labouring classes moved into the town when they were no longer fit for work in the fields. (7) A second reason which occurred to him, and one which might very well have been a more important factor, was the increase of trade and manufacture in the town. (8) He, also, noted that the increase in population had taken place in all the villages of the parish as well as the burgh, itself. All this had happened, while as he remarks the population of the landward area had diminished. (9) Coupled with the drift from the land a considerable part of the increase was due to a preponderance of births over deaths. The Parish Registers of Auchtermuchty show that births exceeded deaths in most years, sometimes very considerably. During the sixty years preceding 1855 deaths exceeded births in only six years, and in only one year were they equal in number. (10) An identical pattern emerges from the Parish Registers of Collessie. (11)

The parishes of what was called the Cupar District consisted of all the parishes in the Cupar Presbyterial area with the addition of a small part of Arngask and Abernethy parishes. The census returns for this

district reveal an increase in the population of the area of more than 10,000 between 1801 and 1851. (Appendix) About that time a significant change took place. When the census of 1861 was completed it showed that the population of very parish except Collessie had declined. (Appendix) Even Collessie, where the population had increased by more than 500 during the first fifty years of the nineteenth century, increased by only ten in the ten years preceding 1861. (Appendix) Interestingly the number of people living in the Burgh of Cupar increased although the total number residing in the parish as a whole declined. (Appendix) Unfortunately, errors in the returns for Auchtermuchty and Newburgh make a comparison with events in these parishes impossible, although in the much smaller Burgh of Falkland the population did decline. (12) In the event it is clear that there was a fall in the total population of the area between 1851 and 1861. It is also apparent that in some parishes the decline started before 1851. At Ceres and Abdie it began some time after 1841, and at Balmerino and Monimail after 1831. The Parish of Cults experienced a small decline between 1831 and 1841 although it reached its peak in 1851. (Appendix)

As the increase in population was possibly associated with trade so may the decline have been the result of a decline in trade. There are repeated accounts of trade difficulties. In 1826 the respectable manufacturers were meeting to devise a scheme to relieve distress among operative weavers and the distress appears to have persisted into 1827 and by 1832 there was again a subscription for unemployed labourers. (13) Early in 1836 there were reports that weavers' wages were improving but the minister of Monimail writing a year or two later commented that the trade could hardly be said to afford an adequate remuneration. (14) By 1862 the linen hand loom weaving trade which had become the principal source of employment, particularly in the larger parishes, was described as 'declining'. (15)

Within the general pattern of growth and decline the people moved freely in pursuit of employment. Those parishes which experienced growth in their populations inevitably had large incursions. The Parish of Collessie, which, uniquely, had a rising number of residents between 1851 and 1861 was typical. At the 1841 census the number of heads of families born in the parish totalled eighty-six. The number born elsewhere in the County of Fife was two hundred and forty-two. (16) Of the three hundred and forty couples whose banns were proclaimed between 1793 and 1829 there were 234 of whom one of the parties was not resident in the parish. In 130 instances the prospective husbands were resident in the parish and since it seems likely that the couple would generally take up residence in the parish where the husband was employed there must always have been a number of wives who had also been born outside the parish. (17)

In the predominantly agricultural parishes where the population was static or declining there was also a considerable amount of movement. The Parish of Kilmany where the population declined throughout the period nevertheless experienced a considerable turnover in individuals resident there. The census of 1851 revealed that the majority of the population had been born outside its boundaries. Of the total population of six hundred and sixty-two only two hundred and twenty-three were born there. (18) Of this tendency in the Parish of Flisk the parish minister commented: about 1840

"the migratory habits of our agricultural population are not favourable to their moral and religious character and prevent a permanent character from attaching to a parish like this." (19)

At Dunbog the parish minister noted that it was the practice for married ploughmen about that same time to look for new employment after one year's service and that it was the practice of unmarried ploughmen always to flit after one year. (20) At Kilmany this experience was

repeated. At the communion of 1832 there were twenty-seven people handed in certificates that they were in full communion with the established church. (21)

While it is difficult to assess accurately the number of children in any family during the period, partly due to the mobility of the parents, there is a reasonable amount of agreement amongst those who wrote of the various statistical accounts that the average size of a family was somewhere in the region of four to five. At the end of the eighteenth century the Parish minister of Strathmiglo estimated the average family at five while his colleague at Monimail during the same period set the average family very precisely at 4.5277. (22) Forty years later at Newburgh the average family was estimated to consist of five children. (23) All this would appear to disagree with the conclusion of the compilers of the 1851 census that families on the mainland of Scotland averaged 4.5 persons, but it may merely reflect the suggestion contained elsewhere that hand loom weavers families were often larger than the average. (24)

The Census returns give an indication of the number of children residing with their parents on the night of the census. In 1841 at Collessie there were 194 families with children, who were living at home on the night of the census. Twenty-seven of these families had only one child, and the children were distributed amongst the remainder as follows:-

41	families	with	2	children
40	"	"	3	"
41	"	"	4	"
27	"	"	5	"
9	"	"	6	"
7	"	"	7	"
1	"	"	8	"
1	"	"	9	"

(25)

The census returns contain uncompleted families as well as families where grown-up children had left home, and the only satisfactory way of

establishing the size of a family is by tracing the births through the parish register. The continual movement of the population makes this extremely difficult and the conclusions must always be suspect. An attempt was made to trace families whose births had been registered at Auchtermuchty between 1818 and 1854 and who had remained in that parish throughout the wife's child-bearing years. The distribution of the children among the forty-three families was similar to the distribution produced by the Collessie census returns. (26) It does suggest that the average family size in the area tended to lie in the range of two to four children rather than the four to five suggested by the writers of the statistical accounts but the difference may well be due to the high mortality rate among children, the incompleted families inadvertently included, and the relatively small number of families considered makes the figures unreliable.

The suggestion has been made that the families of hand loom weavers tended to be larger than the families of men engaged in other trades, while the families of farmers were on the whole smaller. The 1841 census for Strathmiglo Parish contained the returns for thirteen families whose head was described as a farmer. The average number of children in these families was smaller than the average number of children in the families of agricultural workers while they in turn were smaller than the number on average of children in the families whose head was described as hand loom weavers. (27) In 1851 the number of hand loom weavers in the parish had fallen dramatically but they again appeared to have on average a larger number of children than farmers or farm workers. (28) Again the small numbers make the averages unreliable but the fact that the pattern recurs at two successive census is interesting.

Amongst the ministers who completed their ministry while in office in one of the parishes which lay within the bounds of the presbytery of the Established Church the average number of children in the families

of those who were parish ministers was 5.2.⁽²⁹⁾ The families of the ministers of the dissenting churches also may have been somewhat larger than the average for the area but they are again difficult to trace because many dissenters did not record the births of their children in the records of the Parish Church and their own congregational records have disappeared. The Rev. John Renton of Auchtermuchty Free Church had had five children by 1861.⁽³⁰⁾ The Rev. John Laird of the Free Church at Cupar who started his career as a minister of the established church had six children and William McAra minister of the Free Church at Strathmiglo had five children in 1851.⁽³¹⁾ Amongst the ministers of the Secession Church, the other principal denomination in the area, James Borwick of Rathillet had seven children.⁽³²⁾

Within all these figures there are, of course, wide variations and where there were favoured circumstances families were frequently very large. David Gillespie, the principal heritor of Kilmany and the Laird of Mountghannie, had a family of four by the time his wife had reached the age of twenty nine.⁽³³⁾ David Haitland Makgill Crichton of Nether Rankeillor who was born in 1791 was the fifth child of a family of fifteen.⁽³⁴⁾ Ministers, perhaps because of the secure circumstances in which they found themselves, frequently had families somewhat larger than average. Peter Barclay, minister at Kettle between 1778 and 1819 had a family of fourteen, a total nearly equalled by Laurence Adamson, minister of Cupar until 1837 whose family numbered thirteen.⁽³⁵⁾

The mortality rate for children was high, and the deaths of children under eleven years of age represented a high proportion of the total number of deaths in any parish. In the Parish of Auchtermuchty children's deaths represented something like one-fifth of the total number of deaths recorded by the Old Parish Registers. Between 1795 and 1799, for instance there would appear to have been twenty-three children who died out of a

total number of one hundred and twelve deaths.⁽³⁶⁾ It is difficult to be certain because ages were not recorded in those years in the register for that parish and it is necessary to infer that the death is the death of a young person from the fact that the small mortcloth was used or from the fact that the dead person is described as the 'son of', 'daughter of', or 'child of' someone. Judging on this basis the only years during the period under review when the proportion of children's deaths fell significantly were in the period between 1800 and 1809 when young people's deaths totalled twenty and there were one hundred and seventy eight deaths recorded. In contrast, the period between 1817 and 1821 has fifty-one entries recording children's deaths out of one hundred and eighty-one recorded.⁽³⁷⁾

This latter proportion would appear to have reflected the experience of the neighbouring Parish of Collessie. Here again it is necessary to assume that anyone who is described as 'son/daughter/child of' someone is a child or young person. Between 1795 and 1799 there were eighteen deaths where the individuals were so described out of a total of sixty-one deaths recorded. In this parish the only years in which the proportion fell significantly were between 1825 and 1829 when eleven deaths out of fifty-seven seem to have been those of young persons. The worst years were 1813 to 1817 when there were forty-one young persons' deaths out of seventy, and 1837 to 1841 when forty-three deaths out of eighty-seven appear to have been the deaths of young people.⁽³⁸⁾

At Collessie the age of death was recorded from 1845 onwards in the Parish Register of Proclamations where deaths were also recorded and allowing for the fact that the population had increased by this later date it seems probable that the figures for the earlier years do not exaggerate the number of child deaths. Between 1845 and 1849 twenty-five children of ten years of age or under died in a period when there were one hundred and five deaths recorded. There were, also, years when the experience

was much worse. Between 1850 and 1854 the number of deaths for children aged ten or under was forty-five. In that period there were one hundred and five deaths recorded.⁽³⁹⁾ The much smaller Parish of Kilmany also recorded the age of death in some years and the experience there was not dissimilar from that of Collessie. Because not every year contains a note of the age of death it is necessary in the case of Kilmany to consider individual years. In 1831 and 1841 each year contains an entry of the deaths of two children under the age of ten while the records note eight deaths in total. By contrast the year 1851 was a bad one with the deaths of eleven children under ten contained in a total of twenty four deaths.⁽⁴⁰⁾ The experience of Strathmiglo in this respect reflected what was happening in Collessie and Kilmany in the years between 1821 and 1830. In that parish the deaths of sixty-eight children of ten or under is recorded among two hundred and eighty one deaths. In the years following 1831 the experience at Strathmiglo appears to have worsened. From 1831 to 1840 the deaths of children in the above age group numbered one hundred and sixty-one out of four hundred and eleven and between 1841 and 1851 out of three hundred and fifty-nine one hundred and thirty deaths were those of children.⁽⁴¹⁾

The diseases of childhood obviously took a considerable toll of life. Chincough and whooping cough are repeatedly given as one of the causes of death among the young. There were four deaths in Auchtermuchty alone during the year 1818 to 1819 from this cause. Croup was another ailment capable of causing death according to the Parish Registers of Auchtermuchty and Collessie.⁽⁴²⁾ Outbreaks of scarlet fever could also, upon occasion, take a considerable toll. In 1862 there were, in the Parish of Collessie, five deaths from scarlet fever and one from scarletina maligna.⁽⁴³⁾ In Collessie this was a year when the deaths of children represented a large proportion of the total. Out of twenty-eight deaths fourteen were those of children under ten years of age while no age at all was given for four individuals.⁽⁴⁴⁾

There were other diseases capable of killing children. In 1814 a serious outbreak of an infectious disease among children occurred at Collessie. In that year the Parish registers record the death of all the children of a Richard Willison and in that same year a David Smart had three children buried between the 28th and 30th December. The cause of death for all of the children was 'a putrid sore throat'. Smallpox also took its toll. In 1796 it accounted for six children's deaths out of seven at Collessie and in 1854 it was the cause of death of another four people in the same parish. (45)

The dangers to mothers and their unborn children during labour added its own tally to the mortality rate. Between 1818 and 1825 six women died in childbirth in the Parish of Auchtermuchty. (46) This may, to some extent, reflect the difficulties experienced by older women during labour, since only two of these women were in their twenties. Two were between thirty and forty, one over forty, while the last was a girl in her teens. (47) While childbirth is not regularly noted as a cause of death instances of it are reported. The records of the Parish of Collessie notes deaths in childbirth infrequently, although such deaths are reported in 1846 and a case of puerperal fever which ended fatally is noted in 1862. (48) The dangers to the unborn child are reflected by the fact that at Collessie Parish there were some twelve still-born children between 1850 and 1854. (49) In Strathmiglo the register of deaths contains entries in respect of thirty-seven still-born children for the period 1837 to 1854. (50) During that period the Parish Registers record the number of baptisms in the parish between 1837 and 1840 and for the year 1844. This information may not represent the total number of live births because dissenters were reluctant to register the birth of their children in the parish records and dissenters represented a significant proportion of the total population of that parish at that time. During these years the number of live births

reported was one hundred and fifty while there were nine still-births. (51)

Of all illnesses in the period few seem to have taken a greater toll of human life than typhus and consumption. At Auchtermuchty the years 1818 - 1819 were marked by thirteen deaths from consumption alone, in total of ninety-seven reported deaths. Seven of the victims were under the age of twenty and all but one under forty. (52) In the years 1821 and 1822 there were ten who succumbed to this illness, five under forty years of age. (53) 1824 was a year when the experience was again bad at Auchtermuchty. Thirteen deaths were recorded in the parish registers as being due to this one cause and six of these deaths were of individuals who were under thirty years of age. (54) At Collessie the cause of eleven deaths was recorded for the year 1849, and four of these were attributed to consumption. In 1849 the same parish register attributed three of the eight deaths, whose cause was given, to the disease. (55) At Kilmany there were twelve deaths between 1831 and 1840 attributable to consumption and the number rose to fifteen in the ensuing ten years. (56) Like consumption, typhus appears to have been constantly present. It has been suggested that where death is attributed to fever this may refer to typhus fever. If this was the case then typhus must have been endemic in the area. In any case it was a recurring disease. An outbreak which had started in the winter of 1828 - 1829 persisted until 1830 when it was reported that at Newburgh there had been some two or three hundred patients treated although there had been only fifteen or sixteen deaths attributed to it. (57) In 1832 there was a report of a further outbreak of typhus in Newburgh where it had been decided to open a soup kitchen and to fit up the town hall with beds for the patients. (58) In 1838 Typhus had broken out in Falkland in December and in the following February the Fife Herald was commenting on the long continued prevalence of typhus. (59) Deaths were reported at Collessie due to this illness in the years between

1846 and 1849 when it apparently claimed five lives.⁽⁶⁰⁾ In view of this it does not seem improbable that deaths attributed to fever in Auchtermuchty in the years between 1818 and 1828 might conceivably have occurred during a prolonged outbreak of typhus.⁽⁶¹⁾

The disease which seems to have raised the greatest public alarm during the period was Cholera Morbus, which first appeared in 1832. In May of that year there were one or two cases being reported including a fatal case at Flisk.⁽⁶²⁾ Following that death the house was fumigated with chlorine gas, the clothes of the person who attended the patient were immersed in boiling water and the body buried within four hours.⁽⁶³⁾ Despite these precautions the disease continued to spread. A soup kitchen had been opened at Letham in the Parish of Monimail as early as March 1832 and the Heritors of Collessie Parish had opened a Cholera Morbus Fund in the same month.⁽⁶⁴⁾ In August there was a fatal case in Kettle and by the twenty-eighth of August there had been four victims in Cupar.⁽⁶⁵⁾ The disease ran its course until December when there had been one hundred and thirty cases and sixty-three deaths in Cupar alone.⁽⁶⁶⁾ The disease remained to be one of the scourges of the area. It was present in Collessie in 1846 and 1847 and it reappeared in the Parish in 1852 and 1854.⁽⁶⁷⁾ The Burgh of Auchtermuchty had a visitation in 1849 when the Burgher church held a fast day on account of the 'collara' and the Burgh of Cupar was also experiencing the effects of an outbreak at about the same time.⁽⁶⁸⁾ Newburgh suffered a very severe outbreak in 1854. Laing in his 'History of Newburgh' commenting on that outbreak recalled that in the year 1832 when the disease first appeared it had raged in the district around Newburgh, but that Newburgh itself was untouched by the disease because the filth was cleared away, the houses examined and in many cases washed with hot lime, the very poor supplied with beds and bed clothes and the closes cleaned.⁽⁶⁹⁾ The persistence of cholera and many of the other diseases which afflicted the area may have

been due to the failure to observe a necessarily high standard of cleanliness in and around the homes of the people.

I(a) Population

- (1) New Statistical Account vol. 1 p212f
- (2) Alexander Leighton - History of the County of Fife vol.2 p.90
- (3) NSA p.213
- (4) Old Statistical Account vol. 19 p.430
NSA p.545
- (5) Abstract of the answers and Returns under the Population Act 3 and 4 Victoria C.99 1841 p.30f
- (6) If the parish minister writing in the OSA was correct in his estimate of a population of nine hundred and eighty in 1790 the changes in Strathmiglo must have been amongst the most dramatic in the whole area. The increase in the population was affected notwithstanding the fact that the OSA records the disappearance of the Cotton of Strathmiglo prior to 1790.
- (7) NSA p.8
- (8) Ibid p.8
- (9) Ibid. p.8f
- (10) Auchtermuchty Old Parish Registers. Vols. 1, 2, 3. Deaths exceeded births in 1805, 1809, 1811, 1812, 1813, and 1819. Births and deaths were equal in number in 1818.
- (11) Collessie Old Parish Registers. Vols. 1 and 3. Deaths exceeded births in 1814, 1820, 1833, 1837, 1843, and 1844. Deaths equalled the number of births in 1834.
- (12) Population Tables and reports - Census of Scotland 1861 p.44f
- (13) Fife Herald 9/3/1826, 4/1/1827, 9/1/1832, 23/2/1832.
- (14) Ibid. 4/2/1836
NSA p.44
- (15) A. Westwood - Parochial Directory for the Counties of Fife and Kinross
P. 40
- (16) Census Returns 1841 - Collessie
- (17) Collessie Old Parish Registers. vols. 1 and 3 - proclamations.
- (18) Census Returns 1851 - Kilmany
- (19) NSA p.603
- (20) NSA p. 214
- (21) Kilmany Old Parish Registers vol. 2. The certificates were issued by

kirk sessions in ten parishes - Monimail, Dairsie, Forgan, Leuchars, Talkland
Ceres, Kettle, Abernethy, Cortachy, and Fetteresso.

(22) OSA vol. 4 p.402, vol. 2 p.400

(23) NSA p.72

(24) T. C. Smout - A History of the Scottish People p.394

(25) Census Returns 1841 - Collessie

(26) Auchtermuchty OPR vol.1.3. The forty-three families were chosen quite at random on the basis that both parents being named they were more easily traced than families where only one parent was named of these there were:

five families with one child
eight families with two children
seven families with three children
nine families with four children
six families with five children
three families with six children
one family with seven children
one family with nine children

(27) Census Returns 1841 - Strathmiglo. The average number of children in the families whose heads described themselves as farmers was 4.9. Thirty-six families had heads of family who described themselves as farm workers of a subordinate type. The average number of children in these families was 5.2. Forty-seven heads of family described themselves as handloom weavers. The average number of children in their families was 5.9.

(28) Census Returns 1851 - Strathmiglo. Only eighteen heads of family described themselves as handloom weavers but the average number of children in these families was 3.9. The twelve families whose head was described as a farmer had an average of 3.1 children, while farmer workers' families which numbered thirty-eight, averaged 3.3 children.

(29) H. Scott - *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*. vol. 5 pp.123 - 176 passim.

(30) Census Returns 1861 - Auchtermuchty

(31) Scott - *Fasti* vol.5 p.440

Census Returns -1851 - Strathmiglo

(32) *Ibid.* Kilmany. The following year his wife gave birth to a still-born child and her death is recorded in the Old Parish Register in 1854. These seven children probably represent a completed family.

(33) *Ibid.*

- (34) J. W. Taylor - Memoir of the late D. M. M. Crichton of Nether Rankelloug
P. 1
- (35) Scott - Past vol. 5 pp.159f, 144f
- (36) Auchtermuchty OPR vol.2
- (37) Ibid. vols. 2 and 3
- (38) Collessie OPR vol. 1
- (39) Collessie Register of Proclamations 1845 - 1864
Collessie OPR vol. 3
- (40) Kilmany OPR vol.2
- (41) Strathmiglo Old Parish Register vol. 4
- (42) Auchtermuchty OPR vols. 2 and 3. Deaths due to croup occurred in
1818 - 19: 5
1821 - 22: 2
1822 1822: 2
1823: 2
1827: 2
Collessie OPR vol. 3. Deaths due to croup are recorded in
1845: 2
1846: 2
1849: 2
1850: 2
1852: 2
1853: 1
- (43) Collessie Proclamations
- (44) Ibid.
- (45) Collessie OPR vols. 1 and 3.
- (46) Auchtermuchty OPR vols. 2 and 3.
- (47) Ibid.
- (48) Collessie OPR vol. 3
Collessie Proclamations
- (49) Collessie OPR vol. 3
- (50) Strathmiglo OPR vol. 4
- (51) Ibid.
- (52) Auchtermuchty OPR vol. 2.
- (53) Ibid. vol. 3
- (54) Ibid.

- (55) Collessie OPR vol. 3
- (56) Kilmany OPR vol. 2
- (57) Fife Herald 3/6/1830
- (58) Ibid. 2/2/1832
- (59) Ibid. 28/12/1837, 22/2/1838
- (60) Collessie OPR vol.3
- (61) Auchtermuchty OPR Vols. 2 and 3
- (62) Fife Herald 10/5/1832
- (63) Ibid. 10/5/1832
- (64) Collessie Heritors Accounts 1813 - 1848
- (65) Fife Herald 23/8/1832, 30/8/1832
- (66) Ibid. 6/12/1832
- (67) Collessie OPR vol. 3
- (68) Auchtermuchty Associate Session Accounts Book 1752 - 1850 17/10/1849
Fife Herald 18/10/1849
- (69) A. Laing - Some Notices of the History of Newburgh p.ix

I(b) Occupational Pattern

Throughout the area in the period under consideration there was a wide range of trades and professions. The coming of the railway appeared to have some effect on those parishes through which it passed, Collessie in particular. Nevertheless, the entire area became increasingly dependent on textile production in general and linen weaving in particular.

The principal industries were farming and linen production but the numbers employed in linen production increased and despite fluctuations which the trade experienced, particularly towards the end of the period, it remained more important in the 1860s than it had been in 1795. In some areas, considered predominantly rural, it is clear that there was sometimes a significant and increasing minority engaged in hand-loom weaving. At the end of the eighteenth century the Old Statistical Account of Monimail reported that the Parish contained thirty-five weavers, thirty farmers, and four shepherds.⁽¹⁾ In 1841 the number of weavers in the parish had increased considerably. The village of Letham, a small part of the parish, by then had seventy hand-loom weavers resident and the numbers engaged in agricultural work would have appeared to decrease in the meantime.⁽²⁾ The Heritors of the parish in their list of land proprietors and tenant farmers drawn up in 1847 named only twenty-four farmers and three land-owners who would appear to have been managing their own estates.⁽³⁾ The numbers engaged in farming were obviously much greater than the twenty-seven who were working farmers but it does suggest that farming had declined as a source of employment while weaving had waxed more important.

The same pattern is repeated in many parishes. At the end of the eighteenth century it was estimated that there were

twenty-six farmers in the Parish of Strathmiglo, and that the dependents and families of these farmers numbered one hundred and eighty-two. At the same time there were estimated to be fifty manufacturers, forty-six craftsmen and twenty-nine household and fifty labouring servants.⁽⁴⁾ Leighton's account of the parish some forty years later reported that there were one hundred and eighty-three people chiefly employed in agricultural work while there were estimated to be about five hundred looms in the parish, and it was claimed that linen manufacture was the chief employment in the village.⁽⁵⁾ The parish minister writing about the same time estimated that the number of persons engaged in the industry was between five hundred and six hundred and maintained that linen manufacture was the staple employment of both men and women. The numbers employed in agricultural work, he estimated at one hundred and eighty-six.⁽⁶⁾ A similar pattern can be seen at Balmerino and other parishes.⁽⁷⁾

In 1862 the compiler of Westwood's Parochial Directory regarded the growth of the linen industry at Newburgh since 1780 as remarkable.⁽⁸⁾ In the 1790s the parish minister indicated that even then there were two hundred and seventy weavers in the parish but added:-

"they do not yet abide constantly at the loom... they betake themselves to a seafaring life when the price of those kinds of cloth which they...weave falls low in the market."⁽⁹⁾

The same writer also added that, till within a few years of his writing, a great proportion of his parishioners regardless of their trade also cultivated small pieces of land which they owned, but that the bulk of this cultivated land had been, by the time of his writing, purchased by the proprietor of Mugdrum Estate so that the residents of the town had become much more

dependent on their particular occupations. ⁽¹⁰⁾ To some extent, the weavers' attachment to the land may have remained. Some thirty years later the parish minister of Cults was still able to write that the majority of weavers there tended to leave their looms at harvest time, while a minority of weavers worked at their looms only in the winter months. ⁽¹¹⁾

Within the linen industry the first half of the nineteenth century was not only a period of growth, it was also a period of change. Brown linens were gradually superseded by bleached linens. Prior to 1793 the linen trade at Newburgh produced principally Osnaburghs, Silesias and other brown linens, while between 1790 and 1791 the trade had nearly five hundred thousand yards of brown linen stamped at Auchtermuchty and only some two thousand yards of bleached linen. ⁽¹²⁾⁽¹³⁾ The Newburgh historian Alex. Laing commenting on this trend in the trade wrote:-

"Somewhere about the year 1820 bleached yarn began to be used...they (the manufacturers) sent their yarn to the bleachfields that were then being set up..." ⁽¹⁴⁾

Towards the end of the period a decline in the role of bleachfields seems to have occurred. ⁽¹⁵⁾ This decline was probably associated with development of spinning mills throughout the area. By 1840 three spinning mills had been erected in the Parish of Ceres, one at Strathmiglo, three in Cupar, and others elsewhere. ⁽¹⁶⁾⁽¹⁷⁾⁽¹⁸⁾ Originally manufacturers distinguished the different kinds of yarn as mill-spun or hand-spun but these terms fell into disuse as mill-spinning improved and prevailed. ⁽¹⁹⁾ The spinning wheel which until the 1820s was to be found in almost every home gradually disappeared after the 1830s, although it remained a branch of household economy to the end of the period. ⁽²⁰⁾⁽²¹⁾ Similarly hand-shuttles were beginning to disappear during the first twenty years of the

nineteenth century. (22)

Perhaps the largest changes were less technical than organisational. At the end of the eighteenth century the parish minister of Newburgh reported that weavers did not arrange themselves under different masters who would furnish them with materials and pay them for their work. They preferred to weave their own yarn and sell their own webs in the town to a few of their own number who then disposed of them at Perth, Dundee, Cupar, Auchtermuchty and Glasgow. (23) Even in Newburgh at that time there were some workshops with up to a dozen looms employed by one master and in other parishes such as Kettle there were looms wrought or superintended by master weavers who employed apprentices and journeymen. (24)(25) The next thirty years saw the rise of resident manufacturers and an increase of importance to the trade of the manufacturers of substance. By 1836 the trade in linen at Newburgh was controlled by thirteen people who employed all the weavers there and furnished work for a considerable number of weavers in the surrounding parishes. (26) In Strathmiglo the hand loom weavers who had previously been dependent on manufacturers at Dunfermline, Dundee and Kirkcaldy had become dependent on resident manufacturers who traded on their own account. (27) Even Creich an essentially rural and agricultural parish had its own two resident manufacturers by 1840. (28)

The increased control of the industry by the manufacturers of substance was followed by appearance of power loom factories in the district. By 1862 they had been erected in Cupar, Freuchie and Strathmiglo. (29) The factory at Strathmiglo which was erected shortly before 1850 contained sixty-four power looms and was apparently capable of employing three hundred and fifty people. (30)(31)

Accompanying the increasing control of the industry by manufacturers and the use of power-driven machinery there were increasing difficulties besetting the trade. In 1862 the hand-loom trade was considered to be in a declining state in Cupar and Ceres, and at Auchtermuchty by 1843 the decline in the trade was attributed to the depression which had afflicted the area in 1817.⁽³²⁾⁽³³⁾ Whatever the cause the number of hand-loom weavers in the area decreased greatly. Between 1841 and 1861 the number of hand-loom weavers in the village of Letham in the Parish of Monimail was reduced from seventy to thirty-five.⁽³⁴⁾ In the Parish of Kilmany, where weavers were certainly never numerous the numbers of hand-loom weavers declined in the same twenty year period from twelve to two.⁽³⁵⁾ At Strathmiglo village, in the parish of that name, the number of heads of families who described themselves as hand-loom weavers in the census returns declined from forty-seven to eighteen between 1841 and 1851.⁽³⁶⁾ Even power loom factories were not immune to this trend. In 1851 the powerloom factory at Strathmiglo employed one hundred and thirty men, one hundred and sixty women, thirty boys and thirty girls. In 1861 the numbers had apparently fallen to fifteen men, forty-two women, two boys and twelve girls.⁽³⁷⁾

Whatever the cause the first sixty years of the nineteenth century saw a series of depressions which adversely affected the trade, and those employed in it. As early as 1812 the Kirk Session of Newburgh were concerned about the failure of trade and the want of employment and in 1813 Newburgh Weavers' Society made a contribution to the poor's fund.⁽³⁸⁾⁽³⁹⁾ The minutes of Collessie and Cupar heritors meetings both reveal a concern about the inadequacy of church door collections to meet the demands made on the Kirk Sessions funds in the year 1813.⁽⁴⁰⁾ 1817 was a particularly bad year. The heritors of Strathmiglo Parish

raised a special fund by subscription amongst themselves and the other inhabitants of the parish. ⁽⁴¹⁾ The fund was raised in January and in February it was providing benefits to ninety-eight people, in addition to the funds handled by the Kirk Session. Between then and June of that same year the number of beneficiaries never numbered less than seventy while support for a declining number of needy was continued until February 1818. ⁽⁴²⁾ The pattern of distress and support was repeated throughout the north of Fife. A subscription was raised in Collesie. ⁽⁴³⁾ At Cupar a committee for the Relief of the Distressed was formed in December of 1816. ⁽⁴⁴⁾

If 1817 was a bad year the details could be repeated from the events of other years. In 1826 the respectable manufacturers of Cupar were meeting to find some means of relieving distresses among operative weavers and in September of that year there were some two to three hundred weavers employed on the roads on Cupar. ⁽⁴⁵⁾⁽⁴⁶⁾ In 1827 one hundred and ninety-six people were being supported by a committee for the relief of the poor. ⁽⁴⁷⁾

The worst spell experienced by the trade in the period under consideration was probably in the decade beginning with the year 1840. The columns of the local press reveal a story of continuing distress:-

Fife Herald 2.7.1840

"We are sorry to find that Fife heretofore comparatively easy is beginning to partake of the general depression. The weaving trade feels it severely, and not only in the towns but in the country villages a considerable number of hands are out of employment."

Ibid. 17.3.42

"Perhaps there are fewer than eight hundred individuals in this place in a partially starving condition...in this once happy and flourishing, but now miserable and ruined village and neighbourhood." (Newburgh Correspondent)

- Ibid. 30.6.42 A committee of relief for the unemployed prepared a list of sixty unemployed persons in Cupar and twenty-four in Springfield.
- Ibid. 19.12.44 Weaving in a dull state the manufacturers cannot keep all their hands employed - Newburgh Correspondent.
- Ibid. 13.3.45 The Dowlas trade considerably distressed - and one manufacturer reported as reducing wages by one shilling. (Auchtermuchty Correspondent.)
- Ibid. 14.4.46 The hand loom weaving trade has been in a languishing condition for a considerable time. (Dunshelt Correspondent)
- Ibid. 6.1.48 A report of the state of trade in Strathmiglo says that it is in a bad way.

The trade fluctuations continued into the 1850s and in the winter of 1851 to 1852 there were continuing reports of languid trade and unemployment. (48) The decline of the trade was obviously protracted over a long period and its effects on those who depended on it must have been most unfortunate.

For the agricultural industry the beginning of the period under review was a time of quite substantial change. The Parish minister of the Cores gives an idea of affairs at the outset of the period, for he draws a picture of society in the midst of re-organisation. The enclosing of lands had been going for about thirty years but a great deal remained to be done. In ploughing, horses were chiefly used but where a farmer used oxen, two oxen and two horses were usually thought sufficient where earlier four oxen and two horses were used on each plough. On the whole, however, two good horses were thought adequate to the task while one ploughman was thought sufficient both to drive the plough and to hold it. The size of farms varied from twenty acres to four hundred acres and on the farms there was a cotter for every plough employed. The cotter was bound to serve the farmer

and in return was allowed a house and a small garden with a cow kept for him. He also received a small cash payment. (49)

Other reports tend to confirm this picture. (50) The Reverent J. Lister, the Parish minister of Auchtermuchty considered that a proper knowledge of agriculture had only arrived towards the end of the eighteenth century in his parish where he was enthusiastically setting an example of good husbandry to his parishioners. (51)

At Monimail the parish minister of the same period considered that the face of his parish had been changed considerably by the improvements that were even then still being put in hand. (52)

Perhaps the most dramatic changes in the countryside were the result of the drainage schemes then being commenced. As early as the beginning of the nineteenth century the parish minister of Collessie reported that as a result of having its course straightened the River Eden, which previously had regularly over-flowed its banks, had ceased to flood the adjacent lands. We attributed an improvement in the general health to this work and in particular the decreased incidence of ague which some fifty to sixty years earlier had been his parish's most common illness. (53)

The real age of the drainage schemes was to come in the early years of the nineteenth century. By 1840 areas of land had been reclaimed from marsh at Dunbog, Collessie and Abdie. (54)(55)(56)

The most impressive of all was, probably the draining of Rossie Loch at Collessie. The Loch had covered some two hundred and ninety acres and draining it cost £3,000, but in return it yielded two hundred and fifty acres of land capable of producing good crops of grain. (57)

At Kilmany it was estimated that the agricultural improvements had increased the acreage of land under cultivation from three thousand two hundred and sixteen scotch acres to three thousand five hundred and fifty scotch acres by 1800. (58)

At Abdie by round about 1836 it was

estimated that the agricultural improvements had increased the amount of grain produced by about one third over the quantity produced in 1792.⁽⁵⁹⁾ Writers on agricultural matters were always cautious to advise their readers not to take the increase of acreage in arable land as a guide to the extent of the improvements because it took no account of the improved state of the soil.⁽⁶⁰⁾

The practice referred to in Ceres, of cotters being bound to serve the farmer may have been somewhat dated even when that account was written. At Monimail it is recorded that servitudes were few and dying away at the beginning of the nineteenth century and such assistance as was given during the hay and corn harvests was voluntary rather than exacted.⁽⁶¹⁾ The parish minister of Monimail at the beginning of the century was also able to report that farm houses were being built in a more commodious and comfortable style and that the tenantry were improving in manners, dress and way of life, and formed a respectable body of men.⁽⁶²⁾ At Collessie forty years later the parish minister was making a similar comment on the way in which tenant farmers were housed.⁽⁶³⁾ By the end of the eighteenth century tenant farmers at Creich were paying rents for their farms which had doubled or even trebled but still the parish minister was noting they were riding better horses and were better clothed than previously.⁽⁶⁴⁾ It all suggests that tenant farmers were becoming more prosperous as a result of the new methods of work which they were adopting and perhaps as a result of the longer leases, extending to nineteen years, which they were being given.⁽⁶⁵⁾ The period also saw the number of farms decline. Between 1791 and 1843 this tendency can be observed in the Parish of Cults. The number of farms in the parish fell from twenty-eight to twenty. It was also noted that

these remaining farms were larger and had "cot towns".⁽⁶⁶⁾

The condition of farm workers also underwent change. At the end of the eighteenth century the cottagers who generally held the farm ploughs got livery, meal, house, a small garden and an acre of land. In return they were also expected to furnish reapers at harvest time.⁽⁶⁷⁾ About 1796 it was the practice for several farmers or cotters to keep a herdsman week about during the herding season.⁽⁶⁸⁾ but the practice of allowing cotters to keep a cow had been discontinued by the late 1830s and only foremen were then allowed to keep a cow.⁽⁶⁹⁾ When the New Statistical Account was published the parish minister of Dunbog was writing about a class of hired ploughmen. Married ploughmen he considered to be quiet, sober and industrious who as young men lived on a diet of oatmeal, sweet milk and potatoes, occasionally varied by pork and in their youth enjoying uninterrupted health and a robust and sinewy vigour.⁽⁷⁰⁾ The cotter system by this time seems to have disappeared.⁽⁷¹⁾ Married farm servants were provided with a house and a garden, while unmarried men were housed in bothies.⁽⁷²⁾ Farm workers appear to have been in short supply and depopulation of the countryside had become a problem to the extent that in some areas farmers were having difficulty in getting labourers to work their green crops and whole villages had disappeared.⁽⁷³⁾⁽⁷⁴⁾

There was also a dark side. The minister of Dunbog having commented on the health and vigour of young ploughmen went on to add that long before old age most of them were crippled with violent rheumatism. He also considered that they laboured under an evil system in that the unmarried men lived in bothies, from the time they were capable of attending cattle. Leaving home when they were no more than boys their religious and intellectual education was, in consequence, neglected from their earliest youth. He, also felt that the wandering life of a ploughman, who

tended to seek new employers frequently after short periods of service with one master did nothing to help the situation. (75)

The period saw the linen industry become very much more important while it is apparent that a marked drift from the land was taking place at the same time. Towards the end of the period the linen trade was also showing signs of decline, perhaps as a result of the acute depressions which had afflicted the trade. The fact that the two principal industries in the area were declining had its effect on the total population of the area.

I(b) Occupational Pattern

- (1) OSA vol. 2 p.400
- (2) Census Returns 1841 - Monimail
- (3) Monimail Heritors Minutes and Accounts 1840 - 75
- (4) OSA vol. 4 p.401
- (5) Leighton - Fife p.198
- (6) NSA p.778
- (7) OSA vol.9 p.219 The writer of the account estimates the number of weavers at fifty, but when the NSA was written the estimate had ~~been~~ risen to one hundred and fifty.
- (8) Westwood - Directory p.178
- (9) OSA vol.3 p.180
- (10) Ibid.
- (11) NSA p.572
- (12) OSA vol. 8 p.181
- (13) OSA vol.6 p.344 Brown linen 239,244½ yards, Brown Silesias 260,093 yards, bleached linen 2,212½ yards.
- (14) A. Laing - Lecture on the History of Linen and of Linen Manufactures in Newburgh p.36
- (15) Westwood - Directory p.44 At Ceres one of the three bleachfields was given up.
- (16) NSA p.527
- (17) Ibid. p.779
- (18) Ibid. p.11
- (19) Laing - Linen p.24f
- (20) Ibid. pp.16 and 24f. At p.21 Laing writes

"It was a thriftless family that had not one or more spinning wheels at work. The daughters of the richest families in town had to take their turn at the wheel....The women servants had to spin an allotted quantity every week."

This, he says, was 2½ spindles or 36,000 yards. He affirms this was the way that the whole yarn of the country was produced.
- (21) Ibid. p.24f
- (22) Ibid. p.30 footnote

- (23) OSA vol. 8 p.181
- (24) Ibid.
- (25) Ibid. vol. 1 p.379
- (26) NSA p.76
- (27) NSA p.778
- (28) Ibid p.651
- (29) Westwood - Directory pp.56, 99, 210
- (30) Fife Herald 14/2/1850 (advertisement)
- (31) Census Returns 1851 - Strathmiglo. Description of James Troup as proprietor of a power loom factory employing one hundred and thirty men, one hundred and sixty women, thirty boys and thirty girls.
- (32) Westwood - Directory pp. 44, 56.
- (33) NSA p.784
- (34) Census Returns 1841 and 1861 - Monimail
- (35) Census Returns 1841 and 1861 - Kilmany.
- (36) Census Returns 1841 and 1851 - Strathmiglo
- (37) Census Returns 1851 - Strathmiglo
- (38) Newburgh Parish Church Kirk Session minutes 1773 - 1849 1/3/1812.
- (39) Newburgh Parish Church Kirk Session Accounts of the Poor 1812 - 31 1/5/1813.
- (40) Collessie Heritors minutes 1775 - 1841 5/2/1813
Cupar Heritors minutes 1802 - 1821 14/1/1813.
- (41) Strathmiglo Heritors Records 1817 - 1818 31/1/1817
- (42) Ibid.
- (43) Collessie HR 1755 1/1/1817
- (44) Cupar Heritors Committee for the Relief of the Distressed 1816 - 1818
- (45) Fife Herald 9/3/1826
- (46) Ibid. 7/9/1826
- (47) Ibid. 4/11/1827
- (48) Ibid. 18/12/1851, 12/2/1852
- (49) OSA vol. 5 p.381f
- (50) OSA vol. 2 p.409f The account says that there were twenty-two ploughs

mostly two horse ploughs and that a certain amount of enclosing was taking place. The accounts of Kettle, Cupar, Collessie and others in the same series also report changes in agricultural methods.

- (51) OSA vol. 6 p.342
- (52) Ibid. vol. 2 p.401
- (53) Ibid. vol. 2 p.407
- (54) NSA pp.205, 207
- (55) Ibid. p.32
- (56) Leighton - Fife p.155
- (57) NSA p.33
- (58) Ibid. p.546
- (59) Ibid. p.53
- (60) OSA vol. 19 p.427 footnote.
- (61) OSA vol. 2 p.405
- (62) Ibid.
- (63) NSA p.32
- (64) OSA vol. 4 p.228
- (65) NSA p.32
- (66) OSA vol. 14 p.234
NSA p.53
- (67) OSA vol. 4 p.234
- (68) Laing - Linen p.19 footnote
- (69) NSA p.793
- (70) Ibid. p.213
- (71) Ibid. p.526
- (72) Ibid p.527
- (73) Ibid. p.213
- (74) Ibid. pp.30, 212
- (75) Ibid. p.214.

I(c) Prices and Wages

Throughout the period the price of the necessities of life was largely dictated by harvest conditions, although prices showed a tendency to rise although such a rise was neither uniform or steady. At Monimail two successive parish ministers published a list of prices in their parish which can be tabulated as follows:-

	<u>1750</u>	<u>1790</u>	<u>1810</u>	<u>1834</u>
Beef and mutton (per lb)	2d.	4d.	8d.	5½d.
Veal (per lb.)	4d.	7d.	9d.	6d.
hens	4d.	1s.-d.	1s.6d.	1s.6d.
new butter	4d.	8d.	11d.	9d.
salmon (per lb.)	1d. - 1½d.	5½d.	8d.	8d.
eggs (per doz.)	1½d. - 2d.	4d.	1s.-d.	8d.
wheat per boll	-	£1.0.2d.	£1.10.6d.	£1.4.10d.
barley do. do.	-	13s.-d.	£1. 4.7d.	£1.0.4d.
Oats. do. do.	-	10s.11d.	£1. 1.7d.	15s.3d.
meal do. do.	-	14s.5d.	£1. 5s.-d.	15s.10d.

(1)

At Cupar Market in the mid 1790s. beef, mutton, pork and veal were all being sold at four pence a pound. Hens were costing three pence each; geese three shillings each; rabbits sixpence a pair; pigeons three pence a pair; butter nine pence a pound; best cheese three pence and coarse cheese three pence. Oatmeal was costing thirteen pence per peck; potatoes fourpence per dozen and salmon five pence per pound. (2)

Within a very short time the price of food rose steeply. In August 1800 the Kirk Session of Newburgh judged themselves authorised to supply the poor during the 'continuance of the high price of provisions'. (3) Nine months later the same Kirk Session was referring to 'the present season of scarcity'. (4) The parish minister of Creich was quoting the price of wheat at £2 per boll on the twelfth of June, 1796 and at £3 per boll on the twenty-ninth of October 1801. (5) At Dunbog the Kirk Session gave a certain Jas. Ramsay a guinea and the entry carried the comment 'Given to Jas. Ramsay during the scarcity. If returned it shall

be credited. (6) That season saw a good harvest and the Kirk Session of Dunbog recorded the fact that a thanksgiving service was held in their parish - for the good harvest 'after the great dearth: the meal being reduced from three shillings and sixpence to one shilling per peck! (7) Society continued to be at the mercy of the climate with regard to the cost of food. In 1825 the harvest does not appear to have been an abundant one although the price of grain did not rise appreciably. This was attributed to the fact that the labouring classes had restricted themselves to the least quantity of food necessary to support life and the extensive use of potatoes. (8) Between 1835 and 1844 the price of barley and meal fluctuated considerably, as the undernoted figures show:-

	<u>1835</u>	<u>1841</u>	<u>1842</u>	<u>1843</u>	<u>1844</u>
Meal	15s. 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ d.	16s. 9d.	16s. 0 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.	13s. 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.	14s.
Barley	16s. 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ d.	19s. 9d.	19s. 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.	17s. 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ d.	11. 0s. 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.

(9)

Inevitably the fluctuations in the price of grain were reflected in the price of bread. In the ten months between October 1853 and July 1854 the price of a four pound loaf rose from eight pence to nine pence before falling again to seven pence half penny. (10) High prices for provisions affected the poorest strata of society most severely and upon occasion attempts were made to help the most severely distressed. In the crisis of 1817 the problems of unemployment were compounded by the high cost of food as a result of poor harvests and at that time committees were formed in a number of parishes intended to relieve the distress. (11) Nevertheless, the poor were obliged to adjust their diet according to the cost of food. Following the bad harvest of 1825 the prices of grain remained lower than was

expected and this was attributed to the fact that the poor made do with less and substituted potatoes wherever possible. (12)

The potatoes which supported so many through the dark days of 1826 were also subject to the risks which afflicted the crops. By the middle of July 1834 there were reports that the potato harvest had again failed for a second successive year. (13) The disaster of 1846 which affected the whole country was also expected to press on the industrious poor in the Cupar district and in that widespread failure the Secretary of the Board of Supervision wrote to all parochial boards requesting information about the failure of the crop and the steps taken to mitigate its consequences. (14)

It was not only the price of food which was subject to fluctuation. Other commodities seemed to be subject to rises in price. At Newburgh the Session Clerk informed the Kirk Session of the parish church in 1807 that Alex. Marshall, wright, was no longer able to supply coffins for the poor at eight shillings owing to the rise in the price of wood. The Kirk Session allowed him ten shillings for each coffin. (15) Four years later the treasurer was reporting to the Kirk Session that Marshall had charged twelve shillings for a coffin alleging that he could not take any less by reason of the high price of wood. (16) The Kirk Session agreed to the demand as 'being moderate'.

Towards the end of the period there appears to have been a feeling among some sections of society that prices were falling. In 1852 the heritors of Cupar received notice of an application for the augmentation of his stipend by the first minister of Cupar. Walker of Kingusk, one of the heritors, argued that while the money stipend arising from the fiars prices of grain was much less than it had been before the introduction of free trade,

the price of all necessaries was also reduced so that the money stipend actually went further than it had done previously.

The argument is suspect because he then went on to point out that the proprietors of land were also feeling the effects of the fall in grain prices and that they found the expense of farming greatly increased by the improved methods which they had introduced. (17) His contention seems to be substantiated by the fact that two years earlier the Parochial Board of Kilmorye turned down an application by the Inspector of Poor at Kettle for an increase in the allowance paid by him on their behalf to a certain John Herdy on the grounds that other parishes were reducing their allowances from the great fall of the price of provisions. (18)

The general tendency was for wages to rise during the entire period. At its out-set ploughmen's earnings varied between a minimum of £4 per year at Ceres and a maximum of £8 per year at Dunbog. (19)(20) Wages depended on ability and a variety of payments in kind were included. At Monimail, in addition to the cash payment a quantity of meal was also included. (21) At Ceres about the same time although wages were estimated to be lower than in some other parishes the ploughman could expect to be provided with a small garden, a house and have a cow kept for him. (22) At the end of the eighteenth century the day-labourers' pay was likely to be varied as between summer and winter. At Cupar the parish minister estimated that a day labourer would earn ten pence to a shilling in winter and one shilling to one shilling and sixpence in summer. (23) Women's wages were lower. At Dunbog a female servant was paid up to £3 a year while at Monimail a maid servant could earn up to £4 per annum. (24)(25) A few years later, in 1810, a woman

engaged in labouring work at Monimail was paid ten pence per day while a man working in the same capacity could look for one shilling and ten pence per day. (26)

By 1840 wages had risen. A married farm servant in Kilmany parish could earn from nine pounds to twelve pounds per annum with a house and a garden provided. In addition at Kilmany he would receive six and a half bolls of oatmeal, nine bolls of potatoes and a pint of sweet milk every day. (27) Unmarried men in bothies could earn ten pounds or eleven pounds a year, with the same perquisites and in addition they were provided with fuel and bed-clothes by their employer. (28) While this represented an appreciable increase it meant that ploughmen were actually earning less than they had been able to earn in 1810 when a ploughman might earn as much as sixteen pounds per annum. (29) The common labourers had not appreciably improved their position during this period. At Kilmany, their emuneration was in the region of eight or nine shillings a week in winter and nine shillings and eleven shillings a week in summer, and at Monimail labourers were earning on average one shilling and fourpence per day. (30)(31) At the same time a tradesman in that parish such as a mason, might earn two shillings and three pence a day. (32) At Kilmany tradesmen were thought to be earning ten shillings to sixteen shillings a week towards the end of the third decade of the nineteenth century. (33) Women's wages continued to be much lower than those of men. At Newburgh a female labourer earned only eight pence a day against the one shilling and sixpence paid to her male counterpart while at Monimail she would have earned only seven pence a day against the one shilling and four pence paid to a man. (45)(35)

Perhaps among the wage earners the highest strata were the

liveried servants whose annual income in 1834 was estimated to be somewhere in the region of twenty six pounds.⁽³⁶⁾ In addition to their payment in money the liveried servants received food and lodging. A close second to the liveried servants were the sailors who could earn two pounds ten shillings a month rising to three pounds per month.⁽³⁷⁾

Although the wages of skilled tradesmen tended on the whole to be higher than those of the unskilled workers there are indications that they were not entirely satisfied with their lot. References to this aspect are not frequent but the Fife Herald carried a report of a strike of journeyman shoemakers with the stated intention of raising wages and forcing their employers to employ only those journeymen who had joined a combination which had been formed by the strikers. Two men brought into the district were dissuaded by the strikers from working, but on being brought before the magistrates they were compelled to fulfil their undertaking. This had apparently been part of a nation-wide combination of shoemakers.⁽³⁸⁾

Of all the trades in the area most discontent was to be found in the weaving trade. At the end of the eighteenth century it was reported that the gross product of a loom on average and including the work of apprentices and old men who did little work, was sixty pounds per annum. Good hands could produce one hundred pounds or more. The same report estimated that the gross average expense to the master in processing the lint at forty-six pounds fifteen shillings.⁽³⁹⁾ It is apparent that the weaving trade at the outset of the period provided for those who practised it an income that compared favourably with the incomes provided in other trades. By the late 1830s the situation had changed appreciably. Writing about

the weaving trade the parish minister of Monimail then commented:-

"...the hours of labour are long and allow little time for reading and relaxation...(it) can hardly be said to offer a fair remuneration to those employed or to be favourable to health or morals." (40)

At Collessie it was reckoned that it required great industry for a weaver to earn nine shillings a week⁽⁴¹⁾, while at Newburgh wages were thought to vary between eight shillings and fourteen shillings a week.⁽⁴²⁾ To be able to earn as much as two shillings a day a weaver was obliged to work twelve hours.⁽⁴³⁾ The parish minister of Cults took a fairly bleak view by estimating the average wage at five shillings per week for an adult weaver whether a man or a woman, and at three shillings per week for a child.⁽⁴⁴⁾ Bleak as the parish ministers thought the situation was, it could be even worse. In 1845 Cupar Heritors received a note from their Kirk Session drawing their attention to the plight of a twenty-three year old woman who worked as a weaver and earned four shillings a week. From that sum she was obliged to pay for her purns (reels of thread) and support her parents and herself.⁽⁴⁵⁾

There are repeated accounts of weavers suffering distress, and the low wages of weavers no doubt made them very vulnerable in the depressions which periodically afflicted the trade. In 1833 the Fife Herald printed a letter to the editor signed

'Will the Weaver' which summarised the weavers position as follows:-

"...in order to earn eight shillings per week (the weaver) must work twenty four or twenty three yards per day which everyone acquainted with the work knows to be great work... I do not think that the manufacturers books will show such exertions are general or can be kept up continuously for a length of time..."

The writer then goes on to estimate the annual income of weavers at twenty pounds sixteen shillings per annum. from which he estimates deductions of house rent at two pounds ten shillings;

loom rent at ten shillings; coals at two pounds one shilling and four pence; lighting at one pound six shillings; dressing and tallow at seventeen shillings and six pence; wearing on furniture and apparel at five pounds; offering at church say two shillings and one penny; which left in his calculations only six pounds nineteen shillings and five pence for food. This says the writer leaves only two shillings and eight pence per week, which, in a family that might require fifteen meals a day or one hundred and five meals a week, has to meet the entire cost of food. He concludes:-

"This is the situation of the weaver and such has it been for a series of years back. We are sometimes considered a discontented race...it is no easy matter to look sweet on an empty belly." (46)

In August of 1835 the Fife Herald was again carrying reports of low wages of hand loom weavers. (47) In May of 1841 the Herald was carrying a report that Heriot of Ramornie had written to the magistrates of Falkland urging that hand loom weavers should be exempted from the tax on windows because of their low wages. (48) In 1842 both the Fife Herald and the Fifeshire Journal were reporting that wages were low. (49)

The Herald report carried the comment, "Wages of weavers, miserably small as they were, have declined these few weeks." (50)

In January of 1843 a complaint from another branch of the linen trade found expression in the columns of the Fifeshire Journal. In a letter to the editor a correspondent signing himself as a 'Working Heckler' stated:-

"the wages of flax-dressers fifteen years ago were from three shillings and sixpence to four shillings per hundred weight. It would be easy to prove...that the demand for labour in this department has increased and yet wages are only one shilling and nine pence to two shillings per hundredweight...You are aware that cotton spinners, calico printers, handloom weavers and many other branches are in the same situation..." (51)

The general dissatisfaction with wages in the linen trade appears to have led some of the hand loom weavers to hold a meeting in Newburgh to form an association for their protection. (52)

Whatever the success of that meeting, in 1852 a meeting of hand-loom weavers in Auchtermuchty agreed to petition employers in the district to raise the prices they received for their weaving. (53)

By July of the following year it is clear that a general agitation was taking place in the area for improved wages for weavers.

Meetings took place at Auchtermuchty, Craigrothie, and Newburgh in an agitation that lasted for at least three months. (54)(55)

In August of 1853 the Fife Herald carried the report of a public meeting addressed by Messrs. Wilson of Ceres and Rougvie of Kirkcaldy whom, the report said, had both been engaged in stirring up the hand loom weavers to join the agitation for improved prices for their work. (56)

Within a few days of that meeting some of the leading manufacturers in the north of Fife had agreed to a settlement involving a uniform rate for work of about half what the weavers were asking with the promise of more later if the trade remained prosperous. (57)

The apparent success of the weavers to prove illusory and within a few months weavers were complaining that a great number of manufacturers were setting their webs to a lower order of reeds and thereby increasing the weavers work and nullifying the effect of the gains which had been sought. (58)

While it would appear that agricultural workers had benefitted through increased wages it is clear that day labourers had not appreciably improved their lot. Weavers and workers in the linen trade generally had experienced a considerable loss of income and a consequent decline in their standard of living, which could only be expected to lead to a decline in the number of people seeking to enter into the trade. In an area where other forms of

employment were scarce many individuals must have been led to leave the area in the hope of improving their lot.

I(c) Prices and Wages

- (1) OSA vol. 2 p.402
NSA p.42
- (2) OSA vol. 17 p.169
- (3) Newburgh PCKS 1773 7/8/1800
- (4) Ibid. 4/5/1801
- (5) A. Cant - The Communion in Creich Parish Church, Fifeshire. 1761 - 1834
(Records of the Scottish Church History Society vol. 4) p.83
- (6) Dunbog Old Parish Registers vol. 3 Accounts 29/10/1801
- (7) Ibid. 5/4/1801
- (8) Fife Herald 2/4/1826
- (9) Hamilton Bruce Papers - Fiars Prices for meal and Harley
- (10) Fife Herald 6/10/1853, 3/11/1853, 13/7/1854
- (11) Cupar HR Relief Committee 1816
- (12) Fife Herald 2/4/1826
- (13) Ibid. 10/7/1834
- (14) Ibid. 25/8/1846
- (15) Newburgh PCKS 1773 3/12/1807
- (16) Ibid 9/11/1811
- (17) Cupar Heritors minutes 1839 - 57 8/6/1852
- (18) Kilmany Minute Book of the Heritors, Kirk Session and Parochial Board
1837 - 1907 16/2/1850
- (19) OSA vol. 5 p.383
- (20) Ibid. vol. 4 p.234
- (21) Ibid vol. 2 p.402
- (22) Ibid vol. 5 p.383
- (23) Ibid vol. 17 p.168f
- (24) Ibid. vol. 4 p.234
- (25) Ibid. vol.2 p.403
- (26) NSA p.42
- (27) Ibid. p.547

- (28) NSA p.547
- (29) Ibid. p.42
- (30) Ibid. p.547
- (31) Ibid. p.42
- (32) Ibid p.42
- (33) Ibid. p.547
- (34) Ibid. p.73
- (35) Ibid. p.42
- (36) Ibid p.42
- (37) Ibid. p.73
- (38) Fife Herald 8/9/1825
- (39) OSA vol. 1 p.379
- (40) NSA p.44
- (41) Ibid. p.31
- (42) Ibid. p.73
- (43) Ibid. p.589
- (44) Ibid. p.572f
- (45) Cupar Heritor Papers - Bundle dated 1842 - 56 Extract from Cupar Kirk
Session minutes dated 6/1/1845
- (46) Fife Herald 10/10/1833
- (47) Ibid. 13/8/1835
- (48) Ibid. 13/5/1841
- (49) Ibid. 28/4/1842
Fifeshire Journal 23/6/1842
- (50) Fife Herald 28/4/1842 (Quotation from the Dundee Advertiser)
- (51) Fifeshire Journal 19/1/1843
- (52) Fife Herald 30/9/1845
- (53) Ibid. 4/11/1852
- (54) Ibid. 28/7/1853
- (55) Ibid. 22/9/1853
- (56) Ibid. 11/8/1853
- (57) Ibid. 15/8/1853
- (58) Ibid, 13/10/1853

I(d) The Political Pattern

The years between 1793 and 1865 were marked by stresses and changes in the political life of the nation which reflected the social and economic changes and stresses which were also being experienced. Throughout the 1780s there had been a reforming movement of a mild character, which had drawn its limited support predominantly from the gentry, the legal profession and the merchant classes. (1) The French Revolution precipitated an ideological struggle. In 1789 it was widely welcomed as being beneficial to France, but the discussion of French political rights led to the discussion of political rights in Britain, and there was much to cause dissatisfaction then and subsequently the total number of electors in Scotland was very small. The electoral roll of the County of Fife at the outset of the period did not exceed two hundred names and since among this very restricted electorate there was a smaller number who were able to influence their fellow electors it was possible to control the result of elections both in Fife and the rest of Scotland. (2)(3) Henry Dundas, who became Home Secretary in 1791 had by then made himself virtually undisputed master of the country since many of the landed families felt obliged to him for past favours. (4) At the height of his power it was claimed that he controlled elections in thirty-six of the forty-five constituencies of Scotland. (5)

Political life within the bounds of the Established Church Presbytery of Cupar was, like the rest of Scotland, at the outset of the period, influenced by Dundas. Members of Parliament favourable to his interest were returned by the County of Fife from 1790 until Dundas' death in 1812, with exception of a short period between 1802 and 1806 when a former

supporter appears to have defected.⁽⁶⁾ Notwithstanding the firm electoral support given to parliamentary candidates favouring the status quo during the period of the revolutionary wars, the ideals which inspired the revolution in France appear to have, at least initially, won sympathy in the County. Thomas Chalmers, then a student at St. Andrews, had high hopes of the events in France during the early stages of the revolution but with the subsequent excesses these hopes were dispersed and Chalmers was later to join the volunteers with a double commission as chaplain and lieutenant.⁽⁷⁾

The formation in Edinburgh in 1792 of a reform society which called itself the 'Friends of the People' led to other groups of similar views and the same name being formed throughout Scotland. By October 1793 it had held three conventions which had successively frightened away more and more of its upper middle class support.⁽⁸⁾ The evidence of support for this movement in the North of Fife is limited but it may be of some significance that a society calling itself the 'Friends of the People' was formed at Dunfermline in 1794 by which time upper middle-class support had largely deserted the movement.⁽⁹⁾

The policy of repression may account for the absence of any record of support for this in the North of the County. Whatever the reaction to events in France the introduction of a bill to enable the authorities to conscript certain classes of able bodied men appears to have caused as much alarm in the North Fife area as elsewhere in the County. A resident of Cupar who could remember events in the years following the raising of the militia recalled that after its dispatch to Newcastle many people joined the volunteers with the intention of avoiding service in the militia.⁽¹⁰⁾ By this time the 'Friends of the People' had disappeared to be

replaced by an organisation calling itself the 'United Scotsmen' which had connections with the 'United Irishmen' who had already raised a rebellion in Ireland. A shadowy body, advocating annual parliaments and universal suffrage the 'United Scotsmen' had connections with Dunfermline.⁽¹¹⁾ While the 'United Scotsmen' achieved nothing it seems that they were thought to have very wide support. The militia, itself, was not considered to be free from its influence and in 1802 Lord Advocate Hope was informed that the entire Fife Militia "except seven stupid fellows" were all 'United Scotsmen'.⁽¹²⁾

The political views of the clergy of the Established Church were probably subject to wide variations. Some were certainly critical of the methods of municipal government but in national politics the views most generally held were probably fairly reflected by the Rev. George Bennet who was presented to the Parish of Strathmiglo in 1807.⁽¹³⁾⁽¹⁴⁾ In 1797 he had written and published a volume entitled 'A display of the spirit and design of those who under the pretext of reform aim at the subversion of the constitution and government of this kingdom.' In the course of that work he defended the monarchy and distinctions of rank and appealing to the scriptures supported his argument with the statement of St. Paul, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. For there is no power but of God..." He was critical of the desire for annual parliaments and universal suffrage on the grounds that an improvement of morals and religion alone could ameliorate the human situation.⁽¹⁵⁾

The disappearance of the 'United Scotsmen' appears to have been followed by a period of political quiescence. The demands for annual parliaments and universal suffrage were to be heard

again within the course of the next fifty years, for radical politics became increasingly important in the life of North Fife. The inhabitants of the area supported liberal causes such as the campaign to improve the condition of the negro slaves and when in August of 1830 the radical Member of Parliament, Joseph Hume, was given the freedom of Cupar it would appear to have been a public recognition of the long-standing loyalty to radical politics in the area. (16)(17)

The agitation for burgh and parliamentary reform provided a channel into which this enthusiasm could be poured. Apart from the restricted nature of the parliamentary franchise the condition of the four royal burghs in the North of Fife like the other royal burghs gave rise for concern. Much had certainly been done to improve life within their bounds. The Parish Minister of Cupar writing the Old Statistical Account of that town commented that the town had a neat, clean, well-built and thriving appearance. The streets had by then been completely paved at the expense of the Corporation, while upwards of one third of the town had been built during the last quarter of the eighteenth century and considerable additions had been made to the town only a short time before his writing. (18) The picture of a changing scene in the towns was confirmed by the accounts of the other burghs. At Auchtermuchty, despite the erection of new and additional housing a short time before the Parish Minister wrote in the 1790s he was still able to report an increased demand for housing. (19) At Newburgh the magistrates and councillors were carrying forward a plan to repair the town street as the eighteenth century was drawing to its close. (20) Despite these improvements there remained a great deal to be done. The heritors of Cupar complained in 1814 that the walls of the burying ground were being injured by dung hills

and ordered the beadle to prevent any more being laid down against the walls.⁽²¹⁾ The Parish Minister of Cupar was also highly critical of some aspects of the town at the end of the eighteenth century. In particular he considered the jail to be a disgrace.⁽²²⁾ The other burghs may also have been open to similar criticism. In 1832 during the first outbreak of cholera the magistrates of Newburgh took the precaution of clearing all the filth and their failure to do so in subsequent outbreaks of the disease in the County was considered to be the cause of the severity with which these outbreaks affected Newburgh, the older residents having noted that in the first outbreak the town was largely spared by the disease.⁽²³⁾

These considerations were not the source of the most active concern about the state of the burghs. In the accounts of the improvements which were going on towards the end of the eighteenth century only at Newburgh did there seem to be any attempt to raise money to meet the cost.⁽²⁴⁾ Writing about the revenues of the Burgh of Auchtermuchty at the close of the eighteenth century the parish minister commented, "How the money is disposed of is best known to those who manage it".⁽²⁵⁾ The affairs of Falkland incurred similar criticism about the same time. "Falkland... adds to that mass of considerations which calls aloud for burgh reformation."⁽²⁶⁾

Prior to 1832 the burghs were governed by largely self electing councils which raised revenue from three principal sources, customs levied on fairs, income from property owned by the burgh and entry fees paid by burgesses.⁽²⁷⁾ Trade within the burghs was then restricted to burgesses but the municipal corporations at Newburgh and Auchtermuchty issued licences to trade to non-freemen.⁽²⁸⁾ By the 1830s Cupar alone had both a gildry and

incorporated trades, and in that burgh commerce was regulated by the former and tradesmen by the latter. Burgesses who intended to commence business in the town were required to be members of the appropriate body before they went into business.⁽²⁹⁾ The rights of these separate bodies were defended fiercely against encroachment by the other even as late as 1823 when an action between the two was heard before the Court of Session.⁽³⁰⁾

The properties of the burghs at this time underwent serious alienation and loss. At Auchtermuchty the property of the burgh not attached to creditors was sequestrated in 1822 at the instance of the town's creditors and sold by authority of the Court of Session.⁽³¹⁾ The properties of the Burgh of Cupar were very largely alienated by feuing them at rousps.⁽³²⁾ The necessity for this was attributed to the fact that the Corporation had carried out improvements without setting up any special fund to pay for them. Money for the improvements having been raised by granting annuities with rates of interest as high as twelve per cent the difficulty of meeting the liabilities so incurred made the alienation of the town property unavoidable. At Cupar there was also alleged to be a want of attention and regularity in the collection of rents due to the Corporation.⁽³³⁾ This alienation of property at Cupar eventually led to difficulties between the heritors and the corporation over the levying of voluntary assessments and other functions which fell to be shared between the heritors and magistrates.⁽³⁴⁾

In the light of the local situation it was perhaps inevitable that enthusiasm for reform in local and national politics became a common place in the area. It was widely believed in the 1830s that at Cupar the members of both guildry and incorporated trades favoured burgh reform.⁽³⁵⁾ In 1820 the County seat in the House of Commons had been won by Captain James Wemyss, a whig, who now

received petitions in favour of reform from Strathmiglo, Newburgh, Freuchie and two from Auchtermuchty. The petitions from Auchtermuchty each carried about four hundred signatures. (36)

Petitions on the subject of reform continued to emanate from the area well into 1831 and the extent of public feeling was demonstrated when an effigy of the Duke of Wellington, who was then the principal opponent of reform was burnt at Ceres. (37)

The struggle for the reform bill led to a welter of bodies working for its support being formed. Some of these such as the Auchtermuchty Political Union would appear to have been based on patterns which had spread across Britain, while others like the Newburgh Burgh Reform Committee may have had a more independent existence. (38)

It may have been the existence of such bodies which led to apparently well organised celebrations throughout the area when the bill was finally approved. (39)

The radical tendencies of the area appear to have been widely recognised and in 1832 William Cobbet wrote to the chief magistrate at Auchtermuchty intimating his intention of delivering a lecture there. (40)

The parliamentary struggle to have the Reform Bill passed seems also to have led to a complete change in the parliamentary representation of the County, for at the end of 1832 the editor of the Fife Herald wrote, "Fifeshire is now all secure - there is not a tory from the once tory county". (41)

Throughout the remainder of the period the County sent in the House of Commons was held almost continuously by Whigs or Liberals. (42)

Despite the celebrations which accompanied the passing of the Great Reform Bill it did not introduce the kind of democracy which had been discussed by the 'United Scotsmen' some thirty years before. The Burgh Reform Act of 1833 which was based on similar qualifications did not mean that control in the burghs passed into the hands of those who lived within their bounds. The ten pound property qualification

meant that in Auchtermuchty only seventy six people qualified for the franchise, in Cupar only one hundred and ninety four, in Newburgh only ninety three, and in Falkland only thirty five. (43)

For parliamentary elections the numbers were not greatly extended either. In the Parish of Balmerino the parish minister believed that only twenty two individuals were qualified to vote. (44)

As a result of the political struggles which had preceded the passing of the new acts many people who were left without a vote had been awakened to an interest in political matters in which they had no direct voice. Dissatisfaction with the new arrangements soon made itself heard. In 1833 meetings were held at both Falkland and Newburgh to express the desire to have the franchise extended to householders of two pounds rental. (45)

Perhaps as a result of this dissatisfaction, and perhaps as a result of the economic difficulties which the entire area suffered the chartist movement won many supporters, apparently amongst the unenfranchised. In 1838 the People's Charter with its six points of universal male suffrage, equal electoral districts, the abolition of the property qualification for M.P.s, the payment of M.P.s, the secret ballot and annual parliaments was drawn up. (46)

In December of that year and in June of the following year large meetings were held in North Fife. The meeting in June of 1839 had an attendance variously assessed at between four thousand and ten thousand people. The Fife Herald placed an estimate of between seven and eight thousand. As the meeting was held in the village of Monkston in the Parish of Collessie those present must have represented almost entirely supporters of the Charter. More interestingly for the observer interested in the popular appeal of the Charter, the tory Fifeshire Journal described the attendance at the June meeting as being only half of the numbers

present at the December meeting. (47)

At the June meeting resolutions in favour of universal suffrage, support for the charter, of opposition to the government and in favour of national government rather than party government were approved in a gesture which indicated only too clearly that neither of the principal political parties had the loyalty of those excluded from the franchise. The June meeting at Monkston was addressed by R.J. Richardson who had represented Manchester at the Convention organised by the Chartists in London in February of 1839. In the course of his speech he expressed the additional hope that one day women might also be given the vote. The local press does not appear to have been over sympathetic to the movement in the area. The whig Fife Herald reporting on the June meeting carried the comment, "Chartists must confess the movement has not made great progress...they will also admit the agitation for equal rights has been conducted in an injudicious and intolerant manner." (48) The tory Fifeshire Journal was much more scathing. The Auchtermuchty correspondent wrote, "Since the start of chartism, thieving in all its branches has been practised here". (49)

The Newburgh chartists probably received the greatest volume of publicity amongst the local groups and were able to invite many of the leading figures in the movement. Julian Harney, one such figure, addressed a meeting in Newburgh in August 1840. The house in which the meeting was held was crowded with men, women and boys who were described as being chiefly of the labouring classes. (50) It was not merely avowed supporters of the Chartist movement who favoured the political aims of chartism, other groups under a variety of titles also added their weight to the demands that the aims of the charter be implemented by government. (51) Consequently, it was not surprising that the

year 1840 ended with a show of strength by supporters of the charter. A visit by three of the leaders of the movement, Collins, White & Duncan, to the district led to a demonstration being organised at Newburgh. A procession of about two hundred men, women and apprentice boys from Newburgh met them half way to Auchtermuchty where they were also joined by large deputations, complete with music and banners, from Strathmiglo, Auchtermuchty and Dunshelt.⁽⁵²⁾ The extent of the movement was seen more clearly when, the following summer, a meeting of delegates from the various chartist societies was held to consider the advisability of nominating candidates to oppose both whigs and tories at the general election then pending. Delegates from Newburgh, Auchtermuchty, Kettle, Kettlebridge, Dunshelt, Cupar, Gauldry, Monkston, and Strathmiglo took part.⁽⁵³⁾

Chartists did not restrict their activities to the purely political field. At Cupar the local Chartists apparently held soirees and in 1841 they organised a meeting which had as its stated aim the organisation of a co-operative store.⁽⁵⁴⁾⁽⁵⁵⁾ In 1842 they were suspected of attempting to organise strikes in Auchtermuchty and Strathmiglo.⁽⁵⁶⁾ In the eyes of the supporters of the existing political establishment even apparently non-political organisations had a politically radical basis. In 1838 the Falkland correspondent of the Fifeshire Journal wrote, "Teetotalism masks a plot to overthrow the national institutions and promote radical and revolutionary ends".⁽⁵⁷⁾ The Chartists movement also had a religious aspect and in some areas Chartist sermons were preached by members of the movement.⁽⁵⁸⁾

The apparent decline of the movement in the area during the latter part of the 1840s did not mean that the ideals of the Charter had been dismissed from the popular mind. In May of 1848

Joseph Hume sought leave to introduce to the House of Commons a bill for the purpose of extending the franchise to include householders, having the vote taken by ballot, restricting parliaments to three years, and making the numbers of people represented by members of the House of Commons more equal in number.⁽⁵⁹⁾ When the bill was introduced it immediately received support from the Cupar District. Petitions were sent from Ceres, Auchtermuchty and Dunshelt to John Fergus the Member of Parliament for the County. The Dunshelt petition carried one hundred and sixty signatures, while that from Auchtermuchty carried the signatures of two magistrates, three clergymen, and three hundred and eighty-two other inhabitants.⁽⁶⁰⁾ At Falkland there was a large meeting in support of Hume's motion.⁽⁶¹⁾ With the failure of that bill the political life of the area seems to have become much less important, perhaps due to the fact that the weavers sought the improvement of their conditions in industrial action rather than political action during the 1850s. It is significant that the editor of the Fifeshire Journal could write in November 1864, the year in which the Liberal Sir Robert Balcaskie was returned to the County seat, that the elections had "passed without inspiring much interest".⁽⁶²⁾

The political activity of the area also had ecclesiastical consequences quite apart from the chartist sermons which were preached. The causes of political reform and religious dissent were frequently indented in the popular mind. During the struggle prior to the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832 many meetings took place in support of the bill in dissenting chapels, while the meetings of political unions upon occasion took place in such premises.⁽⁶³⁾⁽⁶⁴⁾ Even earlier, although Cupar had two parish ministers it was left to the Baptist minister to give an address

when Joseph Hume was given the freedom of Cupar.⁽⁶⁵⁾ During the 1830s there was a strong political movement developed which sought the disestablishment of the Church in Scotland and during this period dissent and reform appear to have become almost synonymous since the movement for disestablishment was led by leading dissenters, and supported by local politicians thought to be sympathetic to the movement for reform.⁽⁶⁶⁾⁽⁶⁷⁾ During this period the Newburgh correspondent of the whig Fife Herald described the magistrates of that burgh as, "Our reform, and we may also add, voluntary magistrates..."⁽⁶⁸⁾ Later that same year the Fife Herald quoted the Kirkcaldy Journal as identifying the Established Church with the tory party and quoting tory canvassers at Strathmiglo as saying that the Established Church was in danger from whigs and radicals. The same edition of the Herald also carried a report that a large group from Ceres had prepared to march on Cupar to oppose a meeting in the parish church there said to be held for 'tory' purposes.⁽⁶⁹⁾

During the first half of the nineteenth century opposition to the Corn laws was common to all shades of reformers. Amongst the petitions sent to parliament from the area in favour of the Reform Bill it was not uncommon to find a clause asking for the repeal of the Corn Laws.⁽⁷⁰⁾ Chartists represented part of that opposition, but the total opposition was much wider than that presented by the largely working class chartists.⁽⁷¹⁾⁽⁷²⁾ In 1842 a meeting of the United Secession and Relief congregations and such other residents of the Parish of Ceres as were opposed to the Corn Laws. At this meeting a committee of manufacturers, dissenting ministers and other influential residents was formed.⁽⁷³⁾ Since the Corn Laws were believed to ensure a high price for grain and the stipends of parish ministers were dependent on the fiars

prices for grain, it appears to have been believed that parish ministers had an interest in supporting the continuance of the Corn tariff. (74) In the course of the anti-corn law agitation D.M.M. Crichton, a prominent land-owner, and a leading figure in the Established Church, expressed the opinion in one of his speeches that the corn laws were just, so long as manufacturers were protected. An editorial comment in the Fife Herald on these remarks mentioned that it was believed that some years earlier the General Assembly of the Established Church had drawn up a petition in favour of the Corn Laws and suggested that the Established Church Synod of Fife had been sympathetic to the continuance of these laws. (75) The fact that Crichton had been chosen as a tory candidate in 1837 no doubt strengthened the connection between church and party in the minds of readers of that newspaper. (76) Crichton later fell foul of the Chartists when, as a result of a complaint he lodged against two nationally prominent leaders of the movement, Harney and Kerr, who had interrupted an anti-patronage meeting which he was addressing, the two were obliged to spend a few days in Stenhaven gaol. As a result Crichton experienced great difficulty with members of the movement who attended his subsequent meetings. (77)

While the relationship between dissenters, reformers and even Chartists seem to have been friendly it could have unfortunate consequences for the dissenting churches, also. In 1840 the Newburgh Chartists requested the use of Newburgh Secession Church for a political meeting. The managers of the church agreed by a majority of two. There being an outcry in the congregation against this decision, the question was laid before a congregational meeting where the managers' decision was overturned by a majority of three. Resignations followed led by that of the preses of the

managers who had supported the admission of the chartists to the church. Those who left at that time subsequently formed the Newburgh Relief Church. (78)

It would have been surprising if the political ferment had not had direct consequences for the churches. Ideas which had been formulated in the struggle of the American colonists against domination by a remote government had been reformulated and brought to the attention of a wide public by the French Revolution. In consequence men had been led to question the nature of the society in which they lived. From examining the political structure of society and working for a change in that sphere of communal life, it was an easy transition to have doubts about the organisation of the church, especially where it became identified with resistance to political reform. The Established Church was closely tied through the tithes and its financial dependence on the heritors to a landed interest which favoured the Corn Laws thought to be injurious to the poorer members of society and which was thought to be opposed to all political reform. Such a church was susceptible to the criticism of the political reformers. In this process dissent and reform became increasingly identified. In such a situation changes in the structure of church life became inevitable. These changes occurred in the period under review.

I(d) The Political Pattern

- (1) Smout - Scottish People p.413
- (2) Electoral Roll for the County of Fife 1793
- (3) R. L. Mackie - A Short History of Scotland p.222
- (4) G. S. Pryde - A New History of Scotland vol.2 p.122
- (5) Mackie - History p.224
- (6) H. Furber - Henry Dundas - First Viscount Melville appended maps.
Sir William Erskine of Torry held the seat from 1796 to 1806 but appears to have defected towards the end of that period. William Wemyss of Wemyss won the seat in 1807.
- (7) W. Hanna - A Memoir of the Life and Writings of Thomas Chalmers vol.1 p.95
- (8) Smout - Scottish People p.414f
- (9) E. Henderson - Annals of Dunfermline p.531
- (10) Anonymous - Historical Notes and Reminiscences of Cupar p.23f
- (11) Smout - Scottish People p.417
- (12) W. L. Mathieson - Church and Reform in Scotland p.121 A letter from Lord Palmerston
- (13) OSA vol.5 p.446
- (14) Scott - Fasti vol.5 p.175
- (15) G. Bennet - A Display of the Spirit and Design of those who under the Pretext of Reform Aim at the Subversion of the Constitution and Government of this Kingdom
- (16) Fife Herald 16/3/1826
- (17) Ibid. 26/8/1830
- (18) OSA vol.17 p141f
- (19) Ibid. vol.6 p.342
- (20) Ibid. vol.8 p.179f
- (21) Cupar HR 1802 3/3/1814
- (22) OSA vol.17 p.141f
- (23) Laing - Newburgh p.ix
- (24) OSA vol.8 p.179
- (25) Ibid. vol.6 p.345

- (26) *Ibid.* vol.4 p.446
- (27) Report of the Commission on Municipal Corporations in Scotland - 1835
- (28) *Ibid.*
- (29) *Ibid.*
- (30) Fife Herald 12/6/1823
- (31) Municipal Corporations
- (32) *Ibid.* Forty-two instances are noted between 1794 and 1813.
- (33) *Ibid.*
- (34) Cupar Heritors minutes 1829 - 1839 1/7/1831. 19/4/1836
- (35) Fife Herald 11/11/1830, 16/11/1830
- (36) *Ibid.* 25/11/1830, 2/12/1830, 16/12/1830, 30/12/1830
- (37) *Ibid.* 7/1/1831
- (38) *Ibid.* 9/5/1831, 18/4/1831
- (39) *Ibid.* 16/8/1832, Cupar, Ceres, Craigrothie, Springfield, Fittlessie, Collessie, Auchtermuchty, Strathmiglo, Dunshelt, Falkland, Newburgh, Luthrie, Balmerino, and Radernie all had well-organised celebrations.
- (40) *Ibid.* 8/11/1832
- (41) *Ibid.* 27/12/1832
- (42) Joseph Foster - Members of Parliament of Scotland 1357 - 1882. The seat was won by James Wemyss of Wemyss in 1820. He held it until 1847 except for the years 1831 - 32 when it was held by John Lindsay, Younger of Balcarres, a tory. John Fergus of Strathore represented the constituency from 1847 to 1857. In 1859 the seat was captured by James Hay-Erskine Wemyss, the son of James Wemyss who had held the seat earlier. In 1864 the seat passed to Sir Robert Balcaskie.
- (43) Municipal Corporations The reports on all four burghs in the area.
- (44) NSA p.583
- (45) Fife Herald 4/4/1833, 11/4/1833
- (46) J.W. Derry - Reaction and Reform 1793 - 1868 p.121
- (47) Fife Herald 20/6/1839
Fifeshire Journal 20/6/1839
- (48) Fife Herald 20/6/1839
- (49) Fifeshire Journal 11/4/1839
- (50) Fife Herald 27/8/1840

- (51) Ibid. 12/3/1840 Ceres Workmen's Association petitioned parliament for the extension of suffrage and the vote by ballot among other things.
- (52) Ibid. 12/11/1840
- (53) Ibid. 24/6/1841
- (54) Fifeshire Journal 4/2/1841
- (55) Fife Herald 18/3/1841
- (56) Fifeshire Journal 1/9/1842
- (57) Ibid. 6/9/1838
- (58) Fife Herald 20/2/1840
- (59) Fifeshire Journal 25/5/1848
- (60) Fife Herald 22/6/1848
- (61) Ibid. 22/6/1848
- (62) Fifeshire Journal 3/11/1864
- (63) Fife Herald 24/3/1831 Meeting in the Relief Church, Kettle.
- (64) Ibid. 9/5/1831 Auchtermuchty United Secession Church Meeting to thank the King for dissolving parliament.
- (65) Ibid. 26/8/1830
- (66) Ibid. 30/1/1834 A meeting in ~~Strathmiglo~~ addressed by the rev. Charles Milne, Secession Minister at Gatoside in the Parish of Strathmiglo and the rev. Dr. Taylor of Auchtermuchty Secession Church.
- (67) Ibid. 6/2/1834, 6/3/1834.
- (68) Ibid. 30/10/1834
- (69) Ibid. 25/12/1834
- (70) Ibid. 2/12/1830. A meeting at Freuchie.
- (71) Ibid. 20/5/1841
- (72) Ibid. 27/8/1840
- (73) Ibid. 20/1/1842
- (74) Ibid. 20/2/1823
- (75) Ibid. 18/10/1838
- (76) Taylor - Memoir p.126
- (77) Leslie C. Wright - Scottish Chartism p.115
- (78) R. Small - History of the Congregations of the United Presbyterian Church vol.1 p.197

II CHURCH ORGANISATION

(a) Churches

At the outset of 1793 the Established Church constituted the predominant church within the area which was under the supervision of the Established Church Presbytery of Cupar. Its bounds contained nineteen parishes each with its own church, minister and Kirk Session.⁽¹⁾ The Parish of Cupar was unlike the others in that it enjoyed a collegiate ministry of two men discharging jointly the responsibilities of pastoral oversight.⁽²⁾ The other major presbyterian groups with congregations in the area were the Burgher, the Antiburgher and the Relief Churches, while a congregation of the Episcopalian church worshipped at Cupar. The Burgh of Auchtermuchty had the distinction of having one congregation of each of these presbyterian churches worshipping within its bounds. The remaining congregations of dissenting presbyterians were situated at Ceres and Balmullo in the Parish of Logie where there were Antiburgher congregations; at Rathillet, in the Parish of Kilmany, and Newburgh where there were Burgher congregations; and at Cupar and Kettle where there were Relief congregations.⁽³⁾ There was also a small congregation of Burghers at Cupar which broke up in 1844.⁽⁴⁾ In 1793 other small religious groups held regular meetings within the bounds of the presbytery and it was recognised that there were some individuals who were in communion with no church but these do not seem to have represented a significant proportion of the community.⁽⁵⁾ During the ensuing half century the situation changed dramatically so that following the Disruption of 1843 the Established Church had become merely one denominational church among several competing denominations.

The evangelical preaching tours of the Haldane brothers towards the end of the eighteenth century had its effect in North Fife as

elsewhere in the country. Small Congregational churches appeared at Newburgh in the 1790s and in Pitlessie in 1802 where there was a congregation of thirty-three gathered under the pastorate of a farmer named Currie from the neighbourhood of Airthrey. (6)(7) Currie who had received instruction from Greville Ewing, who provided the leadership of the Congregational Church in Scotland after the Haldanes became Baptists, was the only pastor and on his death the congregation broke up. Most of those associated with it united with the congregationalists at Cupar. (8) This latter group were associated with a tabernacle owned by Robert Haldane. The church which was formed about 1800 declined partly as the result of the sale of the property by Haldane and partly as a result of the unpopularity of one of the ministers but despite this decline a Congregationalist Church still existed in Cupar in the year 1851. (9)(10) An Independent Chapel was also established in Falkland. In 1840 the congregation called the Rev. J. Elrick, M.A., to be their pastor. (11) In 1851 the congregation was estimated to be more than sixty strong but by the 1860s the chapel was no longer in regular use. (12)(13)

The Baptist Church appears to have established itself more successfully in Cupar at least. A Baptist congregation was founded in Newburgh in 1808 and in 1851 its continued existence was reported by the results of the religious census taken that year when it was said to have a membership of about twenty-five. (14)(15) Another small congregation was established at Auchtermuchty about 1830 but its numbers again appear to have been small. (16) Unquestionably the most successful of these congregations was that founded at Cupar in 1815. Formed by a Montrose man called Jonathan Watson who practised as a druggist in Cupar it had its origins in a group of individuals drawn together by Watson's exposition of baptist views. (17) It continued in existence throughout

the period and beyond and in 1851 was said to number three hundred members. (18)(19)(20)

Despite the presence of these small denominations the real change in the area's ecclesiastical balance lay in the growth of dissenting presbyterian congregations. Some of these new congregations owed their existence to disputes within older dissenting congregations. In 1793 on the death of the Ceres Antiburgher minister some of the Cupar members of that congregation withdrew and petitioned for supply of sermon for sabbath days during the winter. The intention behind the request was well understood at the time but despite opposition from the Ceres Antiburgher Kirk Session the group at Cupar was allowed to call a minister in 1796. (21) The disputed settlement of ministers at Ceres in the Antiburgher Congregation, and at Cupar in the Relief Congregation led to the establishment of two new congregations of the Relief Church, at Ceres in 1798 and at Cupar in 1830. (22) The second Relief Church Congregation at Cupar subsequently dissolved in 1847 when the minister found the terms of the union between the United Secession and Relief Churches to be unacceptable. The minister and some of the congregation applied for admission to the Established Church which received them in 1849. The church premises subsequently passed into the possession of the Baptist Church. (23) In 1840, another dispute, this time in the United Secession Church congregation at Newburgh over a decision to allow the Chartists to use the church premises led some of the members of that congregation to withdraw and form a new Relief Church in that burgh. (24)

Not all of the new churches had their roots in disharmony. Some of the new congregations were established quite peacefully but each of these had the distinction of being set up in villages which were remote from the parish church intended for the worship of those resident there. A congregation of the Burgher Church came into

existence at the village of Freuchie, in the Parish of Falkland, in 1794, while the formation of the United Secession Church by the union of the New Light Burghers and Antiburghers, led to the formation of congregations of this new denomination at the villages of Gateside, in the Parish of Strathmiglo in 1825 and in 1834 at the village of Pitlessie, in the Parish of Cults. (25)(26)(27)

While these advances by the Secession and Relief Churches represented an erosion of the Established Church's position the greatest increase in dissenting churches occurred at the Disruption of 1843. At that time eight of the Parish ministers and the assistant of another left the Established Church. (28) Altogether twelve Free Church congregations were established throughout the area while at Gauldry, in the Parish of Balmerino, a preaching station associated with the Free Church congregation in the Parish of Logie, was established. (29)(30) The event doubled the number of dissenting congregations and brought into existence a church strongly opposed to the principles of those remaining within the Established Church.

The period also saw the appearance in the area for the first time of two denominations each of which established a single successful congregation. The first of these to appear was a congregation of the Reformed Presbyterian Church which was formed at the village of Strathmiglo in 1824. Its appearance was largely due to the enthusiasm of a gentleman of that persuasion who had moved into the area. (31) It successfully survived throughout the period under review. The second appeared in 1864. This was the Roman Catholic Church which owed its organisation in North Fife to the activities of Douglas Dick of Montrave, a prominent catholic, who took an interest in the local catholic families and who purchased a site at Millgate in the Burgh of Cupar for the erection of a place of worship. (32)(33) While neither was strong enough to exert great influence they contributed

to the atmosphere of denominationalism then becoming prevalent.

In the face of this large extension of dissenting congregations the only major additions to the organisation of the Established Church took place in the Parish of Cupar. In 1834 it was felt that the number of individuals resident in the Burgh who could not obtain seats in the Parish Church made it desirable to hold additional services elsewhere. John Birrell, minister to the Burgh's second charge, and the assistant of the minister of the first charge, began to hold services in the Burgh's Masonic Lodge for the accommodation of those who were unable to obtain seats in the Church. The heritors of the Parish agreed to pay the rent of the Lodge for this purpose while collections at these services were given to the Kirk Session. The services appear to have had the poor in mind because it was agreed that there would be no charge made for seat rents at these services. ⁽³⁴⁾

Against a background of hostility to the Established Church engendered by the Voluntary Controversy a fund was raised for the building of a chapel of ease and by April 1835 some £900 had been raised. ⁽³⁵⁾

At the end of 1837 when the new building was ready to be opened £1,000 had been raised towards its cost of £1,700. ⁽³⁶⁾

Known as St. Michael's, with St. Mary's Quoad Sacra charge it became a centre of controversy towards 1843. ⁽³⁷⁾ After the Disruption it continued as a chapel of ease in which the two parish ministers alternately conducted the services. ⁽³⁸⁾

In 1834 the Established Church at Cupar also began to conduct services in the village of Springfield, which lay at that time within its parochial bounds. ⁽³⁹⁾ These services eventually became sufficiently important to justify the employment of a missionary in that village. ⁽⁴⁰⁾

With the successive unions which led to the formation of the United Presbyterian Church in 1847 the congregations of the Secession and Relief Churches were formed into a large denomination with congregations in several parishes. It, together with the Free Church,

presented a challenge to the Established Church which could no longer claim to be a non-sectarian church in the sense which it had been in 1793, since by 1865 its members constituted a minority of the church-going population even if it was the largest minority.

II(a) Churches

- (1) Scott - Fasti vol. 5 p.123f
- (2) Ibid vol.5 p.141f, 146f.
- (3) Robert Small - History of the Congregations of the United Presbyterian Church vol. 1 pp. 152, 161, 165, 167, 177, 180, 184, 186, 191, 192, 195
- (4) Ibid. vol. 1 pp180, 186.
- (5) OSA vol. 8 p.187f
Fifeshire Journal 3/10/1839
- (6) OSA vol. 8 p. 187f
- (7) H. Escott - A History of Scottish Congregationalism p.273
- (8) Ibid. p.273
- (9) Ibid. p.273
- (10) J. H. Dawson - An Abridged Statistical History of Scotland. p.412f
- (11) Fife Herald 16/4/1840
- (12) Dawson - Statistical History p.423
- (13) Westwood - Directory p.99
- (14) George Yuille - History of the Baptists in Scotland pp. 155
- (15) Dawson - Statistical History p.436
- (16) Yuille - Baptists pp.54, 276
- (17) Anonymous - Historical Notes and Reminiscences of Cupar p.126f
- (18) Ibid. p.129
- (19) Westwood - Directory p.57
- (20) Dawson - Statistical History p.412f
- (21) Small - U.P.Church vol.1 p.184f
- (22) Ibid. vol.1 p.157f
- (23) Ibid. vol.1 p.190
Rem. Cupar p.88
- (24) Small - U.P. Church vol.1 p.198f
- (25) Ibid. vol.1 p.200
- (26) Edenshead United Secession Minutes of Congregational Meetings and Managers
1826 - 1883 p.1

- (27) Small - U.P. Church vol.1 p.208
- (28) Thomas Brown - Annals of the Disruption p.806
- (29) W. Ewing - Annals of the Free Church of Scotland vol.2 pp.143, 148f
- (30) Westwood - Directory p.165
- (31) W. J. Couper - The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland (Records of The Scottish Church History Society vol.2) p.50f.
- (32) Rem. Cupar -p.124f
- (33) Ibid. p.124f
- (34) Cupar Heritors minutes 1829 - 39 21/2/1834
- (35) Fife Herald 2/4/1835
- (36) Ibid. 21/12/1837
- (37) Rem. Cupar p.105
- (38) Westwood - Directory p.56f
- (39) Fife Herald 21/12/1837
- (40) Westwood - Directory p.57

II(b) Membership

While the number of dissenting congregation increased during the first fifty years of the period under review it is difficult to assess the relative strengths of various denominations because only a limited amount of information on this subject is available. Even the results of the religious census of 1851 provides only a little information some of which appears to represent estimates rather than accurate figures. In the dissenting denominations numbers may also have fluctuated considerably in individual congregations. In this respect the experience of the dissenting congregations in the Burgh of Cupar may not have been untypical.

The Antiburgher congregation of Cupar avoided major internal disputes. Formed in 1793 it was allowed to call its first minister in 1796 and at that moderation thirty four votes were cast. This may have represented the entire adult male congregation.⁽¹⁾ When the second call was moderated in 1829 one hundred and sixty-two votes were cast while in 1837 there were two hundred and sixty communicant members. The numbers making up the congregation may very well have been augmented in 1844 when the original Burgher church broke up and again 1852 when a dispute in the 1st Relief Church led many of its members to leave that congregation.⁽²⁾ Since the one hundred and sixty-two who voted in 1829 may very well have represented only males and the two hundred and sixty communicant members claimed by the congregation in 1837 probably include both males and females these figures do not give any reliable guide to the growth or decline of the congregation. There does seem to be ground to consider that this congregation may at least have held its own in a town with a growing population.

The Relief Church in Cupar, by contrast, had a more turbulent history. The original congregation was formed in 1770 and was estimated to have eight hundred members prior to 1829, although at a hotly

disputed call in 1828 only five hundred and twenty-three votes were cast for the two candidates. (3)(4) The minority vote on that occasion numbered two hundred and sixty three and in consequence of failing to carry the day many of the minority group withdrew and formed the Second Relief Church, which within a short time was said to have a membership of three hundred and eighty, while the original congregation was said to have a membership of upwards of five hundred. (5)(6)

Whatever the strength of the second congregation after the breach had occurred a call signed after a vacancy in 1842 and 1843 received some two hundred and forty-six signatures. (7) The history of the Second Relief Church came to an end in 1849 when the minister and part of the congregation were received into the Established Church. (8) In the meantime the First Relief Church continued in existence. In 1851 it was estimated that its congregation numbered five hundred members but in 1852 it was rent by a further dispute and by 1863 its membership had declined to one hundred and thirty. (10)

Towards the middle of the nineteenth century the appearance of the Free Church gave a new strength to those who were dissatisfied with the Established Church. At the census of 1851 the attendance at the churches in the Parish of Cupar which returned figures were given as:-

The Established Church	(Parish Church	350 - 900
	(St. Michael's Chapel of Ease	450 - 550
	(Springfield Mission	65
The Free Church		800 - 1,000
Boston U.P. Church (1st Relief)		nearly 500
Baptists		300

There were no returns for the Episcopalian, Congregational, or Burnside U.P. congregations. (11) While most of the figures which the census provided in Cupar are estimates and many of the figures are totally missing it is clear that while the Established Church remained an important element in the religious life of the town it had come to be the church of only part of the church-going population.

In the Parish of Strathmiglo shortly before the Disruption of 1843 there were congregations of three different denominations worshipping. At that time the average number attending the three churches and the number of communicants were thought to be:-

Established Church	attendance - above 700	Communicants - 450
United Secession Church	attendance - above 300	Communicants - 200
Reformed Presbyterian Church	attendance - above 200	Communicants - 140

(12)

Since the figures were drawn up by the Parish minister they tend to be suspect, although they do suggest that the membership of the United Secession Church had built up rapidly from 1827 when a call had carried one hundred and thirty-six signatures, thirty-four of which had been the signatures of adherents. ⁽¹³⁾ In 1835 the number of male heads of families associated with the Parish Church was 163. ⁽¹⁴⁾ Unfortunately there are no comparable figures for the other congregations and in the census of 1851 only the Free Church provided any indication of their members attendance which was estimated at between three hundred and fifty and three hundred and sixty. ⁽¹⁵⁾ The first year in which the numbers on the Free Church roll are made known by the available records is the year 1855 when the roll contained the names of four elders, four deacons, and two hundred and two members. ⁽¹⁶⁾ If there had been no drastic decline in the intervening four years it seems likely that many of the worshippers of 1851 were adherents rather than communicant members, although between the years 1851 and 1861 a marked decline did take place in the population of this parish. Between the closing years of the 1850's and the mid 1860's some indication of the membership of the congregations worshipping in the villages and Strathmiglo is available. In 1858 the Reformed Presbyterian Church membership was one hundred and thirty-five having risen from one hundred and thirty in 1848, while the Free Church roll in the same year contained the names

of three elders, seven deacons and one hundred and ninety-three members. (17)(18) Figures are not available for the Established Church until the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in 1864 when two hundred and eighty-five individuals communicated although this may not mark the number on the roll of the congregation since in 1868 when three hundred and thirty seven individuals communicated there were five hundred and twenty-four names on the roll. (19) By comparison the Free Church in 1864 had a roll of one hundred and ninety two members, four elders, and six deacons and in 1868 their roll contained 191 names. (20) Since these figures ignore the United Secession Church at Gateside, it seems likely that the Established Church had become the church of only a section of the population, here, too.

In the neighbouring Parish of Auchtermuchty the proportion of the population attached to dissenting congregations may have been much higher than was common in the area. The Old Statistical Account of the Parish gives the membership of the four congregations as being:-

Established Church	-	620	
Antiburgher	-	93	
Burgher	-	189	
Relief	-	284	(21)

About thirty years later three of these congregations found themselves without a minister and their activities in seeking a minister give some indication of their strength. In 1826 a call by the former Antiburgher congregation which was by then a congregation of U.S. Church carried one hundred and forty names and since it would appear that women did not sign such calls this appears to represent only the male element of the congregation. (22) The following year a call to the Rev. John Taylor by the former Burgher congregation also now part of the U.S. Church carried the signature of two hundred and sixty-two members and fifty-seven adherents and it is reported that during Taylor's ministry the congregation increased to about five hundred

members. (23)(24) In 1832 the Parish Church was also without a minister and a petition in favour of a neighbouring minister was presented to the patron. The petition carried the comment:- "There has been perfect unanimity and everybody within the above limits" (magistrates, councillors, tenants, heritors, and members of the Established Church all ardently attached to the Establishment) "has literally signed it with only two exceptions." The petition carried the signatures of three hundred and seventy-six males all above twenty years of age being communicants or hearers of the Established Church. (25)

The advent of the Free Church at Auchtermuchty probably only made the sectarian nature of church life there more apparent. Its membership which rose from one hundred and ninety-two in 1848 to two hundred and thirty in 1859 probably went some way to reducing the active membership of the Established Church. (26) At the census taken in 1851 only three of the Auchtermuchty congregation made any returns. Of these the Free Church congregation claimed that three hundred and eighty individuals attended their service while amongst the three U.P. Churches the former Relief Church claimed an attendance of three hundred and twenty and the former Burgher church claimed about four hundred. (27) According to their Kirk Session the Free Church roll of members contained two hundred and eight names in 1852, while the former Burgher congregation, then known as the U.P. (East) Congregation had a membership of three hundred and sixty-eight in 1856. (28)(29) The figures suggest that the results of the census of 1851 have to be treated with some reserve. The former anti-burgher church, now known as the U.P. (North) Church failed to make any returns at all in 1851 but in 1854 during a rather troubled time for the congregation the minister informed the Kirk Session that the church had two hundred and ten members. (30) For the Parish Church

no statistics are available probably because at this time the Parish minister's conduct was the subject of an enquiry which subsequently led to his demission of office in 1852. In that year a petition signed by five hundred people was presented to the presbytery. The petition was in favour of the retiring minister withdrawing his resignation and it was said to have been signed by almost the entire congregation. (31)

The decline in the population which effected the entire area after 1851 appears to have effected severely the dissenting congregations, especially those in Auchtermuchty. In 1857 a unanimous call for a moderation in the North U.P. Church, the former Antiburgher Church, received only one hundred and twenty-three signatures, while in the four years following 1856 the East U.P. Church, the former Burgher Congregation, suffered a fall in the numbers of its congregation from three hundred and sixty-eight to one hundred and ninety-three. (32)(33)

The congregation of the West U.P. Church which at the 1851 census had claimed to have a congregation of three hundred and twenty went through a period of falling numbers until 1873 when its membership having fallen to one hundred and seventy it united with the East U.P. Church. (34) The Free Church also experienced this fall in membership, which in this congregation declined from two hundred and thirty in 1859 to one hundred and ninety-five in 1865. (35) No statistics about the membership of the Parish Church are available at this time, but again the Established Church would seem to have lost an early predominance.

Until the appearance of the Free Church very few dissenting congregation had been formed in predominantly rural parishes. An Antiburgher congregation at Balmullo in the Parish of Logie, had existed prior to 1793 and continued a chequered career throughout most

of the period. Around 1808 it appears to have been receiving pulpit supply at the instance of the Burgher Presbytery. Its membership in 1843 numbered about seventy and then the majority united with the Free Church in 1852 the dissenting minority retained possession of the premises. (36)

At Rathillet in the Parish of Kilmany a less turbulent congregation of Burghers was estimated to have a membership of two hundred and forty and to have some three hundred hearers sometime after 1814. A call signed in 1837 by members of the congregation carried one hundred and forty seven signatures which was twenty-four fewer signatures than had been obtained for a call in 1812. (37)

By comparison in 1838 the Parish Church was said to have between two hundred and sixty-six and two hundred and seventy-five communicant members. (38)

In the rural parishes where there had never been a congregation of dissenters the impact of the Free Church was considerable, although perhaps not so great as the founders might have hoped. At Monimail where the Parish Minister came out in 1843 the Free Church congregation was never strong. In 1848 when the roll of the Free Church contained one hundred and fifty-two names the roll of the Parish Church was almost four hundred strong. (39)(40) In 1861 the Free Church roll contained one hundred and thirty-seven names while in 1862 a call by the congregation of the Parish Church to the Rev. J. McGregor was signed by three hundred and ninety-one members and adherents. (41) In the Parish of Collessie where the Free Church was fortunate in obtaining the support of some of the prominent landowners the Free Church congregation in 1843 was estimated to be one hundred and fifty while at the winter sacrament of the Parish Church that year there were one hundred and twenty communicants. (42)(43) In March of 1851 the attendance at the Parish Church was said to be two hundred and six while at the Free Church it was two hundred and two. (44) Seven years

later in 1858 the summer sacrament of the Parish Church at Collessie attracted two hundred and thirty one communicants and the winter celebration of the sacrament one hundred and seventy-seven communicants, while in that same year the roll of the Free Church contained only one hundred and sixty-two names.⁽⁴⁵⁾⁽⁴⁶⁾ In these areas the impact of schism cannot be judged numerically.

It seems likely that dissenting congregations drew their members from a wide area round their place of worship. Writing about the dissenters of an earlier period a Free Church minister recorded the fact:- "Many travelled seventeen miles each Sabbath to worship with those who were associated in the maintenance of the same principles."⁽⁴⁷⁾ In Auchtermuchty the secession church probably drew the bulk of their congregations from the Parish of Auchtermuchty, but it is also clear that some members of the congregation did come from the surrounding parishes.⁽⁴⁸⁾ At the formation of the United Secession Church at Gateside in the Parish of Strathmiglo forty disjunction certificates were handed in from former members of the United Secession churches at Auchtermuchty; twenty-six from former members at Milnathort; ten from individuals from Abernethy U.S. Church; while others came from the congregations at Perth, Kiarross and Balgedie.⁽⁴⁹⁾ Auchtermuchty, some six miles away, was probably the nearest of these congregations, and it seems likely that the bulk of the new congregation at Gateside lived in the immediate surroundings of Gateside village.⁽⁵⁰⁾

This was true of all the dissenting churches. The Reformed Presbyterian Church in the Parish of Strathmiglo was attended by many people from neighbouring parishes. With an average attendance of about two hundred there were thought to be only ninety communicant members resident in the Parish of Strathmiglo.⁽⁵¹⁾ The advent of the Free Church did not change this tendency. In some Parishes the Free Church appears to have attempted to work within the context of an

individual parish.⁽⁵²⁾ Nevertheless in several areas it was hoped that the congregation would draw its membership across parish boundaries. It was expected at Kettle that the Free Church there would serve members both from Kettle and Cults, and a similar thought must have been present in the minds of those who built Abdie Free Church at Clatchard on the outskirts of the Burgh of Newburgh.⁽⁵³⁾⁽⁵⁴⁾ This was certainly the situation at Monimail where the Free Church drew considerable support from the population of Springfield in the Parish of Cupar, where there was already a large Free Church. In 1848 the number of communicants members of Monimail Free Church living at Springfield was thirty-four out of a congregation of one hundred and fifty-three. By 1864 the number of people from Springfield had fallen to seventeen but by then the congregation had also fallen in number to one hundred and thirty-six.⁽⁵⁵⁾ In addition the congregation drew members from Cupar Muir and Uthrogie in the Parish of Cupar and Ladybank in the Parish of Collessie.⁽⁵⁶⁾

While it might be too strong to describe this as a movement to a form of congregationalism, a strong sense of loyalty to a congregation rather than to a denomination seems to have been a feature of the time. In 1835 the Roll of Male heads of Families of the Parish Church at Strathmiglo carries the names of only twenty-three individuals from Gateside in a list of one hundred and sixty-three names.⁽⁵⁷⁾ By comparison the records of the Gateside congregation of the United Secession Church contains the names of many local farmers and small land-owners in the immediate area round the village of Gateside. In 1828 when the Managers of the United Secession Church were attempting to raise money to defray the expense of an induction they divided the congregation into four quarters according to their place of residence. The Village of Gateside constituted one of these quarters, while the

three others lay to the North, South and West of the Village. There would appear to have been few of the congregation living to the East of the village and it is to the East of the Village that Strathmiglo and the Parish Church lay. (58) Edenshead United Secession Church would appear to have been regarded as the local church of Gateside and its surrounds. This may explain the success of other Secession congregations like those at Rathillet, Freuchie, and Pitlessie which were all somewhat isolated from their parish churches.

Whether the movement was towards denominationalism or congregationalism its ultimate effect was to create an atmosphere in which the ethos of the Established Church was irrevocably changed.

II(b) Membership

- (1) Small - U.P. Church vol.1 p.184
- (2) Ibid. p.186f
- (3) Ibid. p.180f
- (4) Ibid. p.188
- (5) Ibid. p.188 The years was 1837 and some seven years after the moderation of the first minister.
- (6) Ibid. p.183
- (7) Ibid. p.189
- (8) Ibid. p.189f
- (9) Dawson - Statistical History p.412f
- (10) Small - U.P. Church vol.1 p.183f, 187
- (11) Dawson - Statistical History p.412f
- (12) Leighton - Fife p.195f
- (13) Small - U.P. Church vol.1 p.396
- (14) Strathmiglo Parish Church Kirk Session Papers - Roll of Male Heads of Families 1835
- (15) Dawson - Statistical History p.444
- (16) Strathmiglo Free Church Kirk Session minutes 1844 - 91 26/3/1855
- (17) Couper - Reformed Presbyterian Church (SCHS vol.2) p.50f.
- (18) Strathmiglo FCKS 25/3/1858
- (19) Strathmiglo Parish Church Congregational Roll 1863 - 69 1864
- (20) Strathmiglo FCKS 25/3/1864, 26/3/1868
- (21) OSA vol. 6 p.341
- (22) Small - U.P. Church vol.1 p.168
- (23) Auchtermuchty Associate Session minutes - Extract from the minutes of the United Secession Presbytery of Cupar 3/4/1827
- (24) Small - U.P. Church vol.1 p.164
- (25) Hamilton Bruce Papers - Petition dated 8/3/1832
- (26) Auchtermuchty Free Church Communion Roll 1848 - 82
- (27) Dawson - Statistical History p.405
- (28) Auchtermuchty FC Roll

- (29) Auchtermuchty United Presbuterian (East) Kirk Session minutes 1852 - 71
1/5/1856
- (30) Auchtermuchty United Presbyterian (North) Kirk Session minutes 1844 -
86 9/2/1854
- (31) HMB - Letter from Rev. R. Williamson to O. T. Bruce dated 10/11/1852
- (32) Small - U.P. Church vol.1 p.169
- (33) Auchtermuchty UP(E)KS 1/5/1856, 4/7/1860
- (34) Small - U.P. Church vol.1 p.167 The population decline affected all
three congregations p.165
- (35) Auchtermuchty FC roll
- (36) Small - U.P. Church vol.1 p.192
- (37) Ibid. vol.1 p.179
- (38) NSA p.555
- (39) Monimail Free Church Kirk Session minutes 1843 - 1868 1/4/1848
- (40) Monimail Parish Church Communion Roll 1848 - 69
- (41) Monimail FCKS 26/3/1861
Monimail Parish Church Kirk Session minutes 1862 - 1908
- (42) Fife Herald 15/6/1843
- (43) Collessie OPR vol.
- (44) Dawson - Statistical History p.410
- (45) Collessie Parish Church Kirk Session Minutes 1851 - 89 follows a minute
dated 26/12/1858
- (46) Collessie Free Church Kirk Session minutes 1843 -85 20/3/1861
- (47) J. W. Taylor - In a Country Manse p.11
- (48) Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. 16/10/1798
- (49) Edenshead USC minutes p.2f
- (50) Ibid. 8/10/1828
- (51) Leighton - Fife p.¹⁹⁶
- (52) Auchtermuchty Free Church Kirk Session minutes 1843 - 80 7/5/1844
- (53) Fife Herald 22/6/1843
- (54) Fifeshire Journal 30/11/1843
- (55) Monimail FCKS 1/4/1848, 3/3/1864
- (56) Ibid. 24/3/1863

- (57) Strathmiglo PC - Male ¹¹eads
- (58) Edenshead United Secession Church Original Register of Births and Baptisms
- Edenshead USC minutes 8/10/1828

III Social Composition of Congregations.

Representatives of all classes of society were to be found worshipping with every denomination. Perhaps the work of the Established Church in providing for poor and for the education of the young may have led some of the more prominent residents of each parish to become associated with the Parish Church. Certainly the burgh councillors appear to have accepted office in one capacity or another despite the fact that during the 1830's many of those who were councillors were identified in the public mind with dissent and voluntarism. (1) In 1793 the eldership of the Parish Church at Newburgh consisted of three of the Burgh's baillies. (2) Nine years later, in 1802, there were still at least two baillies of the town to be found amongst the Kirk Session and when, in 1826 when there appears to have been no Kirk Session in the parish, a meeting appointed by Presybetry nominated the Town Clerk as elder-elect and subsequently proceeded to ordain him. (3)(4) Again, in 1835, at the height of the dispute regarding the endowment of the Established Church, when the Town Council of Newburgh were thought to be voluntaries to a man, a baillie of the town was ordained to the eldership of the Parish Church. (5)(6) In the Burgh of Auchtermuchty the Town Council appears also to have been closely identified with the Parish Church prior to 1832. In that year a petition in favour of the Rev. John Fleming of Flisk was presented to the Patron of the Parish during a ministerial vacancy. It was signed by seventeen councillors and magistrates who all claimed to be ardently attached to the Establishment Principle. (7) Five years later the loyalties of the councillors at Auchtermuchty appear to have undergone a dramatic change for in 1837 the Parish Minister complained to the Patron that the whole council, with one or two exceptions were dissenters and voluntaries and that the chief magistrate was an elder of the United Secession Church. (8) This may have been the result of

the presentation of Johnston rather than Fleming to the Parish at a time when the dissenting churches were launching a fierce attack on the endowment of the church. Nevertheless, even in Auchtermuchty one of the town's baillies was ordained to the eldership of the Parish Church in 1835⁽⁹⁾ Through to the end of the period individual councillors retained their connection with the Parish Church and in 1862 the Parish Church numbered the Town's provost among its members.⁽¹⁰⁾

In an area where farmers formed an important social group the Established Church numbered many among its communicant members. The Roll of Male heads of Families for the Parish of Strathmiglo drawn up in 1835 contains the names of only five farmers and it appears that the United Secession church at Gateside in the Parish may have attracted the farming population at the West end of that Parish.⁽¹¹⁾ At Auchtermuchty the 1832 petition contained the names of ten farmers and in 1835 when a new Kirk Session was being formed at Dunbog both of those nominated as elders-elect were tenant farmers.⁽¹²⁾⁽¹³⁾ After the Disruption of 1843 the Established Church seems to have retained the loyalty of the farmers of North Fife. The Rev. J. Taylor, Free Church minister at Flisk, which was a rural and agricultural area, complained that his congregation contained only four farmers.⁽¹⁴⁾ Certainly, between 1850 and 1860 the roll of Collessie Parish Church contained the names of fourteen farmers.⁽¹⁵⁾

Amongst all denominations it is possible to find the names of land-owners. In the 1840's David Carsewell of Rathillet appears to have been closely connected with the United Secession Church whose premises at Rathillet lay in the Parish of Kilmany.⁽¹⁶⁾ Prior to 1843, the leading lay figure in the work of the Established Church in North Fife and further afield, was D.M.M. Crichton of Rankeilour who was an elder of Parish Church at Collessie, an honour which he shared with

William Walker of Pitlair.⁽¹⁷⁾ After the formation of the Free Church Crichton went on to become a driving force in the Free Church congregation at Collessie.⁽¹⁸⁾

On the other hand the names of neither the Skenes of Pitlour, nor the Cheapes of Wellfield are to be found in the roll of male heads of families drawn up at Strathmiglo in 1835 and it is apparent that between 1834 and 1843 the children of Charles Cheape of Wellfield were all baptised by Episcopalian clergymen.⁽¹⁹⁾⁽²⁰⁾

This family's connection with the Episcopalian Church appears to have gone back beyond 1808 and although the name of Mrs. Cheape appears on the roll of the Parish Church in the 1860's and a seat rent payment appears to have been made by her to the United Presbyterian Church at Gateside in the Parish of Strathmiglo this may merely represent an interest in local congregations.⁽²¹⁾⁽²²⁾⁽²³⁾

A similar interest is recorded at Monimail in 1862 when the patron attended the Parish Church and taught in the local Sunday School but would not receive communion in the Parish Church.⁽²⁴⁾

Describing a Scottish Land-owner of his acquaintance whom he met in the Parish of Flishk the Rev. J. Taylor commented:- "Born an episcopalian and bred at Oxford his views of divine truth were Arminian, if not semi-Pelagian."⁽²⁵⁾

This he appears to believe true of most of the landed gentry in the area. About thirty years earlier in 1817 a meeting of the congregation of the Episcopal Church in Cupar resolved to procure a more convenient and more respectable place of worship. Among the list attached to the proposal were those of many of the prominent land-owners and heritors of the district.⁽²⁶⁾

The Episcopalian Church would appear to have become the church chosen by the gentry.

In 1835 the list of Male heads of families at Strathmiglo reveals a congregation consisting largely of working men. Of the one hundred and sixty-three names the list contains, one hundred and ten are

described as weavers, labourers, or servants, while there are only five farmers, two feuars and two manufacturers.⁽²⁷⁾ The roll of Collessie Parish Church between 1850 and 1860 contained the names of one hundred and twenty people described as ploughmen, weavers or servants out of the one hundred and ninety-eight people whose occupations are listed.⁽²⁸⁾ In a discussion about a provision for the poor in 1832 the Rev. Dr. Adamson, the minister of the second Charge of Cupar Parish Church maintained that the older congregations of that town contained the bulk of the poorer members of the community and within a few years the Parish Church at Cupar had arranged services in the Burgh's Masonic Lodge where no seat rents were charges.⁽²⁹⁾⁽³⁰⁾ Other denominations had their share of poorer members. At Freuchie the fact that the Burgher congregation took fifty-six years to clear the debt incurred in the building of their church was attributed to the failure of the members of the congregation to pay seat rents, probably because of their slender earnings.⁽³¹⁾ The failure of Nonimail Free Church to provide suitably for their minister in the 1860's was thought by a visitor to the church to be the poverty of those who made up the congregation since it was not a small congregation for a rural parish.⁽³²⁾ Even where there were two congregations of the same denomination in one place each congregation appears to have attracted different social groups. After the dispute which led to the formation of the Second Relief Church at Cupar in 1830 it would appear to be the case that the more prosperous members of the Relief Church in Cupar chose to worship at the Second Church rather than the First Church. Sometime after the formation of the Second Church the minister of the First Church reported that his congregation consisted only of working class people while the minister of the Second Church said his congregation consisted mainly of working class people. When the Second Congregation applied for

admission to the Established Church it was said to include two landed proprietors and some of the most respectable merchants in Cupar. (33)

On the other hand many of the dissenting churches appear to have had an appeal to the middle classes. At Flisk where the Free Church only had four farmers and two or three ploughmen, according to its minister, it also included some ten farm foremen. (34) At Strathmiglo an application to the feuars for land on which to build the Free Church was met sympathetically by the feuars who granted the missive to George Miller, a manufacturer and William Wishart, a merchant. (35)

The middle classes at Strathmiglo were to be found prominently in all three dissenting congregations. At its formation in 1824 the Reformed Presbyterian Church appointed six managers. They consisted of two manufacturers, one merchant, two weavers and a labourer. (36) Since the Reformed Presbyterian Congregation was the smallest in the Parish of Strathmiglo it is a mark of its strength that it contained the same number of merchants and manufacturers as the Parish Church, with its much greater membership in 1835. (37) Nor would it appear that this congregation lacked for wealthy members. In 1834 John Archibald who may have been the brother of one of the original managers bequeathed the congregation £25, while his brother had lent the congregation £90 in December of 1824. (38)(39) In 1859 when Andrew Archibald, the brother, died he bequeathed to the congregation his entire heritable estate, which consisted of considerable areas of land in Gateside and in and around Strathmiglo. (40) In 1840 the managers included three of the Strathmiglo feuars and in 1860 the congregation still had at least two merchants amongst its members. (41)(42)

Other congregations similarly had their benefactors. The United Secession Church at Gateside in the Parish of Strathmiglo appears to have drawn its support from the west end of that parish and the

names of many local farmers and small landowners can be found in its baptismal records and in the seat-letting accounts. ⁽⁴³⁾ At Auchtermuchty the Free Church there received considerable support from Miss Ann Moncrieff of Southfield. ⁽⁴⁴⁾ On the other hand at Monimail the congregation appears to have depended very largely on the minister in its effort to meet all its commitments. ⁽⁴⁵⁾ It may very well be that many of the congregations of the dissenting churches may have owed their survival to the enthusiasm of a small group of comparatively prosperous members who were prepared to give extensive assistance to the congregations of which they were members and it would appear that dissent may have made a stronger appeal to the middle social groupings in the areas in which congregations were formed.

II(c) Social Composition of Congregations

- (1) Fife Herald 30/10/1834
- (2) Newburgh PCKS 1773 30/6/1793
- (3) Ibid. 1/8/1802
- (4) Ibid. 4/4/1826, 23/4/1826
- (5) Fife Herald 30/10/1834
- (6) Newburgh PCKS 1773 1/3/1835
- (7) HBP - Petition to O. T. Bruce dated 8/3/1832
- (8) Ibid. Letter from the Rev, R.J. Johnston to O. T. Bruce dated 24/1/1837
- (9) Auchtermuchty Parish Church Kirk Session minutes 1832 - 63 5/7/1833
- (10) Ibid. 16/4/1860, 16/5/1862
- (11) Strathmiglo PC - Male Heads
- (12) HMB - Petition to O.T. Bruce dated 8/3/1832
- (13) Dunbog Parish Church Kirk Session minutes 1746 - 1938 3/3/1835
- (14) Faylor - Country Manse p.33F
- (15) Collessie Parish Church Communicants' Roll 1850 - 71.
- (16) Kilmany OPR vol.2 births 25/4/1847
- (17) NSA p.30
- (18) Collessie FCKS 19/3/1847
- (19) Strathmiglo PC - Male Heads
- (20) Strathmiglo OPR vol.4 births entered in 1845
- (21) Ibid. vol.1 births.
- (22) Edenshead United Secession Church: Record of Seat Rents 1834 - 70
November 1864
- (23) Strathmiglo Parish Church Congregational Roll 1863 - 69
- (24) A.L. Drummond and J. Bulloch - The Church in Victorian Scotland p.63
- (25) Brown - Annals p.475
- (26) Monimail Heritors Papers - subscription list dated 18/10/1817
- (27) Strathmiglo PC - Male Heads
- (28) Collessie PC Roll 1850
- (29) Fife Herald 12/1/1832

- (30) Cupar HR 1829 21/2/1834
- (31) Small - U.P.Church vol.1 p.201
- (32) John C. Orr - Pife Pulpit p.87
- (33) Small - U.P.Church vol.1 p.188
- (34) Taylor - Country Manse p.43f
- (35) Strathmiglo Feuars minutes 1840 onwards 1/6/1843
- (36) Strathmiglo Reformed Presbyterian Church Congregational and Managers' minute book 1824 - 1878 22/11/1824
- (37) Strathmiglo PC - Male Heads
- (38) Strathmiglo RPC minutes 17/1/1834
- (39) Ibid. 27/12/1824
- (40) Ibid. 6/12/1859, 6/2/1860
- (41) Ibid. 23/1/1840
- (42) Ibid. 6/2/1860
- (43) Edenshead USC Birth Register
Edenshead USC Seat Rents
- (44) Auchtermuchty Free Church Deacons' Court minutes 27/5/1845
- (45) Monimail Free Church Deacons' Court minutes and accounts 1843 - 77
21/5/1858

II(d) Admission of New Communicants

The recording of those who were to be admitted to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was the responsibility of the Kirk Session. Walter Stewart of Pardovan in compiling the laws of the Church of Scotland warned that those who were to be admitted to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper had to be found to have a competent knowledge of the fundamentals of the Christian faith and to be of such an inoffensive walk and conversation towards God and their neighbour that they are not known to be guilty of scandal. ⁽¹⁾ Pardovan also insisted on the advisability of the Kirk Session recording the names of those who were allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper. ⁽²⁾ In practice the keeping of a roll appears always to have been associated with the celebration of the Lord's Supper. In 1850 the Kirk Session of the Free Church of Strathmiglo noted in their minutes:- "In consequence of the approach of the period appointed for the dispensation of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper the communion roll was revised and corrected." ⁽³⁾ The 1840's in Auchtermuchty appears to have been a period of confusion with regard to the composition of the congregational rolls and in 1845 the Kirk Session of the Parish Church there made arrangements for the celebration of the sacrament so that a proper roll of communicants could be made up. ⁽⁴⁾ In 1847 the Kirk Session of the Auchtermuchty U.P. (North) Congregation asked the elders to bring in the number of members in their districts so that a new roll could be compiled. This request was made by the Kirk Session at the meeting which decided the date on which the sacrament was celebrated and three weeks before the date of the sacrament. ⁽⁵⁾ It is clear that in Auchtermuchty, at least, earlier Kirk Sessions of the Parish Church had kept the communion roll very carefully. In 1797 the Kirk Session of the Parish Church there had resolved to admit no one from whatever sect without a certificate that they were in full communion with the church they were leaving or without being required to attend

the church for such a length of time as the session deemed necessary. (6)

An Act of the General Assembly of 1706 had recommended ministers to take as strict a trial as could be of such as were admitted to the Lord's Supper and to take special care for those who were being admitted for the first time to ensure that they had been adequately instructed. (7)

Pardevan in his compilation had also enjoined that names of such as were admitted to the fellowship of the Lord's Table should be recorded by the Kirk Session which should proceed either upon the minister's examining the parties in their presence or at least in the presence of two or three of the elders. (8)

A retrospective view taken in the 1880's suggested that in the eighteenth century that the clergy had on the whole attached a great deal of importance, in particular to a service of admission for communicants who were presenting themselves for admission to the sacrament for the first time. (9) Whatever the situation in the North of Fife during the years under review the available records do not contain a great deal of information of the kind that would suggest that Kirk Sessions regarded this as being an important part of their duties, but this does not mean that the duty of care in this matter was not discharged.

It is not until the 1830's that the records begin to record the activity of Kirk Sessions with regard to the admission of communicants to the table for the first time. At Collessie Parish Church in the years following 1833 the practice appears to have been for a list of names of persons seeking to share the sacrament for the first time to have been submitted to the Kirk Session at some time shortly before the celebration of the sacrament, and for the list to be approved by the Session. (10) In 1833 the list was submitted to the Session on the twelfth of June which would appear to have been the fast day before the communion which was celebrated on the sixteenth of June. (11)(12)(13)

The submission of the names on the fast day was not an invariable practice. Before the Collessie summer communion in 1840 the names of the prospective first communicants was presented to the Kirk Session a fortnight before the sacramental occasion. ⁽¹⁴⁾⁽¹⁵⁾ This practice of submitting a list of names was followed by parish ministers elsewhere. ⁽¹⁶⁾

In many areas the suggestion is frequently made by those not associated with the parish churches that the parish ministers did not evince much concern with the spiritual state of their parishes. An account of Thomas Chalmer's ministry at Kilmany before 1811 suggests that he took his responsibilities fairly lightly. The writer of the biography comments:- "If he expended as much effort upon the religious improvement of his people as any ministry within the bounds of his presbytery" ... the standards to which he appealed must have been miserably low. ⁽¹⁷⁾ Chalmers journal records that in 1811, after his conversion, he examined some young people in his own home, but this would appear to have been part of a general examination of the people resident within the parish. ⁽¹⁸⁾ It may be that the practice of catechising and examining parishioners and congregations made special preparation of those coming to sacrament for the first time a less essential part of the minister's work than it subsequently became. In 1834 the minister of the Parish of Collessie submitting the names of individuals seeking admission to the Lord's Table reported that he had been satisfied about their Christian knowledge and views from previous conversations with them. ⁽¹⁹⁾ Such a comment might imply that he had arranged special interviews with them or had had sufficient opportunities of making himself familiar with the extent of their knowledge and the nature of their views during the exercise of his normal pastoral oversight.

After the Disruption ministers of the Free Church in North Fife appear to have followed a similar practice to that of the parish minister of

Collessie, but it seems clear that ministers had had more than one meeting with those applying for admission to the sacrament. In 1847 when the minister of the Free Church at Auchtermuchty submitted a list of names of such individuals to his Kirk Session he reported that he had had frequent opportunities of conversing with those individuals concerned and was well pleased with their religious knowledge and frame of mind. At this meeting the Kirk Session authorised tokens to be given to these applicants and their names added to the roll. (20) The Free Church at Strathmiglo also appears to have followed Pardovan's advice and to have required intending first communicants to satisfy the Kirk Session as to their Christian knowledge and character before having their names added to the roll. (21) It would appear that with the passage of time the movement towards providing instruction for first communicants became more pronounced. In 1860 it is clear that it was not only the evangelical branches of the presbyterian church which were interested in ensuring that those seeking admission to the sacrament were adequately instructed. In that year the Kirk Session of the Parish Church of Collessie had submitted to them a list of the names of catechumens who had undergone a period of ministerial instruction and examination before having their names submitted. Following this instruction and examination they then appeared before the Kirk Session who expressed themselves satisfied both with the character of each catechumen and with the ministerial statement as to their fitness to be permitted to become communicant members of the church. (22)

While it does not appear to have been a general practice throughout the country as recorded in the minutes some ministers appear to have been in the habit of conducting a service of admission in the presence of the Kirk Session and such members of the congregation as chose to remain and participate. At these services formal questions were put to the catechumens after which they were received into the fellowship with

suitable prayers. ⁽²³⁾ The Secession Church in particular seems to follow this practice more than others in the North of Fife.

The former Antiburgher congregation of Auchtermuchty, by then an United Secession congregation, immediately prior to the union with the Relief Church required catechumens to accede to what are described as the principles of the United Secession Church before they were acknowledged as members of the congregation. ⁽²⁴⁾

After the union with the Relief Church in July of 1847 catechumens were being required to acknowledge their agreement with the principles of the United

Presbyterian Church. ⁽²⁵⁾ In 1857 the services appear to have taken place in the presence not only of the Kirk Session who had been formally constituted but also in the presence of the congregation. ⁽²⁶⁾

The practice of this congregation appears to have been to conduct this service on the Saturday before communion when the Kirk Session were in the habit of issuing tokens to other members of the congregation. ⁽²⁷⁾

The form of service followed by the United Presbyterian churches of Auchtermuchty was similar for the two congregations for which details are available. Questions were put to the catechumens who formally answered them. They were then addressed by the Minister who was seen to be acting as moderator of the Kirk Session, and then after prayer tokens were served to those who were receiving them for the first time. ⁽²⁸⁾

The congregation of Auchtermuchty United Presbyterian (East) Church followed a similar order. In 1853 the new communicants were admitted to the full membership of the church on the Saturday before the communion Sunday.

After the tokens had been distributed to those of the congregation entitled to them, the minister, again acting as moderator of the Kirk Session, solemnly exhorted those who were presenting themselves for the first time and then admitted them to membership. ⁽²⁹⁾

In 1860 the catechumens were said to have been received into membership of the church

by having the question of the formula put to them. Subsequently tokens of admission to the Lord's Table were distributed to the congregation on 1860. (30) Some of the Parish Church Kirk Sessions had also adopted a somewhat similar practice towards the end of the period. In 1860 catechumens seeking admission to the sacrament at Collessie Parish Church were presented to the Kirk Session after a period of instruction with a statement as to their suitability for admission to the sacrament. The Kirk Session having expressed themselves satisfied with the character of those who presented themselves, the minister, acting as moderator of the Kirk Session addressed the catechumens and the Kirk Session put tokens of membership into their hands. (31) In the United Presbyterian Churches the date of admission appears to have been decided by the Kirk Session but attendance at the service of admission does not appear to have been considered essential. (32) At least on one occasion a catechumen appears to have received a token without attending the service. (33)

The number of catechumens admitted on these occasions probably varied widely. In 1845 the Kirk Session of Auchtermuchty admitted twenty-four individuals at one occasion. (34) Probably the number of catechumens admitted to the sacrament before any celebration was much smaller than that. In some congregations the admission of new communicants for the first time may even have been a rare occasion. The first occasion on which the admission of new communicants is recorded in the minutes of Collessie Free Church Kirk Session is in 1863, some twenty years after its foundation, when four names are recorded. (35) This may merely represent the first time that the fact is recorded in the minutes but other Kirk Sessions of the Free Church have the fact recorded regularly in their minutes.

The average age of Catechumens appears to have been relatively high.

At Collessie the age at which communicants were admitted to the sacrament for the first time was recorded between 1852 and 1865 by the Kirk Session of the Parish Church. During that period the youngest person admitted was a fourteen year old girl, but she was unusually young being at least two years younger than any other person admitted to the table of the Lord. (36) On the same occasion the oldest first communicant was admitted, a thirty-eight year old man. In 1857 three men over the age of thirty years were admitted and it may be that men tended to be older than women before they sought to be admitted to the sacrament. (37) The most common age for both sexes nevertheless appears to have been between the ages of seventeen and twenty-two but in the lists kept at Collessie the names of men over the age of twenty is three times as common as the names of women in the same age group.

On the whole the picture that emerges is of a group of relatively mature men and women who have been instructed in their faith presenting themselves for admission to the communion of the church, and of Kirk Sessions tending to take an increasing interest in their preparation and admission. This interest may have been more pronounced in the evangelical branches of the church but it would appear that even in the Parish Churches the Kirk Session began to follow a more formal method of marking the solemnity of the occasion.

II(d) Admission of New Communicants

- (1) A Compendium of the Laws of the Church of Scotland vol.1 p.298
- (2) Ibid. vol.1 p.299
- (3) Strathmiglo FCKS 5/7/1850
- (4) Auchtermuchty FCKS 1832 11/2/1845
- (5) Auchtermuchty UP(N)KS 6/7/1847
- (6) Auchtermuchty Parish Church Kirk Session minutes 1766 - 99 29/1/1797
- (7) Compendium vol.2 p.164
- (8) Ibid. vol.1 p.299
- (9) G. W. Sprott - Worship and Offices of the Church of Scotland p.84f
- (10) Collessie Parish Church Kirk Session minutes 1833 - 50 12/6/1833
- (11) Ibid.
- (12) Collessie RR accts 1813 16/6/1833
- (13) Collessie FCKS 1833 23/11/1833. At this communion the same day was observed as the pre-communion fast.
- (14) Ibid. 7/6/1840
- (15) Collessie Parish Church Collection Book for the Poor 1837 - 47 21/6/1840
- (16) Auchtermuchty FCKS 1832 11/2/1845
Strathmiglo Parish Church Kirk Session minutes 1863 - 1879
- (17) William Hanna - Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Thomas Chalmers
vol.1 p.404
- (18) Ibid. vol.1 p.232f. A quotation from Chalmers' journal.
- (19) Collessie FCKS 1833 16/11/1834
- (20) Auchtermuchty FCKS 29/7/1847
- (21) Strathmiglo FCKS 18/2/1845, 19/2/1850
- (22) Collessie FCKS 1851 16/6/1860
- (23) Sprott - Worship p.84f
- (24) Auchtermuchty UP(N)KS 27/1/1847
- (25) Ibid. 31/7/1847
- (26) Ibid. 2/11/1857
- (27) Ibid. 27/1/1847
- (28) Ibid. 3/5/1860

- (29) Auchtermuchty UP(E)KS 6/8/1853
- (30) Ibid. 8/12/1860
- (31) Collessie FCKS 1851 16/6/1860
- (32) Auchtermuchty UP(N)KS 28/4/1859
- (33) Ibid. 3/5/1860
- (34) Auchtermuchty FCKS 1832 11/2/1845
- (35) Collessie FCKS 18/6/1863
- (36) Collessie FCKS 1851 13/6/1858
- (37) Ibid. 18/6/1857

II(e) Church Buildings.

The late eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century was a period when a great deal of church building was completed. In the parishes which were under the supervision of the Established Church Presbytery of Cupar with the exception of Cupar, Strathmiglo, and Auchtermuchty which were built in the 1780's, Kilmarnock built in 1768, Flish built in 1790, and the very old buildings of Dairsie and Koonzie all the Parish churches in the area were built during the period under review. (1) The 1820s and 1830s, in particular, was a period when many new parish churches were erected. Abdie, Collessie, Grouch, Kettle, Logie and Newburgh all replaced their old Parish Churches at this time. (2)

It was not only the Parish Churches which were being rebuilt or replaced. Seceders and Relief congregations were also in many cases engaged in the re-construction or replacement of their churches. The Antiburgher Congregations at Cupar during this period built two churches. The first in 1794 and the second in 1830. (3) At Auchtermuchty both the Burghers and the Antiburgher Congregations replaced their church buildings, the Burghers in 1846, and the Antiburghers in 1850. (4) (5)

The United Presbyterian Congregations at Rathillet, Cupar (Boston), and Kettle replaced their buildings in the decade between 1849 and 1859, while the formation of new congregations of the Relief Church at Boree in 1798, Cupar (Provost Wynd), in 1830, and of the Secession Churches at Freuchie, in 1794, Edenshead in 1825, and Pitlessie in 1834 all led to the erection of new Church buildings. (6) (7) Above all the Disruption of 1843 created a situation which necessitated the erection of some twelve new churches within a period of a few years following the event. (8)

Upon occasion the parish churches were in a very dilapidated condition before replacement was considered necessary. In 1793 a meeting of the heritors of the Parish Kounaill having met to discuss the condition of the Parish Church building requested the minister to:-

"...publish to the parish that sufficient tradesmen have expressly declared that there is no ground of apprehension during the time that measures are being taken for repairing or rebuilding the church."

This course of action was taken because it was said:-

"... alarm has spread from the danger of the present state of the roof."

(9)

Two years later the Monimail heritors felt obliged, in view of the increasing alarm among parishioners about the state of the roof, to ask tradesmen to submit estimates for rendering the roof safe for one year. (10)

Eventually the decision to rebuild was taken and in 1795 estimates were accepted for a building which was completed in 1796. (11)(12)

The state of the parish church at Dunbog at the close of the eighteenth century was similar. In 1799 the heritors agreed to lay out a sum not exceeding £3 sterling to render the church habitable, "which it is not at present", and in order to give them time to consider the propriety of building a new church. They did not feel it was in their interest to spend a large sum of money on repairing the building. Equally it was not felt that this outlay would improve the comfort of the congregation because the burying ground, which was already four or five feet above the level of the floor of the church and consequently made the church damp, was constantly being heightened. (13) It was 1803, a further four years before the building was demolished to make way for a new church. (14)

At Collessie the Parish Church was also in an advanced state of disrepair before arrangements were made for the provision of a new building.

In 1834 the heritors decided the building should be made wind and water-tight. (15)

These arrangements apparently left much to be desired and a petition signed by the parishioners in 1837 complained that the church was cold, damp and unwholesome, that the cold was increased by the decayed state of the windows, doors and all the materials of the buildings, and that for half the year the congregation, and especially the aged and infirm, could not remain in it for the usual period of the services

without the risk of injury to their health, an injury, which they alleged had in some cases occurred.⁽¹⁶⁾ A little later the Kirk Session were constrained to petition prosbytery on the subject and the justification of all the complaints was provided by the report of the builders appointed to examine the premises.⁽¹⁷⁾ They informed the heritors that:-

"the inside of the church generally and the roof in particular are unworthy of being repaired".

They also expressed the view that part of the south wall would require to be taken down and rebuilt before the walls could be said to be in good and sufficient state."⁽¹⁸⁾

It was not only the buildings of the parish churches which were allowed to fall into disrepair. The premises of the dissenting congregations, although on the whole of more recent construction than the parish churches, were allowed upon occasion to fall into a dilapidated condition. In 1849 the church premises of the Boston United Presbyterian congregation of Cupar, the former First Relief Church, were found to be in a ruinous state and the congregation resolved to pull the building down and erect a new church on the site.⁽¹⁹⁾ The Baptist congregation of Cupar was another reported to have found its buildings to be badly in need of repair. In consequence of this discovery and the fact that it was felt that larger premises were, in any case, needed, this congregation proceeded to purchase the church in Provost Wynd, Cupar which had previously been built by the Second Relief congregation of the town.⁽²⁰⁾ A decision by the congregation of the Episcopal Church in Cupar to procure more convenient and respectable premises as a place of worship suggests that there may have been some defects in the premises then in use.⁽²¹⁾

As the nineteenth century wore on the opening of new churches was apparently marked with an increasing interest and ceremony. When the

new Parish Church at Dunbog was opened in 1804 the total offering was three shillings and a penny which appears to have been a fairly average offering. ⁽²²⁾ In 1859, when the new Parish Church at Collessie was opened for worship the total offering amounted to £18. 12. 3¹/₂. ⁽²³⁾ This is even larger than the "sacramental" offering of 1837 which amounted to only £15. 6. 0d. but was itself very much larger than the normal weekly offering. It suggests that the opening service was marked by the attendance of an exceptionally large number of worshippers. ⁽²⁴⁾ When the congregation of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Strathmiglo opened its new place of worship in 1852 they invited the Rev. Dr. Andrew Synington of Paisley, a prominent figure in the life of the Reformed Presbyterian Church and the Professor of Divinity in that body, to preach at its opening. ⁽²⁵⁾ On the following day, which was a Monday, a fruit soiree was arranged. ⁽²⁶⁾ The opening of the Free Church at Monimail was reported by the Kirk Session of the Congregation to have been marked by a well filled church. ⁽²⁷⁾ Perhaps due to the emotional atmosphere in which the Free Church came into existence there appears to have been an inclination amongst some of these congregations to mark the laying of the foundation stones with some simple ceremony and an act of worship. At Cupar the laying of the foundation stone of the Free Church was marked by a service at which James Home of Tarvit, a local landowner, placed a zinc box with papers pertaining to the church in the stone, after which the minister 'invoked the divine blessing'. ⁽²⁸⁾ At Monimail, when the foundation of the Free Church was laid, prayer and praise were offered after which the Free Church ministers of Monimail and the neighbouring parish of Collessie addressed the people. ⁽²⁹⁾

The architectural styles favoured by those who were responsible for the erection of the new churches changed as the nineteenth century

advanced and the plain building normally erected at the outset of the century and earlier gave way to a more highly ornamented form of construction. Kettle United Presbyterian congregation built their church in 1853. (30) A visitor to the church a few years later wrote:-

"It is...a very beautiful church. Without exception it is the most elegant ecclesiastical edifice in Wife. With its large Gothic windows, its strong buttresses, numerous spires and beautiful white free stone it stands pre-eminent. The interior is in admirable keeping - pulpit, gallery, aisle all are faultless in symmetry and the seats are comfortable and airy." (31)

The United Presbyterian Church at Bathillet, in the Parish of Kilmany, which was erected in 1859 was similarly described as being a fine new building of Gothic style while the Parish Church of Newburgh built in the same architectural fashion was described by the minister of the parish as being 'elegant'. (32) (33)

Not all parish ministers thought so highly of their churches. Those whose congregations worshipped in older buildings were often very critical of their appearance. In 1843 the Parish minister of Strathmiglo described the Parish Church in which his parishioners worshipped and which had been erected in the 1780's as being an 'ill-sited, paltry structure.' (34) At Cupar, the Parish minister described the Parish Church there as being a large and commodious building which was plain and unattractive and by no means elegant. (35) In the 1860's others were more critical of it. A commentator on ecclesiastical matters in the locality wrote of it,

"It is a large plain and very unpretending building, utterly devoid of architectural ornament and were it not for the handsome ecclesiastical looking steeple which adjoins it it would be taken...for an overgrown barn." (36)

By the 1830's all the churches built during the preceding half century were being criticised for their lack of ornamentation. At that period the Parish Churches of Abdie, Balmerino, Kilmany and Logie were all described as being plain buildings. (37) It was not only the Parish Churches which were subjected to such criticism. In the 1860's the

church building belonging to the Auchtermuchty (east) United Presbyterian congregation, a building erected a century earlier, was represented as being 'homely' and of 'rather antiquated appearance' as well as of 'the most unpretentious construction'.⁽³⁸⁾ Nevertheless, it was not only the older buildings which were criticised. In the 1860's Nonmail Free Church which was by then about twenty years old was thought to be plain and economical looking and unadorned.⁽³⁹⁾

Parish ministers in some instances found an additional cause for criticising their churches. Some of the sites on which Parish Churches had been erected were remote from the community the building was intended to serve as a place of worship. At Cults the Parish Church was built about a mile from Pitlessie where the majority of the population of the parish lived.⁽⁴⁰⁾ At Kilmany, also the church had been built at some distance from the most populous parts of the parish, while the site of both the manse and Parish Church of Nonmail were felt by the parish minister to be far from convenient.⁽⁴¹⁾ Some of the parishioners of Flisk bore witness to their remoteness from their Parish Church by worshipping regularly in the Parish Church of Dunbog which was nearer to their homes than the Parish Church intended for their use.⁽⁴²⁾ In 1848 the Presbytery of Cupar remedied the situation there by annexing Glenduckie in the Parish of Flisk to the Parish of Dunbog as a quoad sacra area of the parish.⁽⁴³⁾

As elsewhere the late Georgian and early Victorian period was one marked by extensive church building in North Fife where churches were built for congregations of all denominations. The narrow rectangle of medieval derivation continued to be widely employed, particularly for rural churches although by the late eighteenth century it had become possible to make the roof spans and lofts wider than formerly, and at Cults, Cupar and Strathmiglo this technical advance was used in the erection of the Parish Churches.⁽⁴⁴⁾ In the nineteenth century this

rectangular hall with a horse-shoe gallery was extensively used, and it was a style favoured by those responsible for the building of the Parish Churches at Gers and Creich, although Creich is distinguished by the absence of any gallery. ⁽⁴⁵⁾ Another style of church building much favoured at this time, was the 'T' plan building which was adopted at the erection of the Parish Churches at Monimail and Collessie. ⁽⁴⁶⁾

The gothic revival associated with the Romantic movement did not by-pass Scottish Church architecture. Ever increasing gothic detail was featured on church buildings, until by 1845 the gothic style had come to be regarded as the only proper style for a church. ⁽⁴⁷⁾ It would have been surprising if this tendency had by-passed the churches being built in North Fife since during the nineteenth century heritors appeared to be anxious to employ architects of national reputation in the planning of their new Parish Churches. William Burn of Edinburgh a leading architect of his time prepared the plans of Abdie and Newburgh Parish Churches. ⁽⁴⁸⁾ R. and R. Dickinson, another firm of well known architects who had designed the spire of the Tron Kirk in Edinburgh, were employed in the designing of Collessie Parish Church and although Monimail church had been built in 1795 the heritors invited James Gillespie Graham, one of the architects who had laid out part of the New Town of Edinburgh, to prepare the plans for their church tower in 1811. ⁽⁴⁹⁾ Inevitably changing fashions affected the attitude to the older plainer churches which increasingly fell into disfavour.

II(e) Church Buildings

- (1) NSA pp.13, 779, 781, 574, 607, 44, 774, 796, 553f
- (2) Ibid. pp.47, 35, 652, 109f, 432, 78.
- (3) W. MacKelvie - Annals and Statistics of the United Presbyterian Church
p.131
- (4) Auchtermuchty Ass. Sess accts 4/1/1846
- (5) MacKelvie - Statistics p.131
- (6) Ibid. pp.133f, 135, 137
- (7) Ibid. pp.128, 136, 138, 437, 141.
- (8) Ewing - Annals vol.2 pp.143, 148f.
- (9) Monimail Heritors minutes 1793 - 1804 26/4/1793
- (10) Ibid. 21/4/1795
- (11) Ibid. 7/10/1795
- (12) Ibid. 22/12/1796
- (13) Dunbog Heritors minutes 1799 - 1927 28/6/1799
- (14) Dunbog OPR vol.3 Accounts 5/6/1803
- (15) Collessie HR 1775 1/10/1834
- (16) Ibid. 2/6/1837
- (17) Collessie PC Collections 19/6/1837, 2/7/1837
- (18) Collessie HR 1775 29/7/1837
- (19) Rem. Cupar p.88f
- (20) Yuille - Baptists p.145
- (21) Monimail Heritors Papers - Subscription list dated 18/10/1817.
- (22) Dunbog OPR vol.3 29/4/1804
- (23) Collessie PCKS 1833 15/12/1839
- (24) Collessie HR accts 1813 after entry dated 20/12/1837
- (25) Strathmiglo RPC minutes 30/3/1852
- (26) S. Lee - Dictionary of National Biography vol.55 p.268
- (27) Monimail PCKS 3/12/1843
- (28) Rem. Cupar p.116
- (29) Monimail PCKS 3/12/1843
- (30) MacKelvie - Statistics p.137

- (31) Orr - Pulpit p.48
- (32) Fife Herald 17/8/1865
- (33) NSA p.78
- (34) Ibid. p.779
- (35) Ibid. p.13
- (36) Orr - Pulpit p.118
- (37) NSA pp.47, 577, 553, 432.
- (38) Orr - Pulpit p.78
- (39) Ibid. pp.85, 87
- (40) NSA p.574
- (41) Ibid p.607
- (42) Ibid. pp553, 44
- (43) Dunbog OPR vol.4 5/6/1848
- (44) G. Hay - The Architecture of Scottish Post Reformation Churches pp.79f, 77.
- (45) Ibid. pp.133, 130
- (46) Ibid. pp.86, 92, 121
- (47) Ibid. pp.115, 116, 120
- (48) Ibid. pp.256, 258
- (49) Ibid. p.258
- Lee - National Biography vol.22 p.328

II(f) Church Fixtures and Fittings

The internal arrangements of the churches changed over the years, as concessions were made to new tastes and an increasing desire for greater comfort. The Parish Church at Collessie before its demolition to make way for the new church which was built in 1839 was a long narrow building. It was seventy-five feet long and twenty-five feet broad with the pulpit in the middle of the long wall. There were galleries to the right and left of the pulpit. The building was seated and some of the seats dated from the fifteenth century. (1) At Falkland where there was also an old parish church before it was eventually rebuilt, the building still had an earthen floor in 1845. (2) As the old buildings were replaced changes could be noted but even at the beginning of the nineteenth century the new buildings still retained many of the characteristics of these older buildings. A description of the Parish Church of Balmerino after its erection in 1811 reveals how similar it was to the ancient building which was still standing at Collessie:-

"The pulpit stood against the middle of the south wall. The gallery, the front of which was half oval extended the whole length of the church. The communion table in front of the pulpit, also extended to almost its whole length. There was a door near to the west end of the south wall and another near the east end of it. Opposite these were two doors in the north wall, leading by stairs to the gallery which was lighted by a square headed window, above each of the south doors. There were no windows in the north wall; nor was there any session house, vestry, or heating apparatus." (3)

The old parish church of Creich was built to a similar pattern. It was described as being a plain oblong building standing east and west, sixty feet long by fifteen feet broad, with the pulpit in the usual post-reformation position about the middle of the south wall. The communion table ran east to west. When the new church was built at Creich in 1832 the effect of new ideas could be seen. The pattern of standing east to west was repeated but a vestibule was erected at the west end of the church while the pulpit was positioned at the east end. There were two passages with the space between so seated that by a slight adjustment,

the pews of the ordinary service were converted to a communion table with seats on either side, while the minister was placed at the east end. (4) With the Reformation the altar of the mass gave way to the long communion table of the reformed rite. Originally a temporary structure erected for the administration of the sacrament and then dismantled, during the eighteenth century long communion table pews became a central feature of many churches. (5) In some of the churches of North Fife it may be that some of the pews were able to be transformed and used as tables. Before the reconstruction of the Parish Church at Creich in 1832 regular payments were made to the wright at the celebration of Communion and certainly after the reconstruction this arrangement was the one adopted. (6) At Strathmiglo, too, regular payments were made for setting up the tables at the time of the celebration of communion during the latter years of the eighteenth century and the early part of the nineteenth. (7)

From the 1830's it appears to have been the intention of many heritors to remove the permanently situated long communion tables. At the building of the new Parish Church at Collessie the minister objected that he thought the arrangements within the church were unsuitable for communion on the grounds that:-

"the whole communicants would be obliged to sit fronting the clergyman without having the benefit of a proper table before them." (8)

Within the Church of Scotland the communion table was the place where the communicants, ministers, elders, and people sat together to partake of the Lord's Supper and it was felt that should it be placed in such a way or in any other way be made to appear as if it were not part of a communion table at which they were all to sit this would be illegal. (9) The minister of Collessie expressed the opinion that the arrangements made for the new church would not be approved probably in the light of this practice. After consultation with the builders the communion seats

were arranged in a way that was thought to be acceptable. In the 1860's alterations were carried out at Kilmany Parish Church, where again the new plan and specification for the seating arrangements involved the front pews only be fitted up as communion seats. (10)

Internal decoration by modern standards was sparse. In 1840 the Heritors of Monimail Parish nominated a committee to carry out repairs to the Parish Church. The committee was particularly directed to get the inside wall whitewashed. (11) The Free Church of Cupar had little in the way of gilding or painting when it was first built, while although the Free Church of Collessie had papered walls it does not appear that the walls were lined with lathe and plaster until 1854. (12) As the nineteenth century wore on it appears that the desire for more elaborately decorated churches which provided greater comfort increased. In 1850, for instance, at Auchtermuchty some members of the congregation of the Free Church decided to make their own seating accommodation more comfortable, and applied to the Deacons' Court for permission to fit up front seats in the gallery at their own expense. (13)

The desire for more comfortable churches led early in the nineteenth century to requests for some system of heating to be installed in churches. In 1821 at a meeting of the Heritors of Cupar Parish, the Provost of the Burgh of Cupar, informed the gathering that a number of the parishioners had complained to him about the coldness of the Parish Church in winter, because of the fact that, unlike other town churches the Parish Church had no stoves. He proposed that the Heritors should consider installing two small stoves. (14) Three years later the Heritors agreed to have stoves installed provided they were not assessed for any part of the expense and all the cost was borne by subscribers to the cost. (15) By 1837 gas heaters were being tried out in Cupar Parish Church but these do not seem to have been successful. (16) In these experiments in

heating Cupar Heritors may have been rather laggard. It seems likely from the reported comment of the provost of the Burgh that the other churches in the town, or at least some of them may have already had some form of heating. Certainly by 1832 the purchase of coals and peat seems to have been a feature of the expense incurred by the former Auchtermuchty Burgher congregation, and there would appear to have been a stove in Strathmiglo Reformed Presbyterian Church before 1830. (17)

At Collessie the question of heating the new Parish Church came before the Heritors in 1840. Like their counterparts at Cupar they were reluctant to bear the expense but declared themselves anxious to do something to add to the comfort of the church in winter, and subsequently they also decided to see whether a heating system could be installed by private subscription. (18) By the 1850's the necessity of heating churches appears to have been agreed, and in 1854 the Deacon's Court of Collessie Free Church resolved to obtain a new stove as the one then in use had been erected on a defective principle. (19)

During the nineteenth century as the use of coal gas for lighting and heating increased it began to be used in churches, too. Earlier in many churches the purchase of candles for lighting was a recurring expense and in 1814 when the congregation of the Parish Church of Cupar petitioned the Heritors to the effect that the east end of the church was so badly lit that it was impossible for many of the worshippers to read their books, their suggested solution was the creation of a window at that end of the church. (20) By 1835 Cupar Parish Church had been fitted with equipment to provide gas lighting. (21) Outside of Cupar gas lighting took longer to appear but in 1849 Auchtermuchty Free Church was provided with gas lighting while at Strathmiglo the Reformed Presbyterian Church appears to have also been fitted out to be lit with gas since in 1857 a heating system was introduced which seems to have used a pre-existent gas lighting system. (22) The Parish Church of Strathmiglo does not appear to have

received the benefits of gas lighting until late in the period since candles continued to be purchased until 1853 when the first gas bill appears among the accounts. (23)

Seats in the parish churches were largely allocated to the heritors. At Ceres, Creich, Logie, Monimail and Strathmiglo the entire seating accommodation was allocated to the heritors, generally according to their valued rents. (24) In some churches an entire aisle was the private property of an individual heritor. (25) When the seats were allocated to the heritors, it usually meant that the seats were allocated free of charge to tenants, servants and others, but this was not the invariable practice. (26) At Strathmiglo where all the seats in the Parish Church were allocated to the heritors a rent of about one shilling or two shillings and sixpence a year appears to have been common. (27) At Cupar where almost all the seats were divided between the Town Council of the burgh and the Heritors some of the seats not used by those to whom they had been allocated appear to have been let at a small rent. (28) (29) In St. Michael's Chapel of Ease, in Cupar it appears that almost all the seats were let. (30) In 1808 and 1809 seat rents in Cupar Parish Church yielded more than two pounds but as early as 1802 the parish ministers were complaining that rents from the seats were inadequate to defray the costs of keeping the church clock and windows, to the expense of which they had been allocated. (31) (32)

At Auchtermuchty the principal heritor, O.T. Bruce, built an addition to the church in 1838. It was built at his own expense and on the understanding that the additional seats would remain his own property. (33) Subsequently these seats were placed at the disposal of the Kirk Session who resolved in 1865 to let them at the nominal rent of sixpence per annum. (34) Following this decision representations were made by parishioners that it was the use and wont of a parish church to give seats without any charge. (35) It also appears that

some seats were left as free seats in the parish churches. At Kilmany where there were two hundred and forty-two seats allocated to the heritors, the schoolmaster and the minister there were fifty-two seats left aside as free seats. (36) At Flisk in 1838, the communion seats were left as free seats while the ministers of Dunbog and Moonzie alone claimed around 1840, that all the seats in their churches were free. (37)(38)

It is clear that the practice of allocating seats to heritors according to their valued rent could leave some individuals without any right to a seat in their parish church. In 1865 the Kirk Session of Auchtermuchty Parish Church noted that individuals who could not get seats in the Parish Church were applying to the Kirk Session for the seats which O.T. Bruce had given into the Kirk Session's control. (39)

At Cupar, the Heritors observed that:-

"It is of importance parishioners should be accommodated in the church as also proprietors of land having no seats at present."

In 1838 the Parish minister of Creich expressed the opinion that it would have been desirable if a considerable part of the church had been set aside for the public. There was, he felt, sufficient accommodation, although some people were unable to obtain seats and suffered from, what he considered to be, a natural dislike of intruding into other people's seats. (41) A year earlier, in 1837, the minister at Logie commenting on this method of dividing the seating accommodation of churches noted that where the heritors had foued their ground they might require a larger number of seats than their proportion of the church could provide. (42)

Amongst the dissenting congregations the renting of seats was an accepted part of church membership. In 1861 the seat rents paid by members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church at Strathmiglo represented almost a quarter of the congregation's total income. (43) In 1841 when a number of the members of the Newburgh United Secession Church withdrew and formed a new Congregation of the Relief Church the income from seat

rents fell by more than one third.⁽⁴⁴⁾ As early as 1798 the Kirk Session of Auchtermuchty Burgher Church discussed a motion that those in the congregation whose circumstances enabled them to pay seat rents, but refused, nevertheless, to pay them should be excluded from church privileges.⁽⁴⁵⁾ The importance of seat rents in the life of the church is perhaps indicated by the fact that in 1826 Edenshead United Secession Church arranged the letting of church seats at a congregational meeting.⁽⁴⁶⁾ At Edenshead the seat letting accounts show that seat rents varied widely, from about four shillings to two pounds two shillings, so that some provision was made to accommodate the ability of the members of the church to pay.⁽⁴⁷⁾ Despite the importance of seat rents for the financial courts of the dissenting churches all the congregations in Cupar claimed in 1837 to provide accommodation for the poor or claimed that the poor might occupy seats on the same right as those who rented them. It was also generally claimed by dissenters that they operated a scale of charges for seats and that the poor might hold a seat at whatever they were able to give.⁽⁴⁸⁾

It may not have been too difficult for the poor to find seats even amongst the congregations where seat rents were charged because churches often seem to have been built very much larger than the size of the congregation would have indicated was necessary. In 1835 the Town Council of Cupar, in a debate in which they expressed their opposition to the further endowment of the Established Church, asserted that the parish churches in the surrounding area were only half-filled at their average attendance.⁽⁴⁹⁾ The statement appears to have contained more than a grain of truth. In 1843 the Parish Church of Auchtermuchty was capable of seating nine hundred worshippers but the number of communicant members at the time was only six hundred.⁽⁵⁰⁾ A petition signed in 1852 by five hundred people was said to contain the names of almost all the congregation of Auchtermuchty Parish Church which at the time was

described by a minister of the Established Church in another parish as "...one of our best filled churches". (51)(52) A visitor to Newburgh Parish Church in the 1860's commented:-

"There was a good audience in the church on Sunday but in that large building the pews looked sparsely occupied." (53)

At the time of the unofficial census of 1851 Balmerino Parish Church which was capable of holding a congregation of four hundred was occupied by between two hundred and forty and two hundred and fifty worshippers. (54) At Ceres where the parish church was thought to be capable of holding thirteen hundred worshippers, there were between seven hundred and eight hundred worshippers according to the return of the same census. (55)(56) At Kettle Parish Church, according to the 1851 returns the congregation numbered only six hundred in a building with twelve hundred seats. (57) Worst of all perhaps was Dairsie Parish Church where only one hundred and twenty of the three hundred and nineteen seats were filled by worshippers. (58)

The dissenting churches may not have had a better record of church attendance in many cases. In 1850 the Strathmiglo Reformed Presbyterian congregation erected a church capable of accommodating four hundred people although its membership at the time numbered only around one hundred and thirty. (59) At Kettle the congregation of the United Presbyterian Church built a new place of worship with seating for seven hundred and twenty-five worshippers. It replaced a church which could hold six hundred. (60) At the census of 1851 the congregation's attendance was recorded as being four hundred and fifty. (61) In 1849 Cupar Boston United Presbyterian congregation which gave its attendance at the census of 1851 as being nearly five hundred had opened a church capable of accommodating seven hundred. (62)(63) The same pattern emerges at Auchtermuchty where the East United Presbyterian congregation opened a new church with a capacity of six hundred in 1845.

This new church replaced an older building with four hundred and twenty-two seats and the congregation reported its attendance in 1851 as being about four hundred.⁽⁶⁴⁾⁽⁶⁵⁾ The pattern of a church larger than that strictly required by the size of the congregation can be seen again at Newburgh where the second United Presbyterian congregation of one hundred and eighty-five people opened a new church with accommodation for four hundred worshippers in 1850.⁽⁶⁶⁾⁽⁶⁷⁾

There were, of course, well attended churches. The rural parishes of Flisk and Dunbog were well filled for the 1851 census.⁽⁶⁸⁾ Amongst the Parish Churches of the Burghs that of Cupar was probably best filled in 1851 with between eight hundred and fifty and nine hundred people fillings its thirteen hundred seats and another considerable congregation in the St. Michael's Chapel of East.⁽⁶⁹⁾ Nevertheless the statistics are not always a reliable guide as to the situation. In the 1830's it was claimed that the United Secession Church at Edenshead in the Parish of Strathmiglo had an average attendance at worship in excess of three hundred people.⁽⁷⁰⁾ Other sources suggest that the church was built to hold three hundred worshippers and in the circumstances some doubt as to the accuracy of the information must exist.⁽⁷¹⁾ On the whole it would seem however that churches were not so well filled as tradition suggests and that there were many churches of all denominations where the seating capacity of the place of worship reflected only the hopes of those responsible for building it.

As the nineteenth century wore on congregations began to expect a greater degree of comfort and a higher standard of decoration within their places of worship. As external decoration was added to the outside masonry so the internal decoration was also enhanced. The most significant feature was the increasing comfort and better lighting of churches as heating and lighting systems were installed in the buildings. It is clear, too, that in 1851 when the population of the

area was at its greatest many of the churches were still built to provide accommodation for many more worshippers than might normally be expected to be present in church although it is possible that at the celebration of the sacrament or on other special occasions churches might very well be well filled. There was also a tendency to abandon the traditional church lay-out in which the pulpit was fitted to the south wall of the church in favour of placing the pulpit to the east of the church, while the long communion table which had once featured as an important part of the church was increasingly replaced by arrangements which made it possible to dispense with it as a permanent feature.

II(f) Church Fixtures and Fittings.

- (1) NSA p.35
- (2) Ibid. p.937
- (3) J. Campbell - Balmerino and its Abbey p.478
- (4) Gant - Communion (SCHS vol.4) p.83
- (5) Hay - Architecture pp.178, 181.
- (6) Gant - Communion (SCHS vol.4)p.84
- (7) Strathmiglo Parish Church Account of Disbursements for the School of the Poor 1794 - 1807 8/6/1798, 11/12/1799, 25/6, 1800, 3/12/1800
- (8) Collessie HR 1775 1/11/1839
- (9) William Mair - A Digest of the Laws and Decisions Ecclesiastical and Civil Relating to the Constitution, Practice, and Affairs of the Church of Scotland pp.92, 95.
- (10) Kilmany Parish Church Minute Book of the Heritors, Kirk Session and Parochial Board 1837 - 1907. 2/11/1859
- (11) Monimail HR 23/10/1840
- (12) Rem. Cupar p.117
- (13) Auchtermuchty FCDC 4/6/1850, 7/10/1850
- (14) Cupar HR 1821 16/10/1821
- (15) Cupar Heritors minutes 1823 - 1829. 23/1/1824
- (16) Cupar HR 1829 11/2/1836, 1/3/1837
- (17) Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. accts. 12/11/1832
Strathmiglo RPC minutes - copy of a letter dated 4/3/1837
- (18) Collessie HR 1755 11/12/1840
- (19) Collessie FCDC 21/8/1854
- (20) Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. accts. 19/10/1828, 25/1/1829, 26/11/1830,
Cupar HR 1802 17/3/1814
- (21) Cupar HR 1829 31/12/1835 (Committee meeting)
- (22) Auchtermuchty FCDC 29/10/1849
- (23) Strathmiglo Parish Church Accounts of Collections at the Church Door and Disbursements 1846 - 1866 2/4/1849, 1853
- (24) NSA pp.529, 652, 432, 779.
- (25) Ibid. p.938
Monimail HR 1793 19/7/1793

- (26) NSA p.652, 607, 553.
- (27) Ibid. p.779
- (28) Cupar HR 1802 5/1/1802
- (29) NSA p.13
Cupar HR 1802 3/3/1814
- (30) Fife Herald 21/12/1837
- (31) Cupar HR 1802 5/12/1810
- (32) Ibid. 2/3/1802
- (33) HMB - Extract from Auchtermuchty heritors minutes dated 30/6/1837
- (34) Auchtermuchty Parish Church Kirk Session minutes 1863 - 1923 22/6/1865
- (35) Ibid. 29/6/1865
- (36) Kilmany PC minutes 3/8/1861
- (37) NSA p.607
- (38) Ibid. p.216, 796
- (39) Auchtermuchty PCKS 1863 22/6/1865
- (40) Cupar HR 1829 26/6/1834 (Committee meeting)
- (41) NSA p.652
- (42) Ibid. p.432
- (43) Strathmiglo RPC minutes ?/2/1861, ?/7/1861
- (44) Small - U.P. Church vol.1 p.197
- (45) Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. 6/6/1798
- (46) Edenshead USC minutes 28/11/1826
- (47) Edenshead USC Seat Rents
- (48) Fife Herald 21/12/1837
- (49) Ibid. 9/4/1835
- (50) NSA p.781
- (51) HMB - Letter from Rev. R. Williamson to O.T. Bruce dated 10/11/1852
- (52) Ibid. Letter from rev. Dr. Anderson to O. T. Bruce
- (53) Fife Herald 31/8/1865
- (54) Dawson - Statistical History p.406
- (55) NSA p.529
- (56) Dawson - Statistical History p.404

- (57) Dawson - Statistical History p.427
- (58) Ibid. p.414
- (59) Couper - Reformed Presbyterian Church (SCHS vol.2) p.50
- (60) MacKelvie - Statistics p.137
- (61) Dawson - Statistical History p.427
- (62) Small - U.P.Church vol.1 p.183
- (63) Dawson- Statistical History p.405
- (64) MacKelvie - Statistics p.129
- (65) Dawson - Statistical History p.436
- (66) Smal - U.P.Church vol.1 p.199
- (67) Dawson - Statistical History p.436
- (68) Ibid. pp.424, 415. Dunbog Parish Church with a capacity of two hundred held one hundred and fifty worshippers while Flisk with a capacity of one hundred and fifty-three had an attendance of one hundred and ten.
- (69) Dawson- Statistical Histroy p.412f
- (70) Leighton - Fife p.196
- (71) Mackelvie - Statistics p.437.

II(g) Finance

The financial arrangements of the Established Church were largely defined by law. The stipends of the ministers were met out of teinds or by the heritors of the land where the option to purchase the teinds had been exercised.⁽¹⁾ The building and maintenance of churches was met in the first instance out of vacant stipend and when this source of income failed by the heritors who were also responsible with the life-renters for the maintenance of the manse.⁽²⁾ Church door collections were devoted to the benefit of the poor along with the income that was provided by the fees paid for the use of the parochial mortcloth, mortifications for the poor and other small charities.⁽³⁾

The funds which were held by Kirk Sessions for the benefit of the poor were obviously those whose sources were the most diverse. In the accounts of Strathmiglo Parish Church Kirk Session for the years between 1807 and 1815 rent of land and houses, mortcloth and proclamation dues, donations, interest and collections all figure.⁽⁴⁾ In the year ending first January 1815 the rent paid to the Kirk Session amounted to £35. 5s. 0d. in a total income for the year of £129. -. 2⁹/₁₂d.⁽⁵⁾ Interest on loans was another substantial item of income for many Kirk Sessions in the early part of the nineteenth century. In 1800 the accounts of Kilmany Kirk Session record that the Session received interest to the total of £37. 5. 2d. in a year in which the entire income of the Kirk Session did not exceed £70. 12. 9¹/₂d.⁽⁶⁾ The accounts of Collessie Kirk Session contain entries noting the payment of interest every year between 1800 and 1807 and in many other years as well.⁽⁷⁾

Fees for the proclamation of banns did not represent in many parishes an important element of income to the Kirk Sessions resources and in any case only part of such fees were paid into the accounts. When, in 1797, the Kirk Session of Auchtermuchty Parish Church drew up a list of charges to be paid by those whose banns were proclaimed there, they also decided

that from fees ranging from three shillings to fifteen shillings and sixpence the amounts by which the poor accounts would benefit would only be between two shillings and threepence and five shillings.⁽⁸⁾ At Strathmiglo the income from proclamation fees between 1807 and 1815 never exceeded £1. 14. 0d. in any one year while at the smaller Parish of Collossie such fees never amounted to more than fifteen shillings in the annual accounts.⁽⁹⁾ Nevertheless associated with the marriages of the wealthier residents of any parish were the donations which many of them were accustomed to make at such a time. The accounts of the Kirk Session of Kilmany record that in 1801 when David Gillespie of Mountquhannie one of the heritors of the parish, and Miss Mary Carnegie of Montrose were contracted to marry two guineas were donated to the Kirk Session funds, while Gillespie's sister, Miss Margaret Gillespie, had her marriage contract marked by the donation of one guinea.⁽¹⁰⁾ Similar donations are recorded in the accounts of many churches.

Donations were not only made to mark marriages. In 1809 the accounts of Dunbog Kirk Session record that a traveller marked his return from India to the Parish with a donation, while at Auchtermuchty donations were received without any reason at all being recorded for their having been given.⁽¹¹⁾ Perhaps the most surprising reason for a donation being given to a Kirk Session was that given by David Maitland Makgill, who as David Maitland Makgill Orichton, subsequently played an important roll in the church life of the area. Collossie Parish Church Kirk Session noted that he had made a donation of five pounds on his return from Madeira where his wife had died.⁽¹²⁾

Fees paid for the use of the parochial mortcloth represented a substantially greater source of income than did fees paid at the proclamation of banns. At Strathmiglo the mortcloth earned an annual sum in excess of five pounds between 1807 and 1818, while at Kilmany the income from the use of the mortcloth was, in that smaller parish, in the region of two pounds a year between 1793 and 1800.⁽¹³⁾

In the 1830's this source of income came under attack. A letter to the editor of the Life Herald complained in 1833 that while the charges made were not much noticed at times of high wages when there was unemployment in the area they were 'odious'.⁽¹⁴⁾ Subscription mortcloth societies were formed throughout the area under the influence of those who supported the voluntary movement until, by 1834, such societies were reported at Cupar, Ceres, Falkland, Freuchie, Strathmiglo, Collessie, Pittlessie and Dunshalt.⁽¹⁵⁾ At Collessie the mortcloth society issued a direct challenge to the Kirk Session when they proposed, in March of 1833, to provide their cloth and 'spokes' free of charge to anyone resident in the parish.⁽¹⁶⁾ The Kirk Session responded to the challenge by commenting that they could not sanction an innovation which permitted parishioners to use another cloth since the traditional practice had the approval of the court of session. Nevertheless they decided that they would not stop anyone using the subscription society's mortcloth but would continue to charge the appropriate fee for anyone buried in Collessie Churchyard.⁽¹⁷⁾ Eight months later the fees for the use of the parochial mortcloth at Collessie were reduced.⁽¹⁸⁾

Church door collections, although subject to fluctuations which reflected the economic fortunes of the area, were until the 1840's generally the largest source of income available to Kirk Sessions. At Strathmiglo during the eighteen months which ended on the first of January 1809 the church door collections amounted to £16. 18. 9⁶/₁₂d. which included an extraordinary collection for the poor which was appointed by the heritors and the Kirk Session and which provided £10. 15. 2d. The total income of the Kirk Session for that year was £111. 1. 3³/₁₂d. That period may have been exceptional and the £25. 2. 4³/₁₂d. collected at the church door in the year ending first January 1811 may have been a more normal figure, while in the severe economic depression which affected the industrial life of the area in 1817 church door collections fell to £16. 9. 2⁶/₁₂d.⁽¹⁹⁾ Sometimes the cause of the fall in church door collections was unassociated with the economic climate. At Dunbog church

door collections fell from one shilling and ninepence half-penny in 1827 to fourpence half-penny in 1831. The Parish minister's comment was:-

"Our collections are gone from bad to worse." (20)

In 1830 he had noted:-

"During my long illness they did away with the ladles quite unknown to me. The collections have fallen so low it is not worth contending about." (21)

While legally the church door collections were for the benefit of the poor it was necessary for special collections to be appointed for other purposes, and when the General Assembly under the influence of the evangelical party took up the cause of church extension, education schemes in the highlands, missionary and other forms of work it became necessary to appoint special collections. (22) In 1862 these special collections at Strathmiglo raised more than twelve pounds to assist with the causes of Home, Jewish and Colonial missions and the endowments of chapels of ease. (23) These special collections in the years following the Disruption and the passing of the Poor Law of 1845 became the channel into which most of the Established Church's members' beneficence was directed.

While the church door collections were reserved for the poor it is equally clear that Kirk Sessions did not observe the law to the letter. While the cost of erecting and repairing communion tents and the payment of fees to the session clerk were considered permissible, the payment of the Presbytery Clerk's salary, communion forms, tables and table cloths was not. (24) Notwithstanding this fact the accounts of Strathmiglo Kirk Session frequently note the payment of the contribution of the Kirk Session to the Presbytery Clerk's salary apparently out of the poor's accounts. (25) After the passing of the poor law of 1845 the practice of paying that congregation's proportion of the Presbytery's expenses appears to have continued at least until 1848 when it disappeared from the Statutory Returns to the Secretary of the Board

of Supervision. (26) At Collessie it appears to have been the custom to meet expenses other than the relief of the poor from church door collections and in particular to meet the congregation's proportion of the prebytery's clerk's salary out of this fund. (27) Nevertheless prior to the passing of the 1845 act the bulk of Kirk Session's outlays were in direct aid to the poor. The Strathmiglo Kirk Session of 1809 disbursed just over seventy-two pounds of which more than fifty pounds was for the direct support of the poor while at Collessie the Kirk Session of 1840 had outlays of more than forty-six pounds of which almost forty pounds was intended for the relief of the poor. (28)

From 1845 onwards the church door collections of the Parish Churches fell dramatically. At Strathmiglo where church door collections had been thought to be low when they fell to seventeen pounds in 1817 the church door collections were reported to the Secretary of the Board of Supervision at Edinburgh, the body responsible for the operation of the new poor law to have fallen to £1. 19. 7½d. during the first year of its operation. (29) This fall probably represents the combined effect of the Disruption, the fact that in 1845 the Established Church had been relieved of its responsibility for the poor, and the fact that to some extent the generosity of its members was directed towards the schemes of the General Assembly. Whatever the cause a similar decline, although more gradual, can be seen in the collections at Collessie where they fell from more than fifty-three pounds in the year ending fifth April, 1840 to just over seven pounds which was recorded in 1854. (30) At Strathmiglo the amount of the collections subsequently rose until in the financial year 1863 to 1864 they reached a total of more than nine pounds. (31)

The frequency with which heritors were called upon to make voluntary assessments varied from parish to parish. Large assessments at the beginning of the period were probably infrequent, although the cost of building a new church, a cost borne by many heritors during the period

under review, was high. The new church at Collessie was estimated to cost £1,220, a cost which makes it possible to understand the reluctance of the heritors there to incur the cost of installing heating apparatus the following year. (32) In 1831 the heritors of Monimail Parish agreed to a voluntary assessment of one hundred pounds a year for three years to defray the cost of repairing the manse offices and to make provision for the poor fund. At this assessment while the smallest heritors were required to pay only ninepence and sevenpence half-penny respectively the sum paid by the principal heritor amounted to more than thirty pounds. (33) In some of the parishes later in the period voluntary assessments became almost annual events. At Kilmany assessments were made in 1839, 1841, 1842, 1843, and 1844, while after the passing of the 1845 Poor Law they were repeated in 1846 and from 1848 annually until 1854. Prior to the passing of the 1845 act the largest assessment at Kilmany was forty-five pounds but from 1845 onwards the amount increased until in 1854 the heritors were being asked to provide one hundred and thirty pounds. (34) Since the amount raised for the support of the poor is not distinguished from the amounts raised for the purposes of the church in this parish it is not possible to establish the cause of the rise. It does seem that elsewhere the rise was caused by the poor rate and it is probable that this was also the cause in Kilmany. (35)

The congregations of churches outside of the Established Church were under the necessity of providing the entire income of their respective churches out of their own membership. Perhaps in consequence finance figured prominently in the deliberations of the courts of these churches. In 1798 the Kirk Session of the Burgher congregation of Auchtermuchty discussed a motion that those in the congregation whose circumstances made it possible for them to pay seat rents and who refused to do so should be excluded from church privileges. (36) Further consideration of the matter was delayed until 1801 when the question of members of the

congregation who were not contributing to the financial support of the church was again raised. On this occasion the Kirk Session resolved that members not contributing regularly to the support of the gospel should be excluded from church privileges as:-

"persons who neglect a plain and necessary duty". (37)

In 1820 the Managers of the same congregation reported to the Kirk Session that nearly a quarter of the congregation habitually neglected the 'support of the gospel'. The Kirk Session agreed to enforce the decision which their predecessors had made in 1801 and to have this decision intimated from the pulpit. (38) This does not appear to have had the desired effect since in 1822 the Kirk Session decided that in view of the deterioration of the Kirk Session's funds the treasurer should present his accounts annually. (39)

In 1823 the ordinary weekly collection of the Auchtermuchty Burgher congregation which was by then part of the United Secession Church, was in the region of one pound, but it is also clear that there were additional periodical subscription lists circulated which produced larger sums of money. In 1824 these lists were said to be for the congregational debt and they generally yielded an amount in the region of five pounds. (40) In 1826 money was being raised by regularly quarterly collections which by 1828 had become an annual feature of the accounts raising in that year eleven pounds. (41) It would appear that collections of various kinds yielded the bulk of the income of all the congregations outside the Established Church. The Reformed Presbyterian Church at Strathwigo in its balance sheet for the half year ending thirtieth of July 1860 reported an income from three sources - collections which yielded £51. 6. 9d.; seat rents which produced £20. 2. 6d.; and the income from property bequeathed to the congregation which gave the congregation a further £3. 5. 6d. In the second half of the same year the income from these three sources was £41. 10. 5½d.; £14. 17. 6d.; and £4. 9. 2d. respectively. (42)

Many of these churches also carried an almost permanent burden of debt. Although the church premises of Freuchie Burgher congregation were built in 1796 the debt incurred at that time was not cleared until 1852.⁽⁴³⁾ At Newburgh the Relief congregation appears to have been dependent on financial help from the Home Mission fund of its own denomination to meet the expense of its minister's stipend, while in 1848 the congregation of Edenshead United Secession Church, in the Parish of Strathmiglo, found itself in debt to its own minister to the extent of fifty pounds.⁽⁴⁴⁾

The strength of these congregations is demonstrated by the fact that so many were able to clear themselves of debt by the generosity of their own members. The Boston Relief congregation of Cupar which had debts totalling five hundred and fifty pounds in 1816 appears to have reduced the debt to less than one hundred pounds in the course of twenty years and when the congregation began to worship in a new church building which they had erected in 1849 there is no record of any debt to be cleared.⁽⁴⁵⁾ The Reformed Presbyterian congregation at the village of Strathmiglo, a congregation which had incurred debts in excess of one hundred and twenty pounds in building its first church found that the subscription raised by its congregation was insufficient to cover the costs and was obliged to borrow ninety pounds which was lent by one of its own members.⁽⁴⁶⁾ In 1835 the income of the congregation amounted to only ninety-five pounds, which since the minister's stipend was forty pounds in the half year, must have left an insufficient surplus to lessen the debt.⁽⁴⁷⁾ By May 1844 the congregational debt amounted to £108. 19. Od. and the principal creditor who was also a member of the congregation offered to pay half the debt if the congregation paid the balance. A subscription was raised among the congregation and with twenty-seven pounds raised by the minister and his friends the debt was cleared.⁽⁴⁸⁾

In 1852 the same congregation built a new church. A subscription list which was circulated raised on this occasion £360. 2. 10d. while

the sale of the old church raised a further £111. 3. 8d., but at the beginning of 1853 the congregation owed the Western Bank £187. 5. 11d. (49) In spite of increasing the minister's stipend to one hundred pounds per annum the congregation was able to clear the debt within four years. (50) The congregation was fortunate in having at least one wealthy member, Andrew Archibald, who was prepared to give considerable financial support and who, on his death, left his entire heritable estate to the congregation. (51) Many of the successful congregation which were outside the Established Church depended on such benefactors. At Rathillet, in the Parish of Kilmany, a new United Presbyterian Church building was opened free of debt in 1859 largely due to the generosity of a local landowner, James Miller of Kinnear, who suggested the idea of its erection and agreed to pay half the cost. (52)

Although the financial position of many United Presbyterian and other dissenting congregations must have been precarious on many occasions the attempts of the United Presbyterian Synod to create funds for the support of weaker congregations were greeted with mixed enthusiasm by those who might have been expected to benefit from such schemes. Despite the fact that the Auchtermuchty North United Presbyterian Church Kirk Session had applied to the Synod's Board for the Liquidation of Debt for assistance in paying its outstanding debt in 1848 twelve years later they reported to their Presbytery that they could not approve of a scheme prepared by the Synod for rating the various congregations for the benefit of the Synod funds, while in 1861 the Kirk Session declined to arrange a collection in aid of the Synod's fund for the Better Support of the Gospel Ministry. (53) Nevertheless dissenting congregations were often generous in their efforts to help young and weak congregations of their own denomination. Running through the accounts of the Burgher congregation at Auchtermuchty are entries showing help given in these circumstances and even though they declined to take part in the rating scheme of 1859

they nevertheless declared themselves willing to contribute to the Synod's Funds as God enabled them. (54)

The Financial affairs of the Free Church during the early years after the Disruption of 1843 were of necessity dominated by the importance of erecting churches, schools and manses. Like the other denominations which stood outside the Establishment such funds as they required had to be raised by the efforts of their own members and although in the early history of the church the efforts made were enthusiastic, for many congregations the raising of loans was unavoidable. Collesie Free Church negotiated a loan of three hundred pounds in 1844, while the Auchtermuchty Kirk Session of the Free church marked the end of the 1843 with a discussion which revealed that while fifty-nine pounds had been given locally and one hundred and sixty pounds had been given by the Building Committee of the Free Church General Assembly another one hundred and fifty pounds was required to pay the cost of finishing the stone work of the church. (55) In May of 1844 the Moderator of the Kirk Session at Auchtermuchty together with another of the elders was authorised to arrange a loan of one hundred pounds. (56) To meet the cost of erecting the buildings which were thought to be necessary subscription lists were circulated amongst congregations. In 1846 at least three were in the hands of the Free Church's supporters at Collesie. To meet a debt of sixteen pounds on the schoolmasters and Beadle's house a list was organised among the deacons and a few other members of the congregation. This it was thought, together with a few pounds which might be raised among the working classes, would be sufficient to clear that debt. Another was in circulation at half yearly intervals for the purpose of raising funds for the maintenance of the property owned by the church, while still a third had earlier been circulated amongst families able to subscribe five pounds or more for the erection of a manse. (57) From the start every effort was made to encourage members

of the congregations to contribute to the various funds which were organised to finance the work which the church undertook. As early as January, 1844 the Deacons at Auchtermuchty were appointed to visit the families of the congregation to encourage subscriptions to the building fund.⁽⁵⁸⁾ Donations from supporters often helped and in some cases the supporters might live at a considerable distance from the congregation they were helping and have a connection with it only through their acquaintanceship with the minister.⁽⁵⁹⁾ Notwithstanding all such efforts, the debts carried by some congregations persisted. In 1854 Collesie Free Church was seeking help with the debt it had incurred in erecting a school, while at Auchtermuchty the Free Church still had debts on its buildings totalling £252. 5. 4d. in 1855, although the congregation by its own efforts had already raised £818. 19. 7d. to pay for their church and school.⁽⁶⁰⁾

The sums of money raised by the Free Church congregations in the early years of that church's existence were often very large by the standards of the time. Auchtermuchty Free Church raised £377. 2. 7½d. in 1844; £346. 12. 8½d. in 1845; and £484. 14. 3d. in 1846. These were the years when the church buildings were being erected and although in subsequent years the income of the church fell appreciably it remained in excess of one hundred and forty pounds until in 1855 when it fell to one hundred and thirteen pounds. By 1865 the income of the church had continued to fall but never below one hundred and two pounds.⁽⁶¹⁾ The cause of this fall is uncertain. The much smaller congregation of Monimail Free Church which does not appear to have had an annual income in excess of one hundred pounds and frequently with an income of much less, could not have survived, according to a local commentator, without help from the Free Church Sustentation Fund.⁽⁶²⁾

The provision which the Free Church made for its weaker congregations through its Sustentation Fund through which ministers of the smaller and

weaker churches were assured of a modest competence was one of the characteristic features of the accounts of its congregations. (63)

It also clearly represented a large charge on the money raised by them.

The limited income of Monimail Free Church yielded the fund £36. 11. 3d. from a total income of £78. 2. 10d. in the year ending seventeenth

March 1846, while in the following financial year the congregation paid £34. 3. 11d. to the fund from an income of £66. 10. 7½d. (64)

In the financial year 1861 to 1862 the Sustentation Fund drew £81. 3. 8d. from the total income of £145. 15. 6½d. raised by the Auchtermuchty Free

Church. (65) The Sustentation Fund was a matter of concern not only to congregations but also to presbyteries and the Free Church Assembly.

As early as 1845 a lay committee of the Free Church Presbytery of Cupar met with the Deacons' Court of Auchtermuchty Free Church who subsequently resolved to try to ensure that every communicant member and adherent contributed to the fund. (66)

Towards the end of 1849 some of the Free Church congregations in the area were being urged by Assembly committees to ensure more liberal contributions and warned that failure to do so

might result in some of the smaller churches being reduced to the status of preaching stations. (67)

It is clear that not everyone contributed to the fund. At Monimail where there were one hundred and thirty-six

communicants in 1844 only ninety-five contributed to the fund, while the following year only one hundred and two of the one hundred and fifty-four communicants were contributors. (68)

The following year the elders and deacons at Monimail decided to remonstrate with those who did not contribute to the fund although their circumstances made it possible for them to do. (69)

A similar course of action was undertaken at Collessie when the Deacons' Court there decided in 1851 to prepare a list of non-contributors

'so that they might become contributors'. (70)

At Collessie the Sustentation fund remained a source of anxiety into

1857. (71) The fund aroused strong passions and when sometime before the Commission of Assembly which met in March 1848 David Maitland Makgill Crichton published a pamphlet entitled 'The Failure of the Sustentation Fund and its Cause' there was a scene caused by members of the commission who believed it represented an attack on the reverent R. S. Candlish who was the convener of the committee responsible for its administration. (72)

The continuing pressure to provide a sufficiently large income to maintain both church and ministry led many congregations in the Free Church, like their United Presbyterian counterparts to become dependent on their wealthy members. Collessie Free Church received gifts totalling thirty pounds from a local landowner, James Bogie of Kinloch, in the years 1855 and 1856 while at an earlier stage of its history the Misses Walker of Pitlair, another local estate had also been supporters of that church. (73)

In 1844 and 1845 Makgill Crichton of Bankeilour who was an elder of the Free Church of Collessie donated fifteen pounds to the Free Church at Monimail which was the Free Church nearest to his own estates. (74) In 1862 when Miss Moncrieff of Southfield, Auchtermuchty who had previously donated three hundred pounds to the congregation withdrew her annual subscription of twenty-five pounds to the Sustentation Fund and cancelled a prospective legacy of one thousand pounds to the congregation of Auchtermuchty Free Church it created great concern in the Deacons' Court. (75)

Pressed by the need to support Free Church schoolmasters, the missionary schemes of the church, the Sustentation Fund and also to pay their own congregational expenses it is easy to understand why the Deacons' Court at Collessie Free Church should deplore the successive losses of wealthy members. (76)

The work of those churches which stood outside the Establishment appears to have been permanently overshadowed by the need for money. Elsewhere the United Presbyterian Church was described as having its roots in that grade of society which was industrious, hardworking, sober

and thrifty. (77) The achievements of congregations which never appear to have been large confirm that these were virtues which were to be found prominently in their North Fife congregations, as well. In the period under review the Free Church demanded from its supporters courage, service and sacrifice which in its early years it obtained but the fact that the demands were of a continuing nature may explain why in the 1860's the church seemed to lose some of its vitality while the Established Church awakened to responsibilities outside its own parishes and relieved of its responsibilities for the local poor took up through the schemes of the General Assembly the responsibility for proclaiming the gospel both in Scotland and abroad.

II(g) Finance

- (1) Sir J. Connell - A Treatise on the Law of Scotland respecting Tithes and the Stipends of the Parochial Clergy vol.1 pp.111,344
Mair - Digest p.460
- (2) Compendium vol.1 pp.333, 334
- (3) Mair - Digest p.116
Drummond - Victorian Church p.80
- (4) Strathmiglo OPR vol.3 Abstracts of Accounts of the Poor 1/1/1814 - 1/1/1815
- (5) Ibid
- (6) Kilmany OPR vol.1 1800
- (7) Collessie Parish Church Kirk Session minutes and Accounts 1772 - 1816
3/2/1800 - 20/3/1807 passim
- (8) Auchtermuchty Parish Church Kirk Session minutes 1766 - 1799 2/7/1797
- (9) Strathmiglo OPR vol.3 Abstract of Poor Accounts 30/5/1807 - 1/1/1816
- (10) Kilmany OPR vol.1 marriage register 13/12/1801
- (11) Dunbog OPR vol.3 accts. 8/10/1809
Auchtermuchty OPR vol.2 accts 7/1/1811
- (12) Collessie PCKS 1833 18/6/1833
- (13) Strathmiglo OPR vol.3 Abstract of Poor Accounts 30/5/1807 - 1/1/1819
Kilmany OPR vol.1 marriage and death register
- (14) Fife Herald 11/4/1833
- (15) Ibid. 7/2/1833, 23/8/1834
- (16) Ibid. 28/3/1833
- (17) Collessie PCKS 1833 21/4/1833
- (18) Ibid. 27/12/1833
- (19) Strathmiglo OPR vol. 3 Abstract of Poor Accounts 30/5/1807,- 1/1/1809,
1/1/1810 - 1/1/1811, 1/1/1817 - 1/1/1818, receipts 10/7/1808
- (20) Dunbog OPR vol.3 2/9/1827, 10/10/1831
- (21) Ibid. 2/5/1830
- (22) Mair-Digest p.117
- (23) Strathmiglo PC accts 1846 23/2/1862,30/3/1862, 20/7/1862, 12/10/1862
- (24) Mair - Digest p.116
- (25) Strathmiglo OPR vol.3 disbursements 11/12/1807, 19/3/1809

- (26) Strathmiglo Parish Church Returns to the Secretary of the Board of Super-
vision 1848 - 1849 The record of collections at the church door and
these returns show slightly different totals so that it is impossible
to say whether gas bills and other expense were paid out of ordinary
or special collections.
- (27) Collessie HR accts 1813 Abstract of Accounts to 14/12/1838; 5/4/1840 -
31/12/1840, Dec, 1838 - 5/4/1840
- (28) Strathmiglo OPR vol.3 Abstract of Poor Accounts 1/1/1809 - 1/1/1810
Collessie HR accts. Abstract of Accounts 5/4/1840 - 3/12/1840
- (29) Strathmiglo PC Board Retns. 1846 - 47
- (30) Collessie HR accts 1813 Abstract of Accounts Dec, 1838 - 5/4/1840
Collessie Parish Church Kirk Session minutes 1851 -1889
- (31) Strathmiglo PC Board Retns. 1863 - 64 The accounts of the period show
a total of £11. 2. -d.
- (32) Collessie HR 1775 2/3/1839, 11/12/1840
- (33) Monimail Heritors minutes 1810 - 1840 8/4/1831
- (34) Kilmany PC minutes 9/8/1839, 29/4/1841, 6/8/1842,-- 25/2/1854 passim.
- (35) Fife Herald 18/11/1847
- (36) Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess 6/6/1798
- (37) Ibid. 14/12/1801
- (38) Ibid. 5/1/1820
- (39) Ibid. 19/2/1822
- (40) Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. Accts 9/3/1823, 8/6/1823, 22/6/1823, 24/8/1823
4/1/1824, 4/7/1824
- (41) Ibid. 1/1/1826, 9/3/1828, 29/6/1828, 29/9/1828
- (42) Strathmiglo RPC minutes 30/7/1860, 25/2/1861
- (43) Small - U.P. Church vol. 1 p.201
- (44) Edenshead USC minutes 19/12/1848
- (45) Small - U.P. Church vol.1 p.183
- (46) Strathmiglo RPC minutes 24/10/1824, 22/12/1824
- (47) Ibid. 27/3/1835
- (48) Ibid. 7/4/1844, 7/6/1844
- (49) Ibid. 26/7/1852, 12/10/1852, 21/2/1853
- (50) Ibid. 13/2/1854, 9/2/1857

- (51) Ibid. 6/12/1859
- (52) Small - H.P. Church vol.1 p.179
- (53) Auchtermuchty NP(N)KS 5/10/1848, 3/4/1859, 5/2/1861
- (54) Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess Accts. 4/11/1821, 27/4/1828, 25/1/1829, 18/3/1829
11/8/1833, 8/6/1834
- (55) Collessie Free Church Deacons' Court minutes 3/9/1844
Auchtermuchty FCKS 15/12/1843
- (56) Ibid.7/5/1844
- (57) Collessie FCDC 28/12/1846, 9/5/1846, 12/2/1846
- (58) Auchtermuchty FCKS after 3/1/1844
- (59) Collessie FCDC 20/9/1847
Monimail Free Church Deacons' Court minutes and accounts building fund
abstract to 15/3/1844, abstract to March 1845.
Auchtermuchty FCDC 25/12/1853
- (60) Collessie FCDC 31/10/1854
- (61) Auchtermuchty FCDC 8/1/1855 The congregation also received grants from
the assembly building funds totalling £594. 7. 9d.
- (61) Auchtermuchty Free Church Cash Book 1860 - 1904 listed totals
- (62) Monimail FCDC abstract of accounts 1848 - 9, to 1860 -1
Orr - Pulpit p.87
- (63) J.H.S. Durleigh - A Church History of Scotland p.356
- (64) Monimail Free Church Kirk Session minutes 1843 - 1868 17/3/1846
Monimail FCDC 20/3/1847
- (65) Auchtermuchty FCDC annual abstract of accounts after 10/3/1862
- (66) Ibid. 14/3/1845
- (67) Ibid. 29/10/1849
Monimail FCDC 29/6/1846
- (68) Monimail FCKS 29/6/1845, and also in 1844
- (69) Monimail FCDC 29/6/1846
- (70) Collessie FCDC 16/1/1851
- (71) Ibid. 26/4/1853, 26/1/1857
- (72) Life Herald 9/3/1848
- (73) Collessie FCDC 7/4/1856, 20/9/1847
- (74) Monimail FCDC Abstract of accounts to 15/3/1844, abstract of accounts
to 20/3/1845.

(75) Aughtermuchty FCDC 27/5/1843, 15/12/1862

(76) Collessie FCDC 19/1/1858

(77) Drummond - Victorian Church p.45

III ECCLESIASTICAL DISPUTES

(a) Church and State

If the period under review was marked by political turmoil for many years, the church too, was affected by the questioning spirit of the age. Many of the problems experienced by the church at this time arose from the fact that Scottish Calvinists had seen the church and the state as two aspects of the one community. This view found its clear expression in the Westminster Confession of Faith where theological authority was given for church and state to proceed jointly against those who denied Christian principles by word or deed.⁽¹⁾ The Relief Church had always been critical of the Confession at this point and although the Secession had not previously questioned the Confession in 1791 an overture had come before the General Associate Synod which led them to appoint a committee to enquire further into the matter.⁽²⁾

In 1795 the Reverend John Fraser, minister of the Burgher Church at Auchtermuchty, submitted to the Associate Synod a document which said amongst other things:-

"...we profess adherence...to many other doctrines of inferior importance. Among these are the power of the civil magistrate in regard to religion. I think it necessary that the formula should be altered and rendered more consistent with the sentiments of all our ministers, elders, probationers and students..." (3)

Local reaction appears to have been muted until 1797. On the second of January of that year the Kirk Session of Fraser's church at Auchtermuchty received a paper from a member of the congregation and signed by seventeen others, claiming to express the mind of the people of the church at Dunshalt in the Parish of Auchtermuchty. It declared:-

"...their strict adherence to the Confession of Faith and Covenants National and Solemn League..." (4)

On the twenty-seventh of January a second paper was read to the Kirk Session in which ten members of the congregation declared:-

"...their strict adherence to the principles of the Church of Scotland as agreeable to the Word of God and the Confession of Faith and to the binding obligation of our Covenants National and Solemn League without the least deviation or abstract on there from and that in case there be any alteration they count themselves not bound to support any that adopts other principles." (5)

Although the last part of the second paper might be viewed as an attack on Fraser he does not appear to have made any defence or retaliation and the storm blew itself out. Elsewhere in the area the consequences of the debate were as transitory. In that same year the Associate Synod added a preliminary explanatory statement to the formula of ordination:-

"That whereas some parts of the standard books of this Synod have been interpreted as favouring compulsory measures in religion... The Synod declare they do not require an approbation of any such principle from any candidate for licence or ordination...The Synod hold the obligations of our Covenants upon posterity do not interfere with that controversy." (6)

With the debate thus concluded only two congregations emerged holding to the 'Old Light', and in 1839 the Old Light Burgher Congregation was petitioning the Established Church for admission to its membership, while the Old Light Antiburghers at Balmullo split in 1852, the majority entering the Free Church while the minority retained the property until the congregation died out. (7)

The union which took place in 1820 between the 'New Light' branches of the two Secession Churches was a recognition that with the settlement of this dispute the division between them had become meaningless. It also prepared the way for those who were subsequently to question the basis on which the idea of an Established Church had for long rested. In 1829 The Reverend Andrew Marshall, United Secession minister at Kirkintilloch, published a sermon entitled 'Ecclesiastical Establishments Considered' in which he attacked all Established Churches as unscriptural, unjust and destructive of the true mission of the church, maintaining, in particular, that the church's work and witness should be maintained solely by the liberality of its faithful people. (8)

Marshall's arguments apparently caught the public mind but it was some three years later, in November 1832, that the Fife Herald published an advertisement informing the inhabitants of Fife and Kinross that a meeting of the 'Friends of Religious Liberty' would be held in the Burgh of Leslie, in the bounds of Kirkcaldy Presbytery of the Established Church, to consider forming a Voluntary Church Society.⁽⁹⁾ A fortnight later the same newspaper carried a letter to the editor expressing support for the Established Church.⁽¹⁰⁾ Nevertheless, a Voluntary Church Society for Fife and Kinross was formed at a meeting at which the Reverend Peter Taylor of the United Secession Church at Ceres took the chair, which was opened with prayer by the Reverend William Burnet of the Boston Relief Church at Cupar and at which deputations from Cupar, Ceres, Auchtermuchty, Freuchie, and Kettle attended.⁽¹¹⁾ The avowed aims of the association were to disseminate by publication and otherwise the principles on which it was founded and to obtain redress of the grievances arising from the compulsory establishment of a particular religious sect.⁽¹²⁾ Within a short time auxiliary branches of the Fife and Kinross Voluntary Church Society were being formed in the parishes under the jurisdiction of the Established Church Presbytery of Cupar.⁽¹³⁾

The columns of the local press carried a lively correspondence by supporters of both sides while those who supported the voluntary principles began to call public meetings to discuss the question, and petitions were prepared for submission to parliament in favour of disestablishment.⁽¹⁴⁾ At one such meeting at Edenshead, in the Parish of Strathmiglo, the presence of the greater part of the heritors of the parish was reported and the fact that the meeting had been marked by a universal unanimity led the reporter to comment:-

"...that the Establishment is in extreme peril no one can doubt..."⁽¹⁵⁾

Feelings of opposition to the Established Church were not confined to ostensibly ecclesiastical groupings. At a meeting of Cupar Town Council in 1834 a motion was proposed to draw up a petition for the abolition of

church patronage which was then a matter to come before the General Assembly. (16) At the close of the debate an amendment opposed to the principle of Establishment was carried by nine votes to eight with one abstention. (17) Two weeks later the Town Council rescinded the vote against the Establishment by thirteen votes to ten and approved the motion against patronage without opposition. (18) The members of the Town Council who were opposed to the Establishment principle subsequently proceeded to send a petition to parliament in the terms of the original vote. (19)

By 1834 the Voluntary Societies and their supporters had focussed their attack on the Established Church on the particular question of the endowment of chapels of ease. Meetings at Cupar, Auchtermuchty, Kettle, Collessie, Newburgh and elsewhere in the area prepared petitions expressing their opposition to such further endowment with a view to delivering them to parliament. (20) In 1835 Cupar Town Council, too, unanimously carried a motion opposed to the granting of public money for the purpose of building new Established Churches while the columns of the Fife Herald carried articles expressing editorial hostility to the further endowment of the Established Church. (21) Ten years earlier, the Reverend Laurence Adamson, first minister of Cupar, had considered that additional church accommodation was necessary for the town. In 1834 the minister of the second charge and the assistant of the first minister had commenced holding services in the local Masonic Lodge. (22) Arrangements were put in hand for the erection of a chapel of ease and by 1835 nine hundred pounds had been raised towards the cost. (23) While this project provided a focus for the attack there was also within the Established Church in the area a doughty defender of its principles to whom the cause of Church Extension was dear. In 1834 David Maitland Makgill Crichton, the laird of Rankeillour, had been enlisted as a willing worker under Thomas Chalmers in the cause of Church Extension. Originally his work had consisted of hard, patient, obscure, local efforts

to encourage thought and liberality on the subject, but gradually Crichton was moved forward as a platform speaker and once given the opportunity he began to take an increasingly prominent place. (24)

It was no light task in which Crichton became involved and the difficulties were increased when he incurred the wrath of the Chartists by having two of their more prominent leaders arrested. (25) His meetings to further the cause of Church Extension by the Established Church were often the scene of violence. On one occasion all the lights but one were extinguished and the meeting was dispersed without being addressed. The people of the village of Kettle witnessed more than one affray at such meetings. On one occasion there the Reverend Murray McCheyne gave up the attempt to address the meeting while Crichton completely failed to obtain a hearing. At the same time the crowd outside the hall were trying to remove the wheels from Crichton's dog-cart and failing to do so cut the cushions and did other minor damage. (26)

In spite of attacks, both physical and verbal, Crichton gave himself unremittingly to the task, travelling from parish to parish explaining the nature and aim of the Established Church's extension scheme. (27) At a meeting at Anstruther he outlined his understanding of the purpose behind the scheme. Inviting the 'voluntaries' to join the Established Church so that they might help in the removal of religious destitution, he pointed out that in Edinburgh and Glasgow there were large numbers of people totally destitute of religious instruction which he maintained the working classes were unable to provide adequately for themselves. Since the people of Scotland were doing their part by building churches he thought it the duty of the state to endow them and the amount of the endowment being sought he estimated would not exceed a farthing to every individual in the United Kingdom. He also maintained that the voluntary system was altogether inadequate to meet the religious wants of the whole population. (28)

In February, 1835 a Society of Friends of the Church of Scotland was formed. Its president was the Earl of Leven and Melville, while Crichton, then known as David Maitland Makgill, was Vice-President. (29) At its inaugural meeting resolutions were passed testifying to the attachment of those present to the Church of Scotland and their determination to defend the same; denying that the connection between church and state was unscriptural and arguing that a well regulated connection between the two promoted the best interest of true religion; asserting that the Church of Scotland was proved to be the most effective instrument for promoting the religious instruction of the people; and expressing awareness that the population had outgrown church accommodation and means of religious instruction and expressing the desire for energetic and comprehensive measures to remedy this evil. (30)

In 1838 at a meeting of the Friends of the Church at Cupar it was moved and seconded that the reports of the government inspectors proved that there was a great deal of spiritual destitution and that the General Assembly's scheme for the extension of the parochial system had already done a great deal to alleviate this. The meeting also complained that without a moderate endowment from the state this scheme would remain ineffectual. At the same time a county association for the purpose of co-operating with the General Assembly's committee on church extension was formed. The President of the county association was again the Earl of Leven and Melville. Although Crichton did not figure amongst the Vice-Presidents on this occasion he was given the key position of convenor of the business committee. (31)

As early as 1834 the response of the Established Church to the challenge of the 'Voluntaries' caused its critics some concern. In that year a special meeting of the Voluntary Church Association was called to consider the steps necessary to reply to certain 'false and calumnious' statements about the Association in the Church of Scotland magazine and

which had subsequently circulated in the district by the minister of Auchtermuchty. (32) A fortnight later it was reported that an exposure of the falsehood was to be published. (33) In the spirit of strife then existing between ministers of the Established Church and their dissenting brethren some of the work done by interdenominational societies suffered. In 1834 the failure of the Auchtermuchty Bible Society was reported, a failure which was reported as being due to disagreements between the Established Church minister and his dissenting brethren. (34) In 1833 a lecture given to Auchtermuchty Temperance Society was interrupted by supporters of the Established Church who were critical of the introduction of 'voluntary' views into the speaker's remarks. (35) While the religious atmosphere was heavy with conflict it was not everyone who allowed themselves to be influenced by it. In 1836 the precentor of the Established Church at Auchtermuchty and his colleague in one of the dissenting churches in the town exchanged their places one Sunday although the hostility of their respective ministers was well-known. (36)

The dispute was one which persisted for many years. In January, 1847 a deputation from the British Anti-State Church Association addressed a meeting at Cupar at which four of the Secession ministers were present. (37) Nevertheless by then a great deal of the virulence had gone out of the battle which was beginning to show signs of turning to other aspects of the state connection. The battle in North Fife merely reflected events elsewhere and for a decade it kept the church in turmoil and elevated the practice of dissenting churches into a principle. In the struggle it appears that many lost sight of the interests of the gospel and to have sought only the advancement of their particular ecclesiastical interest. The appeal for parliamentary endowment of the new church extension charges and the response of the dissenters appears to have become so focussed on the number of church seats available that the evangelical aim in providing the seats disappeared without trace. The appearance of the Free

Church as a dissenting denomination attached to the establishment principle may have done something to modify the views of those who supported the voluntary principle.

III(a) Church and State

- (1) Westminster Confession of Faith XX (iv)
- (2) A.L. Drummond and J. Bulloch - The Scottish Church 1688 - 1843 p.150
J. McKerrow - History of the Secession Church p.372f
- (3) Ibid. p.579f
- (4) Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess 2/1/1797
- (5) Ibid. 27/1/1797
- (6) MacKelvie - Statistics p.21f
- (7) Fifehire Journal 3/10/1839
Small - U.P. Church vol.1 p.192
- (8) Burleigh - History p.325
- (9) Fife Herald 15/11/1832
- (10) Ibid. 29/11/1832
- (11) Ibid. 6/12/1832
- (12) Ibid 13/12/1832
- (13) Ibid. 20/12/1832, 14/3/1833, 23/5/1833, 13/6/1833
- (14) Ibid. 15/12/1832, 3/1/1833, 10/1/1833, 24/1/1833, 20/6/1833, 24/12/1833,
16/1/1834, 13/2/1834, 31/1/1833, 30/1/1834, 27/2/1834, 13/3/1834, 27/3/1834
16/10/1834, 20/11/1834.
- (15) Ibid. 13/1/1833
- (16) Burleigh - History p.336
- (17) Fife Herald 6/2/1834
- (18) Ibid. 20/2/1834
- (19) Ibid. 6/3/1834
- (20) Ibid. 23/10/1834, 20/11/1834, 2/4/1835.
- (21) Ibid. 9/4/1835, 5/3/1835
- (22) Cupar HR 1829 21/2/1834
- (23) Fife Herald 2/4/1835
- (24) J.A.Wylie - Disruption Worthies vol.2 p. 186
- (25) Wright - Chartism p.115
- (26) Taylor - Memoir p.108f
- (27) Ibid. p. 102

- (28) Ibid. p.103
- (29) Fife Herald 12/2/1835
- (30) Ibid. 5/2/1835
- (31) Fifeshire Journal 26/7/1838
- (32) Fife Herald 2/10/1834
- (33) Ibid. 16/10/1834
- (34) Ibid. 11/9/1834
- (35) Ibid. 18/7/1833
- (36) Ibid. 8/9/1836
- (37) Ibid. 7/1/1847

III (b) Patronage and the Disruption

Concurrently with the attack on the Established Church from outside interests there arose within its own supporters a source of discord which eventually caused those who espoused the opposite sides to break apart. In 1712 parliament had restored the right of lay patrons to present ministers to vacant parishes.⁽¹⁾ This act eventually brought about the formation of the Secession and Relief Churches and over the years it had contributed to their growth.⁽²⁾ Nevertheless there remained within the Established Church many who regarded its operation as harmful to the Church and felt that the removal of the right of patronage was the only way of popularising it, harassed as it was by the attacks of the voluntaries, and others, and in consequence anti-patronage societies had made their appearance before the question was raised in the General Assembly of 1832.⁽³⁾ In 1826 the patronage of the Parish Church of Dairsie was offered for sale and a letter was published in the Fife Herald urging the parishioners to raise a public subscription to buy the patronage for themselves while also suggesting that they should contact the Church Patronage Society of Edinburgh if for some reason they feared to do so.⁽⁴⁾ By November of that year the patronage of the parish had been acquired by 'The Society for Improving Church Patronage in Scotland', a body which remained active in the area subsequently.⁽⁵⁾

The activities of this body were viewed with disquiet by some members of the church. In 1826, after the society had intervened at Dairsie, a letter to the editor of the Fife Herald signed 'Parishioner of Dairsie' attacked the principles of the Anti-patronage Society alleging that ministers nominated by that body would vote for one party only at meetings of the General Assembly.⁽⁶⁾ The Evangelical Party of the Established Church had traditionally been opposed to the intrusion of ministers against the wishes of parishioners. In general patrons were not thought to be sympathetic either to evangelical religion or reforming politics and in their unpopularity the church was thought to share. As the agitation

for disestablishment grew the question of patronage acquired an increasing urgency. (7) Unsuccessful attempts in the General Assembly to introduce legislation to end patronage were made in 1832 and 1833 but in 1834 the Evangelical Party were for the first time dominant in the Assembly which passed the Veto Act declaring:-

"It is a fundamental law of this church that no pastor shall be intruded on any congregation contrary to the will of the people and...the presbyteries of the church shall be instructed that if in the moderating of a call to a vacant pastoral charge...the major part of the male heads of families, members of the vacant congregation and in full communion with the church shall disapprove of the person in whose favour the call is proposed to be moderated in such disapproval shall be deemed sufficient ground for the Presbytery rejecting such person and he shall be rejected accordingly..." (8)

In 1833 a petition against church patronage was being signed in Cupar but in Strathmiglo a meeting to consider the propriety of petitioning parliament was reported to have proved a failure because of the general acceptance of the voluntary principle. (9) Nevertheless, the question of patronage excited considerable interest. In February, 1834 the question appeared on the agenda of Cupar Town Council only to be defeated by an anti-establishment amendment, which in its turn was subsequently rescinded. (10) The columns of the local press carried letters to the editor on the subject, while prior to the election of commissioners to the General Assembly of 1834 there appears to have been canvassing on this question. (11) Within a few months of the passing of the Veto Act the presentation of an unpopular candidate for the pastoral charge of Auchterarder had set in motion events which were to convulse the church and culminate in the Disruption of 1843. (12) Before the Auchterarder case could come before the Court of Session the death of the Reverend Laurence Adamson, first minister of Cupar raised not dissimilar problems in that parish.

On Adamson's death the parish was divided into two parties. The friends and supporters of the second minister, the Reverend John Birrell,

a group which initially included a large and influential section of the parishioners attempted to persuade the Town Council to support the appointment of the assistant of the late Dr. Adamson to the second charge of Cupar, on the assumption that Birrell would be appointed to the first charge, a practice which had been followed in earlier vacancies. In an area that was predominantly Whig in its politics, Birrell was known to be a Tory and the Town Council declined to interfere. A public meeting was held in the Parish Church at which a letter was read from the Member of Parliament for the County stating that the Secretary of State had resolved that:-

"...the resident heritors and male heads of families in communion with the Church of Scotland shall have a free voice in the choice of their pastor..."

On a vote two hundred and eleven votes were cast in favour of Birrell's translation to the first charge while fifty votes were cast in favour of delaying a decision. In view of the vote a recommendation was forwarded to the crown who was the patron in favour of Birrell. Nevertheless, the leaders of the opposition despatched a remonstrance to the crown signed by one hundred and fifty-two male heads of families on the communion roll and forty-two who were not on the roll to the Secretary of State at the same time as the recommendation in favour of Birrell. Within a short time a reply was received setting aside Birrell's claim to the charge. ⁽¹³⁾

In setting aside Birrell's claim the crown submitted the names of five candidates including that of Adam Cairns, the Parish Minister of Dunbog. Cairns name had apparently been added to the list without his knowledge and without his having made any application for the presentation. The Presbytery of Cupar unanimously resolved to withhold the use of the pulpit from the five candidates only to receive an answer from the crown that the right of presbytery to interfere with the right of patronage was not admitted and at the same time issuing a presentation in favour of Cairns. On Cairns acceptance of this the matter was considered by the Presbytery where

Cairns who was a member of the Evangelical Party and closely identified with the cause of non-intrusion was warmly criticised. (14) An attempt was apparently made to invoke the Veto Act but when the matter came before the General Assembly in May of 1837 Presbytery was instructed to proceed with the translation. (15)

The settlement of the Parish of Cupar having been resolved the settlement of other parishes remained to trouble the church. In 1838 the Court of Session having considered the Auchterarder case decided in favour of the rights of the patron and when the General Assembly met in 1838 it resolved to make a declaration that the spiritual jurisdiction of the church was independent of state control and the declaration concluded with the assertion that as the church judicatories had an exclusive jurisdiction in the doctrine, government and discipline of the church it would enforce this on office bearers and members of the church. (17) This declaration was greeted with regret by the Moderate Party and its supporters. The Fifehire Journal, normally tory in outlook, suggested that this decision of the Assembly should inspire feelings of sorrow if not shame. (18) This was not the emotion inspired in the hearts of Evangelicals. The following year when the General Assembly re-iterated its adherence to the principle of non-intrusion a correspondent to the whig Fife Herald writing in praise of that particular Assembly commented:-

"But to us the most...glorious of all things connected with the past General Assembly was the decision it came to by a triumphant majority in favour of the great principle of non-intrusion..." (19)

In 1840 the non-intrusion party began to organise their support within the church. In January of that year Adam Cairns presided at a meeting in St. Mary's Chapel of Hase when an association of the operatives of Cupar Parish was framed for the purpose of defending and promoting the spiritual rights of themselves and their families in the settlement of ministers relative to the Veto Act. (20) Arising out of this meeting a further meeting took place in that church when arrangements were made for the

formation of a Cupar Non-Intrusion Society. (21) Similar societies may very well have been formed since non-intrusion meetings were reported not only in Cupar but in Ceres, Auchtermuchty and Kettle as well. (22)

Interest outside the Established Church in these events is reflected in the fact that within a short time those who favoured voluntary principles were organising meetings in opposition to those arranged by the non-intrusionists. (23)

The meetings of the non-intrusionists were not viewed with uniform sympathy within the Established Church either. The Heritors of Collessie noted with regret that David Maitland Makgill Crichton had used their Parish Church for a holding a meeting for the purpose of forming a secular society of those willing to subscribe their money to support the dominant party of the church. (24)

The Kirk Session in the same parish noted that £4. 1. 8d. had been raised in the parish for erecting a church at Marnoch where the civil courts had again invalidated the decisions of their ecclesiastical equivalents. (25)

Crichton having embraced the cause of non-intrusion turned his considerable energies to its support. Subsequently supporters of the Free Church maintained that few men did more to implant the doctrine of the co-ordinate jurisdiction of church and state in the minds of the masses. (26)

He addressed meetings all over the country on behalf of the non-intrusionists and few excelled him in the command he had over a large popular audience. (27)

In the autumn of 1841, following a decision of the civil courts adverse to the General Assembly, a public meeting

"of those friendly to the principles of religious liberty for which the General Assembly and the majority of office-bearers and people of the Church of Scotland are now contending"

was held in Cupar Parish Church, when a 'District Church Defence Association' was formed. (28)

By January of 1842 more such meetings had taken place. Crichton took a prominent part. Having been present at the Cupar meeting he was also a leading figure at meetings at Auchtermuchty

and Strathmiglo. (29) In the course of that year some of the non-intrusion party became convinced of the importance of a weekly newspaper to make their principles and position understood. The work of arranging a proprietor, publisher and editor devolved on to Crichton who was largely responsible for the appearance of the 'Wife Sentinel' which was first published on the twelfth of January 1843 and continued in circulation until 1845 when it merged with the 'Northern Warder'. (30) July of 1842 also saw a series of meetings throughout the area in compliance with the recommendations of the non-intrusion leaders. Such gatherings were arranged at Auchtermuchty, Strathmiglo, Cults, Kettle, Monimail, Collessie, Ceres, Logie, Springfield, Cupar, Dunbog, Newburgh and Falkland. (31)

In the courts of the church the division between the two contending parties created difficulties. In January of 1834 it was reported that the competition for elders' commissions to the General Assembly on behalf of the burgh was keen since it was thought that the patronage question would be brought before parliament by that Assembly. (32) When presbytery met to choose its commissioners that same year canvassing had already taken place on the question. (33) Throughout the period of strife the composition of the General Assembly was of crucial importance and commissions were often challenged by the different sides as when in 1836 Makgill Crichton and the Reverend John McFarlane of the Parish of Collessie, both of whom subsequently came out at the Disruption, objected to an elder's commission. Although resident in Edinburgh he was presented to the Presbytery as an elder from Newburgh where the minister was the leading protagonist on the Moderate side. (34)

Presbytery, too, found its work increasingly dominated by the disagreement over the Veto Act and its consequences. In 1840 a proposal was introduced to Cupar Presbytery to petition the General Assembly for the repeal of the Act. The Parish Minister of Auchtermuchty introduced a counter-proposal to petition the Assembly to persist in its non-

intrusion principles. This counter-motion was carried by thirteen votes to nine although the majority of the ministers present voted against it. (35)

In 1841 a petition was presented to the presbytery who were invited to ask parliament for the abolition of patronage. On a division presbytery voted in favour of the petition, reportedly because of:-

"the numerous attendance of elders apparently whipped in for the purpose." (36)

The tory Fifehire Journal, which claimed the whole problem had been brought about by the manoeuvres of the whigs, reported subsequently that some of the 'whipped' elders were travelled and entertained at the expense of the non-intrusion fund. (37) The struggle between the ecclesiastical courts and civil courts was followed by the members of both parties in Cupar Presbytery. In 1839 and 1840 the Court of Session had ruled against the operation of the Veto Act in inhibiting the Presbytery of Strathbogie from inducting a presentee and in 1841 Cupar Presbytery passed a motion deploring the decision of the Court of Session and asserting the separable and exclusive ecclesiastical jurisdiction. It was also resolved to send the motion to the representatives of the government. (38) The Assembly of 1834, in addition to the Veto Act, had also passed an act admitting the minister and a representative elder of quoad sacra charges to the membership of presbyteries. This act, like the Veto Act, had been ruled ultra vires by the civil courts and in Cupar Presbytery where the minister and representative elder of the quoad sacra charge of St. Mary's in Cupar had taken their places as members their right to do so was challenged but presbytery upheld the right of the church courts to pass the act, and the two members retained their status as members of presbytery. (39)

In 1842 a convocation of non-intrusionists in Edinburgh apparently convinced many people that a secession was probable. In December of that year Adam Cairns, the first minister of Cupar was quoted as saying

he had:-

(40)

"a near prospect of dissolving his connection with the Establishment."

The Parish Minister of Honimail was reported to have said that he was prepared to give up the emoluments of his benefice rather than separate himself from those who had signed the resolutions adopted by the convocation. (41) The non-intrusionists now began to follow a course of action that made the harmonious working of Presbytery even more difficult. In February 1845 the moderate minister of Newburgh complained that two members of Presbytery had entered his parish and without intimation to him had held a meeting advocating opinions and practices declared by the courts to be illegal and destructive. (42) In March the parish minister of Collessie preached the inaugural sermon in what was described as a Free Presbytery Church at Kettle, while at Strathmiglo the Fouars Committee received a request in April for land on which to build a church which, it became clear in June, was to be a Free Church. (43) In April, too, collections were being made throughout the area to raise funds for the 'Free Church of Scotland'. (44)

In April a more public dispute occurred. The Earl of Zetland, the patron of the Parish of Flisk, which was then vacant, presented the Reverend J.W. Taylor to the charge. Taylor was a known non-intrusionist and only agreed to accept the presentation if the parishioners approved of him. This they apparently did. The induction took place on the fourteenth of April when the Reverend John Anderson, a leading moderate, was appointed to address both Taylor and the congregation. (45) The address Anderson chose to deliver consisted of a defence of the doctrines and doings of the moderates and an attack on the non-intrusion party. John McFarlane, the Parish Minister at Collessie attempted to reply but was refused permission by the moderator who brought the meeting to a close. McFarlane did subsequently appeal to the parishioners condemning Anderson's address. (46)

Eleven days later Presbytery met again. Although it had originally met in the Session House of Cupar Parish Church it adjourned to the church because of the great crowd which had collected in the expectation of a battle over the validity of the members' commissions and those present were warmly supported or opposed according to the way they were expected to vote. On this occasion the views of the moderates prevailed. (47) Adam Cairns of Cupar objected to the exclusion of the elders from Monimail and Strathmiglo Parishes and the elder from the Quoad Sacra charge of St. Mary's Cupar while he also objected to the inclusion of the representative elder from Noonzie Parish. (48) Following a protest on these grounds submitted by Cairns, and with which Makgill Crichton associated himself, Crichton, Cairns, McFarlane, the Parish Minister of Collessie, and Smeaton the Parish Minister of Falkland withdrew from the meeting. (49) The seceding minority accompanied by a large crowd withdrew to the George Inn at Cupar where they constituted themselves a presbytery of the 'Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland'. Crichton having invited the elders with rejected commissions to accompany himself and the others who were seceding the new Presbytery after the appointment of a moderator and a clerk, proceeded to sustain the commissions rejected by the Established Church Presbytery. The meeting then proceeded to discuss the necessity of shortening the curriculum of students in order to procure a sufficient supply of young men for the Free Presbyterian Church after which the proceedings terminated with Cairns giving the audience an address on the causes which had led to the secession. (50)

Not all the non-intrusionists took this drastic step at that time. John Murray, the Parish Minister of Dunbog, James Brodie of Monimail, and John Taylor of Flisk remained but it was to be for only a short time. (51) After the meeting of the General Assembly the following month Cairns, McFarlane and Smeaton were joined by Taylor, Murray and Brodie as well

as by Reverend Andrew Melville of Logie, the Reverend Angus McGillivray of Dairsio and John Duncan, Assistant minister at Ceres. (52) Johnstone of Auchtermuchty, who had appeared sympathetic to the non-intrusion party at an early stage in the struggle had changed his views some time in 1841 when he debated the meaning of 'spiritual independence' with Makgill Crichton at a Church Defence Association meeting at Auchtermuchty, while Elder of Quoad Sacra Charge of St. Mary's in Cupar who had apparently supported the non-intrusion party throughout the struggle decided to remain within the establishment. (53)

Within the bounds of the presbyterial area there were also a number of people who by reason of their position in society were fitted to conduct and encourage the new church when it emerged. Not least among these was Makgill Crichton whose dedication to the church's work and to the principles of non-intrusion had been amply proved in the past. With him must be included his brother James Maitland of Rossie, the Heriots of Ramornie, the Riggs of Tarvit and the Misses Moncrieff of Southfield. In the period following the Disruption all of them were important to the Free Church. (54)

Initially the Free Church met in a variety of premises. At Cupar the new congregation first met in the Boston Relief Church. (55) At Monimail the Free Church worshipped in the Gardeners' Hall, at Ceres in a wooden hut, while at Flisk the congregation worshipped in a barn. (56) Difficulties were encountered from the fact that many land-owners prevented their cottars and dependents from worshipping with the Free Church while in some areas land-owners made the acquisition of land for building a new church difficult. (57) It was not only the Free Church which experienced difficulty. Within the bounds of Cupar Presbytery's jurisdiction there were only ten ministers of the Established Church left and the use of probationers to conduct services became essential. (58) Kirk Sessions were also hard hit. Although by August a call to the

Reverend William Leitch signed by the parishioners of Monimail included the signatures of two elders, in the immediate aftermath of the Disruption there was thought to be only one elder left in the parish and one of the elders who signed the call may very well have been the patron, the Earl of Zetland.⁽⁵⁹⁾ At Creich the Parish Church appears to have been left completely without elders.⁽⁶⁰⁾

For some laymen of the area the Disruption was a mystery. John Taylor the former Parish Minister of Flisk, thought that in the eyes of farmers generally, it seemed madness for men to give up their temporal advantages.⁽⁶¹⁾ Taylor thought that the lower farm servants were lacking in intelligence but from among the foremen whom he regarded as the most intelligent and the best inclined in matters of religion, he claimed many of the Free Church's best adherents were drawn.⁽⁶²⁾ The numbers of laymen who followed the lead of the non-intrusion ministers at the Disruption in the area was probably much smaller than was hoped by the leaders of the movement. At Falkland, immediately after the Disruption the former parish church minister was reported to have drawn a slender congregation to the independent chapel at mid-day while Dr. Anderson, the Parish Minister of Newburgh had had an overflowing congregation both morning and afternoon. At Dunbog the Parish Minister of Creich preached to a fuller than normal congregation in the Parish Church while the former Parish Minister of Dunbog officiated in a barn which was thought to be capable of holding eighty people.⁽⁶³⁾ At Cupar, the secession appears to have had much greater popular support than elsewhere in the area. Attendances at the Parish Church and St. Michael's Chapel of Ease at the end of June appear to have been in the region of about five hundred and three hundred and thirty respectively, while at the sacrament of the new Free Church in July the attendance was in the region of seven hundred and thirty.⁽⁶⁴⁾ By July the Fife Herald reported that while the attendance at the Parish Church had not

improved St. Michael's had been closed. (65)

The generosity of some of the members of the new church could be extraordinary. The Reverend John Murray of Abdie Free Church subsequently recalled how a woman came to her minister with twenty pounds in her apron:-

"the gatherings of many a days or rather many a years winding of pins - all of which she now offered to the Lord to be divided among the schemes of the church. It was all her living." (66)

Such acts perhaps reflected the sense of religious enthusiasm which in some aspects was reawakened by the Disruption. John Taylor the seceding Parish Minister of Flisk subsequently wrote:-

"...God's saving grace was effectually put forth in the Disruption year and in some of the years which followed. It is true that things did not turn out as I had expected...My hope was that there would be some marked and outwardly recognisable work of grace, some visible acknowledgement from God of the testimony which as a church we were trying to bear to his glory. Now it was not so...There was a measure of hearty interest among the people and hopefulness in connection with the ordinances which was encouraging. But it was years afterwards before I knew of cases of conversion which had really taken place at this time." (67)

As to the spiritual benefits which arose from the Disruption Taylor listed them as being firstly freedom from the fellowship of many in the ministry with whom he had little sympathy; secondly that he saw God was owning the testimony borne to the mediatorial glory of His Son in the increased earnestness of those who waited on his ministry; and thirdly the fact that his ministry was not destroyed by a deliberate disowning of Christ. (68)

On the first point Andrew Melville, the former Parish Minister of Logie agreed with Taylor. Prior to the Disruption he was subsequently recorded as saying, he had found the necessary association with moderate ministers blighting to his soul while after the Disruption he felt himself to be breathing purer air. (69)

In the struggle which had taken place during and after the passing of the Veto Act in 1834 the Evangelical Party had been the growing and eventually dominant party. It is probable that this dominance was

expected to continue in the year 1843. Had this happened it seems likely that the Disruption when it came would have been a Disruption between church and state rather than within the church. (70) In Cupar it was apparently felt by Adam Cairns that he and those who thought like him were in such a large majority that it was in no way inconsistent to suggest to Dr. Anderson the leading moderate and Parish Minister of Newburgh that Anderson and his party should withdraw and form a separate court. (71) In 1843 when the final clash came the Evangelical party found themselves in a minority in the courts of the church and even perhaps amongst church members and it was the Evangelical Party which found itself obliged to withdraw and form new courts. In the event a new denomination was created and the tendency towards denominationalism which had been accentuated by the struggle over the relationship between church and state was increased by the existence of a new sect with bitter and unhappy memories.

III(b) Patronage and the Disruption

- (1) Drummond - Scottish Church p.18
- (2) Ibid.pp.40,59f
- (3) R. H. Story - The Church of Scotland vol.3 p.778
- (4) Fife Herald 5/10/1826
- (5) Ibid. 2/11/1826, 29/3/1827
- (6) Ibid. 19/10/1826
- (7) Burleigh - History p.336
- (8) Ibid. p.338
- (9) Fife Herald 7/3/1833
- (10) Ibid. 6/2/1834, 20/2/1834
- (11) Ibid. 20/6/1833, 27/3/1834
- (12) Burleigh - History p.340
- (13) Rem. Cupar p.62f
- (14) Ibid. p.65
- (15) Fife Herald 27/4/1837
- (16) Rem. Cupar p.70
- (17) Story - Church vol.3 p.778
- (18) Fifeshire Journal 31/5/1838
- (19) Fife Herald 6/6/1839
- (20) Ibid. 16/1/1840
- (21) Ibid. 30/1/1840
- (22) Ibid 6/2/1840, 12/3/1840, 19/3/1840
- (23) Ibid.
- (24) CollessieHeritors minutes 1841 - 1907 19/11/1841
- (25) Collessie PCKS 1833 21/6/1841
- (26) Wylie - Disruption Worthies vol.2 p.188f
- (27) Rem. Cupar p.101f
- (28) Fifeshire Journal 13/10/1841
- (29) Ibid. 18/11/1841
Taylor - Memoir p.146f

- (30) Taylor Memoir p.219f
- (31) Fife Herald 14/7/1842
- (32) Ibid. 2/1/1834
- (33) Ibid. 27/3/1834
- (34) Ibid. 31/3/1836
Rem. Cupar p.101f
- (35) Fifeshire Journal 2/4/1840
- (36) Ibid. 4/2/1841
- (37) Ibid. 30/7/1840, 8/4/1841
- (38) Fife Herald 1/4/1841
- (39) Fifeshire Journal 9/9/1841
Rem. Cupar p.105f
- (40) Fife Herald 29/12/1842
- (41) Ibid. 5/1/1843
- (42) Rem Cupar p.104f
- (43) Fife Herald 30/3/1843
- (44) Strathmiglo Feuars minutes 18/4/1843
- (44) Fife Sentinel 6/4/1843, 20/4/1843
- (45) Taylor - Country Manse p.29 Footnote, p.35
- (46) Rem. Cupar p.107f
- (47) Ibid. p.110f
- (48) Fife Sentinel 27/4/1843
- (49) Taylor - Country Manse p.38
- (50) Rem. Cupar p.110f, p.114f.
- (51) Taylor - Country Manse p.38
- (52) Brown - Annals p.806
- (53) Fifeshire Journal 18/11/1841, 22/6/1843
- (54) Brown - Annals p.464
- (55) Rem. Cupar p.89
- (56) Monimall ~~FSKS~~ 4/6/1843
Ewing - Annals vol.2 p.148f
- (57) Taylor - Country Manse p.40
Brown - Annals p.254

- (58) Fifeshire Journal 8/6/1843
- (59) Monimail Parish Church Kirk Session minutes 1820 - 62 18/8/1843
- Monimail HR 1840 17/7/1843
- (60) Taylor - Country Manse p.41
- (61) Brown - Annals p.164
- (62) Taylor - Country Manse p.43
- (63) Fifeshire Journal 8/6/1843
- (64) Ibid. 29/6/1843
Fife Herald 27/7/1843
- (65) Fife Herald 27/7/1843
- (66) Brown - Annals p.171
- (67) Ibid. p.203
- (68) Ibid. p.202
- (69) Ibid. p.640
- (70) Drummond - Victorian Church p.4f
- (71) Rem. Cupar p.105f.

III (c) Other Disputes and Unions

While the ecclesiastical life of the country was torn principally by the relationship of church and state through the period other disputes occurred. The British and Foreign Bible Society had been kept in funds and widely supported by the voluntary work of many people throughout the country, not least by the members of the Fife and Kinross Bible Society and its auxiliaries. At the Annual General Meeting of the Central District of Fife and Cupar Bible Society it was reported that one hundred and five pounds had been remitted to the parent society during 1822.⁽¹⁾ Subsequently it transpired that the directors of the Society at London had for some time been publishing the apocryphal books with the authorised scriptures. The matter coming to the attention of the secretary of the Edinburgh Bible Society, Dr. Andrew Thomson, he at once entered into controversy with the society's directors.⁽²⁾

In June of 1830 Dr. Thomson, in pressing his point of view in this dispute, was present at a meeting called in Cupar to oppose the British and Foreign Bible Society policy. He denounced what he described as the pernicious doctrines of the Apocrypha and in particular the doctrine of atonement for sins by almsgiving, prayers for the dead, and its commendation of suicide and assassination. He was also critical of some of its historical statements. He went on to claim that the Bible with the Apocrypha was being forced on people who did not want it or who would have accepted the Bible without the Apocrypha and that the arrangement was acceptable only to the Roman Catholic Church. The Meeting closed with the formation of a new bible society in the town.⁽³⁾ Dr. Thomson's views appear to have won wide support. A few days later he delivered a sermon at Auchtermuchty during an evening service, in aid of the funds of the Auchtermuchty and Strathmiglo Bible and Missionary Societies. The local press reported that none of the local churches could have contained even a third of the audience which wished to hear Dr. Thomson

and in consequence a tent had to be set up for the occasion. The following evening which was a Monday being the day chosen for the Annual General Meeting of the local Bible Society the meeting was held in Auchtermuchty Parish Church with the Parish Minister as chairman. There was a good cross-section of local ministers present as well as Dr. Thomson. Amongst those present only the minister of the United Secession Church at Freuchie was critical of the views being expressed by Dr. Thomson whose arguments he attempted to refute.⁽⁴⁾ The Apocrypha dispute while it generated some temporary interest and led to a reorganisation of local bible societies appears to have had no lasting effect on the life of the church.

Outside of the question of the relationship of church and state very few of the disputes which arose were divisive. Attitudes toward the sabbath were at this time changing. While the sabbath was generally recognised as a day of rest it is clear that public houses were open on Sundays and that it was not considered abnormal for funeral to take place on the day of rest.⁽⁵⁾ In 1831 the Kirk Session of Monimail Parish Church took the practice of burying the dead on the Sabbath into their consideration and decided to discourage it on the grounds that it profaned the Sabbath.⁽⁶⁾ In 1838 the Presbytery of Cupar appointed a committee to look into questions raised by the carriage of mail on Sunday.⁽⁷⁾ The matter was a pressing one with the coming of the railway since the directors of the Edinburgh and Glasgow Railway Company had discussed the possibility of running trains on Sunday only to drop it in the face of opposition prominent amongst which was David Maitland Makgill Crichton who was a shareholder of the company.⁽⁸⁾ Not everyone shared Crichton's views on the sanctity of the Sabbath. In November 1846 Cupar Town Council decided by ten votes to seven to keep the town's reading room open on Sunday, except at the times of divine service and at the same meeting they also agreed to memorialise the directors of the local railway

company expressing their sympathy with the provision of Sunday train services. (9) The following year the Established Church Presbytery of Cupar discussed the matter of Sunday train services and eventually decided to oppose the provision of such train services. (10) Nevertheless, although some ministers remained unconvinced that this service would constitute a profanation of the Sabbath the majority of the clergy seem to have opposed it. Towards the end of 1847 the introduction of Sunday working by the railways led to the formation of a 'Sabbath Alliance' in which ministers and laymen of all denominations united in their opposition to attempts to desecrate the Sabbath but in particular to the appearance of Sunday railway working. At a meeting held on the thirtieth of December, 1847 the Parish Ministers of Cupar, Monimail, Moonsie, and Flish, the Free Church Ministers of Dairsie, Collessie, Dunbog, Cores, and Auchtermuchty, the United Presbyterian Minister of Kettle and the Reformed Presbyterian Minister of Strathmiglo united in favour of a 'Sabbath Alliance' in the area. (11)

Within a short time the Sabbath Alliance organised meetings throughout the area. Meetings at Newburgh and Kingskettle were well attended, although a meeting at Auchtermuchty was less successful, perhaps because Makgill Crichton had given a lecture in the Free Church there earlier on the subject of the advantages to the working class of the observance of the Sabbath. (12) The question of Sunday work was a continuing source of agitation to the church and in 1850 Sunday work in the Post Office was the subject of criticism. (13) It would appear that the opposition of the churches had little effect. At Cupar the town's reading room was still opening on Sundays, although it still closed during the times of divine service. (14) In December, 1864 the Kirk Session of the Parish Church of Collessie took into their consideration that fact that the North British Railway Company were running trains for ordinary traffic on a Sunday, and resolved to send a petition to the

directors of the company to state that they:-

"have learned with regret and alarm that the North British Railway Company have begun to run trains for ordinary traffic, upon an extensive scale on the Lord's Day... (your) memorialists considering the divine law of the Sabbath to be one of the essential supports to vital and practical Christianity, feel it incumbent on them to make every exertion for the maintenance of that law as understood by the Scottish people"

The Kirk Session went on to insist that in their opinion the reasons which were being put forward in justification of the Sunday operation were such that they would lead to a widespread and, in their opinion, dangerous interference with the rest and the sanctity of the Christian Sabbath which would be injurious to the working classes in particular. (15)

While the trials of Edward Irving and John McLeod Campbell may have been followed with interest in North Fife their views do not appear to have won widespread support in the area, despite the interest aroused by a visit paid by Irving to Monimail in 1828. (16) Nevertheless, when, in 1841 the Reverend James Morison of the United Secession Church at Kilmarnock was forced out of his denomination as a result of his denial of the doctrine of election the subsequent interest in this question locally appears to have been more lively. His expulsion by the Synod left a good deal of unrest behind it, and in 1845 when Dr. John Brown who had been Morison's teacher came under attack culminating in his acquittal of several charges of heresy the unease among congregations in the area became apparent. (17) On the fourth of March the Kirk Session of Edenshead United Secession Church unanimously agreed to request the Synod of the Church to recall or modify any deed of the Synod:-

"which taught or might be supposed to teach the doctrine of universal atonement" (18)

About the same time the Kirk Session of the United Secession Church at Rathillet expressed deep concern at the opinions held by ministers and elders and unanimously agreed to memorialise the Synod suggesting that that court of the church should recall any of its declarations which

seemed to countenance the doctrine of universal atonement. (19)

Within the United Secession Church there were many who were prepared to tolerate a wider range of belief and who regarded this renewed controversy as unnecessary. At Pitlessie the United Secession Kirk Session unanimously agreed to memorialise the Synod condemning the attempt to re-open the dispute. (20) In April a circular letter signed by eighteen elders of the United Secession Church in the area was sent to all the Secession ministers inviting elders to meet in Cupar to consider the propriety of adopting resolutions to counteract the efforts being made to renew the discussion on doctrinal problems. (21) When the meeting took place letters were received from the Kirk Session of former Antiburgher congregation of the United Secession Church at Auchtermuchty, the Rathillet Kirk Session of the United Secession Church and others further afield recording their disapproval of the meeting. In spite of this the meeting went ahead and adopted a memorial to be submitted to the Synod which expressed the meeting's feelings of alarm and sorrow at the efforts being made to re-open the doctrinal debate at the Synod's ensuing meeting.

"Firstly because...there has been a diversity of opinion amongst ministers of the Secession regarding the extent of the atonement yet it would not appear that the difference is of such a nature... as to warrant the suspicion that any of them are unsound in faith... And being so your memorialists conceive...it is not of such practical importance to religion as to warrant the renewal of a discussion...more likely to divide the church."

The petition went on to say that all Secession ministers:-

"preach the necessity of an atonement and of faith in that atonement in order to salvation...(and)only differ in their modes of explaining how it is so efficacious as to form the ground of a full and free offer to salvation to all - whether that efficacy is a consequence of the dignity of Christ's person or of the Father's appointment or of both. But they are all agreed that there is in it an efficacy sufficient to warrant every sinner to accept of it." (22)

There was among the elders of the Secession Church, at least on this subject, an eirenic spirit which was a welcome change in ecclesiastical life. For the Secession Church the question appears to have lost much

of importance but it subsequently became a matter of pulpit controversy between the Reverend William Landells of the Baptist Church in Cupar and the Reverend Adam Cairns of the Free Church there. While Landells maintained the doctrine of universal atonement Cairns took the Calvinistic view that it was for the elect alone. (23)

While many of the disputes created and perpetuated divisions even the most divisive of them often drew together those denominations that found themselves in sympathy and sharing a common struggle. In the 1830s as the Established Church began to show signs of a renewed vitality and as it took up the struggle over the operation of the Patronage Act the Original Burgher Synod found themselves in sympathy with the struggle. Their Presbytery meeting in Cupar in 1835 unanimously agreed to petition Parliament for the abolition of patronage in the Established Church and at the Assembly of that year their Church asked if they might be received back into the Establishment. (24) Their request was welcomed and the union was completed in 1839. In the same way the Old Light Antiburghers recognised the similarity of their views with those held by the Free Church and united with them in 1852 although a small minority of those at Balmullo continued a separate existence. (25)

Of all the drawing together of denominations which occurred at this time perhaps the most important was that which took place in 1847. The heat of the 'voluntary' controversy had perhaps insensibly drawn all who were practical 'voluntaries' towards each other. In 1835 when the attack on the establishment principle was being pursued with great enthusiasm the Pife Herald reported that a meeting had taken place at which the desirability of a union between the Relief and the Secession Churches had been urged. (26) The following year a meeting of elders and ministers of the Relief and Secession Churches took place in Kirkealdy. It adopted a resolution which contained the following points amongst others:-

"1 - Division in the church is a very great evil; that in its effects it is exceedingly injurious...that Christians are therefore under the strongest obligations to seek and preserve within the church the vital principle of unity...

3 - The Relief and Secession Churches bearing so close a resemblance to each other in origin and approximating to each other so closely...in doctrine, worship, discipline and government are loudly called upon to adopt measures likely to lead to their incorporation into one ecclesiastical body." (27)

It was eleven years before this spirit finally bore fruit. In 1845 as the movement towards union between the two churches continued a meeting was held in Cupar United Secession Church to nurse that spirit which existed between them. The ministers of both denominations in the town took part in the proceedings, while in August of the same year the United Secession Presbytery of Cupar and the Relief Presbytery of Dysart appointed representatives to confer with their corresponding courts as a necessary step towards unity. (28) Despite this long and careful preparation the union when it came in 1847 was not greeted with the unanimity which might have been expected.

At an early stage in the negotiations it had been ascertained that both denominations were substantially satisfied with the Westminster Confession of Faith's statement that:-

"Saints by profession are bound to maintain a holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God...Which communion as God offereth opportunity is to be extended unto all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus." (29)

At a meeting in October, 1846, when the final adjustments were being made to the Basis of Union, the representatives of the Relief Synod wished to include an article sanctioning the right to admit members of other denominations to occasional communion. The request being opposed the matter was dropped but it was at this point that some ministers of the Relief Church held back, among them the ministers of Ceres and Cupar, (Provost Wynd) Relief Churches. At the Relief Synod held in May of 1847 John Craig, the minister of the Provost Wynd Congregation at Cupar, dissented from the resolution to consummate the union. On Sunday the

sixth of June he told his congregation that in his opinion a wall as high as heaven had been raised between the United Presbyterian Church and every other denomination and that the principle of free communion, the distinguishing principle of the Relief Church had been extinguished. At the ensuing congregational meeting a proposal was made that the congregation should join the United Presbyterian Church but it was decided to remain as an independent congregation. (30)

The Cercs congregation which also held back from the union subsequently decided that it would be in their interest to enter it and they did so in November of 1847. (31) In March of 1848 John Craig following another course informed his congregation that he intended to apply to the Established Church for admission to that denomination. At a highly controversial meeting where the town officers were at the door to eject trouble-makers a motion for the congregation to follow Craig and apply for admission to the Established Church was carried by thirty-nine votes to thirty-five, amid accusations that names had been removed from the roll without authority. (32) An article in the congregation's constitution appeared to provide that the property of the congregation could not be alienated from the Relief cause except on the vote of four-fifths of the congregation. (33) When the minority were refused possession of, or access to, the church they applied to the sheriff for an interdict which was apparently refused on a technical objection. (34) In 1849 Craig and such of the congregation as followed him were received into the Established Church and the congregation was dissolved, the building being sold to the Baptist congregation in Cupar. (35)

The turmoil and desire for reform which marked the political life of the nation found its corresponding outlet in the church. The reconsideration of the relationship between church and state which had erupted periodically in the eighteenth century into secessions from the

Established Church and divisions between the branches of the Secession Church culminated in a review which subsequently led to the acknowledgement of the 'new lights' that the divisions between them had little relevance in the world of the nineteenth century. The separation between church and state having been accepted as a proper state of affairs it became a source of criticism of the Established Church that it retained the state connection with dependence upon civil courts in so many matters. The attack mounted by the Seceders and the Relief Church had two consequences. Firstly it led the leaders of the Established Church who wished the church to be master within its own house to attempt to remove the power of patrons which had caused the appearance of the dissenting churches and when this course of action was blocked resulted in the prominence of the doctrine of the separate jurisdiction of church and state, a doctrine which when all else failed, led to the Disruption. Secondly the attack of the voluntaries led all those who were practical voluntaries to draw closer together. As the 'new light' controversy had made the two branches of the Seceders aware of their similarities so the 'voluntary' controversy made the Relief and Secession Churches aware of what was common to their church life. The problems of the Apocrypha and the observance of the sabbath merely confirmed a common outlook in the face of which their divisions became somewhat unreal. Nevertheless the nineteenth century's struggles left a strong sense of denominationalism, which created barriers between those who were on opposite sides, most particularly in the struggle over the state connection. While the 'voluntaries' drew together United Presbyterians, Established Church and Free Church remained divided by their views on the civil magistracy and even the two 'old light' branches of the Secession church remained separated by the question. The burghers finding their spiritual home with the Established Church, the antiburghers theirs in the Free Church.

III(c) Other Disputes and Unions

- (1) Fife Herald 16/5/1822
- (2) Story - Church vol.3 p.767f.
- (3) Fife Herald 3/6/1830
- (4) Ibid. 10/6/1830
- (5) Collessie PCKS 1833 2/11/1834
- (6) Monimail MR 1810 4/4/1831 (Extract from Kirk Session minutes)
- (7) Fifeshire Journal 6/12/1838
- (8) Taylor - Memoir p.32
- (9) Fife Herald 26/11/1846
- (10) Ibid. 13/5/1847
- (11) Ibid. 30/12/1847
- (12) Ibid. 24/2/1848, 5/2/1848
- (13) Ibid. 18/4/1850
- (14) Westwood - Directory p.62
- (15) Collessie PCKS 1851 25/12/1864
- (16) Dunbog OPR vol.3 accounts 22/6/1828
- (17) Drummond - Victorian Church p.51f
- (18) Edenshead USC minutes 4/3/1845
- (19) Fife Herald 13/3/1845
- (20) Ibid. 27/3/1845
- (21) Ibid. 3/4/1845
- (22) Ibid. 17/4/1845
- (23) Rem. Cupar p.128f.
- (24) Fife Herald 12/3/1835
Drummond - Scottish Church p.222
- (25) Burleigh - History p.362
Small - U.P.Church vol.1 p.192
- (26) Fife Herald 9/4/1835
- (27) Ibid. 31/3/1836
- (28) Ibid. 6/2/1845, 20/8/1845
- (29) Westminster Confession of Faith XXVI (ii)

- (30) Small - U.P. Church vol.1 p.189f
- (31) Ibid. vol.1 p.159
- (32) Fife Herald 23/3/1848
- (33) Ibid. 23/3/1848
- (34) Ibid. 6/4/1848
- (35) Small - U.P.Church vol.1 p.190f
Rem. Cupar p.128

IV OFFICEBARRERS

(a) Ministers

The nineteenth century was marked by an increasing tension within the Christian Church in Scotland. That tension was marked by the 'voluntary' dispute as well as by the 'non-intrusion' struggle. The lead in the struggle in which these tensions culminated was taken by ministers amongst whom there was a remarkable similarity of background. The Reverend Robert Johnstone, parish minister of Auchtermuchty, Adam Cairns, minister of the first charge of the Established Church and later of the Free Church at Cupar, Laurence Adamson, Cairns' immediate predecessor at Cupar were all sons of the manse, while Thomas Chalmers the leading figure in the Disruption of 1843 and minister of Kilmany from 1803 and John Anderson, the moderate parish Minister of Newburgh were both the sons of merchants. The Reverend Samuel Martin, minister of Monimail at the beginning of the nineteenth century and the Reverend George Campbell Minister of the first charge of Cupar at the same time were both the sons of school-masters.⁽¹⁾ Among the ministers of the Relief and Secession Churches it appears to have been more common to have had a family connection with the Christian ministry. John Fraser, the Burgher minister at Auchtermuchty, was a son-in-law of a minister and had three sons who followed him into the profession as well as a daughter who married a member of it.⁽²⁾ George Barlas, one of Fraser's successors was a grandson of a minister and had an uncle who was engaged in this work. Thomas Stevenson, of the (North) United Presbyterian Church at Auchtermuchty from 1842 had four brothers with the same calling while his predecessor, James Forsyth was a minister's son.⁽³⁾ John Johnston of the United Secession Church at Newburgh was the son of the minister of the same denomination at Rathillet in the Parish of Kilmany, and while he had married his predecessor's daughter, his own daughter married his colleague in the Second United Presbyterian Church of Newburgh.⁽⁴⁾

There were some ministers of the Established Church with similarly ecclesiastical family trees. James Brodie became assistant and successor to his grandfather, Samuel Martin, minister of Monimail, while at Kilmany both John Cook and his younger brother, Henry, were ordained as Parish Minister over a period of about twenty years.⁽⁵⁾ Nevertheless, this does not seem to have been such a prominent feature of the ministry of the Established Church as it was of that of the dissenting churches.

Ministers tended to share a similar educational background. The career of Adam Cairns, first minister of Cupar from 1837 to 1843, was perhaps typical in that he received his rudimentary education at the parochial school at Longforgan where his father was Parish Minister. Showing promise of academic ability he entered the University of St. Andrews at the age of fourteen, which he, in later life, thought too young.⁽⁶⁾ Thomas Chalmers, who became Parish Minister at Kilmany in 1803, had a similar educational path, although in his case he was only twelve when he enrolled as a student at St. Andrews.⁽⁷⁾ Outside the Established Church James Johnston, Burgher minister at Rathillet in the Parish of Kilmany at the same time as Chalmers, had sought and been granted admission to the divinity hall of his church at the age of fifteen.⁽⁸⁾ Both Chalmers and Johnston shared the distinction of having prosecuted an advanced level of study at what was recognised as a very early age. Most students were older and David Ogilvie who was to become Parish Minister of Collessie was perhaps not untypical when he went up to St. Andrews at the age of twenty-seven to conclude his divinity course.⁽⁹⁾

The theological training of ministers was preceded by a course of study of a general character in the faculty of arts.⁽¹⁰⁾ Students were obliged to undergo an examination by the courts of their church in literature, and philosophy and particularly in latin and Greek.⁽¹¹⁾

For some of those who pursued a course of study with the intention of entering the ministry there must have been difficulties. Of John Wise who was ordained assistant and successor at Auchtermuchty Relief Church in 1838 it was recorded:-

"Amid facilities of a not very encouraging nature he prosecuted his literary course at the University of St. Andrews from which he went to the Relief Divinity Hall where he finished his theological studies." (12)

Despite attempts by the courts of the church to enforce attendance at classes such attendance was often variable in the extreme. (13)

The Secession Divinity Hall appears to have met for eight weeks every year and students were required to attend for at least five weeks unless they could give sufficient excuse. (14) James Browning, ordained to the Antiburgher Church of Auchtermuchty in 1785 was nevertheless said to have had a fragmentary theological training since he had attended the divinity hall of his church on only one hundred and ten days in six successive sessions and in consequence had taken two years longer than usual to be taken for trials for licence, and John Young, minister of the First United Presbyterian Church of Newburgh also appears to have experienced some difficulties in completing his theological training. (15)

When David Ogilvie of Collessie went up to St. Andrews he was accompanied by David Maitland (later David Maitland Makgill Crichton) to whom he had become tutor in 1808 and who was now being sent to St. Andrews to attend the Grammar School there. (16) The practice of acting as tutor to the children of a wealthy family was a common one amongst ministers waiting to be called to a charge. Thomas Stuart, minister of Newburgh, acted as tutor to a family at Bath. (17) Samuel Martin, minister of Monimail at the same time as Stuart's ministry at Newburgh was tutor to the family of Thomas Shairp of Houston. (18)

It was not only probationers of the Established Church who found temporary employment in this way. John Robson, the Antiburgher minister of Cupar at the beginning of the nineteenth century, was employed in

this capacity for some time at Mountbattell.⁽¹⁹⁾ Tutorships were not the only possible outlets for the probationers talents. James Cochrane, first minister at Cupar from 1843, spent some time as secretary to Thomas Chalmers and as librarian to the theological library at Edinburgh University, while John Birrell, who had also held the post of tutor to the family of James Home, Professor of Materia Medica at Edinburgh University had been for some time a teacher at George Watson's Hospital.⁽²⁰⁾ For some of the probationers the post of tutor was quite uncongenial. Thomas Chalmers who took up such a post in May of 1798 gave it up and returned to St. Andrews University in January 1799.⁽²¹⁾ Some of those who took up the post found that within it a warm affection could grow up between themselves and their pupils. A member of the Maitland family of Rankeillour, to whom David Ogilvie, later the Parish Minister of Collessie, had been tutor, wrote an account of a childhood there. In that account, Ogilvie, whose theological views were not highly regarded by the family was referred to as 'dear old Obi', while of Ogilvie's relationship with the children of the family the author wrote:-

"It needs no strain of memory to make my ears tingle even now at the thought of what certainly awaited us on entering the schoolroom, if more than five minutes after the third horn. Mr. Ogilvie was posted firmly behind the door and the whack which met the cheek of the late entrant was a splendid reality...And yet this was a man so tenderhearted and who loved us so well that, had he not seized the moment of anger to strike, he might not have been able to do it at all."⁽²²⁾

It would appear that the supply of ministers to dissenting churches was sometimes less than the demand. There are reports of long vacancies in congregations and of the men inducted to charges within the area, many were the subject of calls disputed by other congregations.⁽²³⁾ Between 1832 and 1834 the congregation of Cupar Bonnygate United Secession Church gave two unanimous calls to ministers who preferred to go to other congregations who also wished their services.⁽²⁴⁾ Amongst the ministers who settled at Auchtermuchty the experience was similar. John Taylor,

John McSwaine, and George Harlas all of whom accepted calls to the former Burgher Church between 1827 and 1865 were the subject of calls disputed by other congregations. (25) Calls to ministers made by the Antiburgher congregation of Auchtermuchty met the same fate. James Browning who was ordained in 1785, his successor James Forsyth, who was ordained in 1826, and David Sidey ordained in 1857 all received more than one call before they were settled at Auchtermuchty. (26)

For probationers of the Established Church the way to their own parish appears to have been harder. When David Williamson, Parish Minister of Newburgh died in 1833 the patron of the parish received thirty applications for the vacant pastoral charge and canvassing took place for candidates whose name appeared on a short list that was finally produced. (27) For those who had accepted posts as tutors the influence of the family who employed them could often be an important factor in obtaining a parish. The influence of the Haultlands of Rankellour was an important factor in the presentation of David Ogilvie to the Parish of Collessie, while Robert Williamson who was presented to the same parish in 1843 had previously been tutor in the family of William Johnston of Iathrisk, the patron of the parish. (28) There were occasions when the influence of the parish minister might not be without effect. John Thomson was ordained assistant and successor to his father, Andrew Thomson, Parish Minister at Balmerino, and at Monimail James Brodie was ordained with similar status to his grandfather, Samuel Martin. (29) At Kilmany where the patronage of the church lay with the United Colleges of St. Andrews University, two of the sons of John Cook, Professor of Moral Philosophy there, were presented to the charge within a period of twenty years, the first having demitted office to take up an appointment as Professor of Hebrew at the university. (30) Upon occasion a minister might have his name added to a list of candidates for a parish without his knowledge and even without any solicitation on his part.

In the disputed settlement of the vacancy in the first pastoral charge at Cupar where the rights of patron were vested in the crown the name of Adam Cairns of Dunbog was added to a short list without prior consultation and in consequence before his presentation he declined to preach as a candidate for the charge. (31)

Patrons were, upon occasion, prepared to give parishioners some degree of choice in the presentation of their minister and increasingly so after the passing of the Veto Act. In 1832 when there was a vacancy at Auchtermuchty petitions were presented by the parishioners to the patron who appears to have totally ignored them in making the presentation, but in the vacancy in Newburgh in the following year the patron prepared a short list of candidates which he submitted to the vote of the male communicants of the parish. (32) Earlier patronage seems to have operated to the exclusion of the popular voice. When the Reverend Andrew Thomson was presented to the Parish of Balmerino, it was said to have been done in response to petitions in his favour from some of the heritors and residents of the parish, but the call was signed only by James Morison of Naughton, a prominent landowner, and Robert Small acting as proxy for the Earl of Moray, the proprietor of the estate of Balmerino, and also for John Stark, the previous minister. (33) On the death in 1837 of Laurence Adamson, the first minister of Cupar where the parish was in the presentation of the crown, the Member of Parliament for the County, Captain James Wemyss informed a public meeting that the Secretary of State had resolved:-

"the resident heritors and male heads of families in communion with the church of Cupar shall have a free voice in the choice of their pastor" (34)

It was only in the subsequent disagreement that the crown took upon itself to appoint a minister totally without consultation with the parishioners. At the other extreme the presentation could depend upon popular acceptance. A few months before the Disruption the Earl of Zetland offered to present the Reverend J.W. Taylor to the Parish of Flisk. Taylor, a non-intrusionist,

contended that the congregation should have a voice in the choice and elected to preach at Flish on the understanding that only if the people approved of him would the presentation be made. In the event the parishioners presented a petition to the Earl requesting the appointment of Taylor. (35) Some twenty years after the Disruption in 1863 the crown was still prepared to exercise its rights as patron in spite of the opposition of parishioners. When the Reverend James Pitt Edgaf was presented to the Parish of Dunbog his appointment was opposed with great bitterness by the people who apparently believed that the government, acting on behalf of the crown, had broken faith with them. (36)

Once the presentation had taken place the presentee preached in the parish church and in the chapel of ease where such existed and thereafter the call was moderated and the minister was inducted. (37) The call was not necessarily widely signed. A call to Andrew Thomson in 1782 appears to have carried only two signatures, but in other parishes later the call assumed an increasing importance. (38) When the call to Adam Cairns was signed at Cupar in 1837 there were one hundred and eighty-two signatories. (39) At Monimail it is recorded that the call to James Brodie in 1828 carried the name of the heritors who were present when presbytery met to moderate the call, the names of several gentlemen who acted as proxies for absent heritors and also the names of such of the people as came forward, but the call to Brodie's successor at Monimail was signed by six heritors, two elders, and the session clerk, and one hundred and seventeen parishioners. While the call to James McGregor who was presented to the charge in 1862 carried the signatures of nine heritors, three elders and three hundred and ninety one members and adherants. (40)

At the signing of the call there could be trouble. When Adam Cairns had his call to the first charge of Cupar signed there were what was described by a letter writer as:-

'several passages at arms'

(41)

while the same account of the events notes that a petition carrying the signatures of one hundred and sixty-one individuals and containing a list of special objections was presented. Disturbing as this must have been to the incoming minister the objections of parishioners could take an even more forcible form. The ordination of Thomas Stuart at Newburgh in 1785 was resisted so strongly that it was delayed for five years and finally carried through under military protection, while after the ordination the pulpit was smeared with filth. (42)

The Reverend James Pitt Edgar who was inducted to the Parish of Dunbog in 1863 had a small bomb consisting of the bush of a cartwheel filled with gunpowder exploded under the manse windows. (43) In the criminal proceedings which arose from this incident Edgar made a statement in which he recalled how he had received statements and reports of meetings of the parishioners of Dunbog as well as letters relating to his presentation even before he arrived in the parish, and how he had received a good many anonymous letters threatening his life and property. When his trial sermons were to be preached in the parish notices were placed at every convenient corner warning the congregation against attending the church on the days appointed for Edgar to be there. (44)

It was not only the parish churches which were the scene of disorder when it was necessary to call a new minister. When the congregation of the Relief Church at Cupar attempted to end a vacancy by calling the Reverend William Burnet in 1829, a minority of about two hundred and sixty people withdrew and formed a second Relief Church in the town, while at Ceres in 1792 another disputed settlement at the Antiburgher Church led to the formation of a new Relief congregation by the dissident minority. (45) Although the dissenting congregations were not troubled by the patronage question in calling their ministers it did not mean that unanimity was easily obtained or always possible.

Although in the Established Church the right of presentation to a parish lay with a lay patron the responsibility of ordaining and inducting those presented lay with the presbyteries of the church as it also did in the dissenting presbyterian denominations. In the Secession and Relief Churches and later in the United Presbyterian Church this right was jealously guarded by presbytery which was also careful to ensure that the stipend to be paid by congregations was adequate. (46) For presbyteries trials of academic ability were considered a necessary prelude to ordination. (47) Before his ordination and induction to the former Burgher Church of Auchtermuchty the Reverend John Taylor was examined in Greek, Hebrew, Church History, and Divinity as well as being required to present a popular sermon, a lecture, an exegesis and a thesis which he was required to defend, and twenty six years later George Barlas found himself confronted with a similar series of tests before his ordination to the church of Auchtermuchty United Presbyterian (East) Church. (47) In the Established Church this examination took place at the time of licencing. (48)

The steps which led to the calling and induction of a minister in churches outside the establishment are reflected in the arrangements which led to the installation of the Reverend John Anderson at Collossie Free Church. At a meeting of the congregation a committee was appointed to do what was necessary to arrange the induction of a minister. From among a list of candidates a short list was prepared and the candidates whose names appeared on it were invited to preach after which a further meeting of the congregation was called to consider the congregation's views. In this instance the meeting led directly to a request to presbytery to moderate a call to Anderson and commissioners were appointed to attend presbytery to this end. Subsequently the presbytery who had agreed to this request met at Collossie where after a service of worship a call was signed in their presence. (49)

Services of ordination appear to have followed remarkably similar patterns throughout the presbyterian church. Presbytery having met intimation was given that they were ready to hear objections to the life and doctrine of the prospective minister. In the event of there being no objections presbytery entered the church where in the course of a service a suitable sermon was preached and the steps leading up to the induction were stated. Thereafter questions were put which were intended to elucidate the fact that the minister-elect was prepared to subscribe the Westminster Confession of faith, although within New Light side of the dissenting churches the confessions view of the power of the magistrate was a permitted exception, and the candidate, if he was to be ordained, was set apart by prayer and the laying on of hands by the presbytery, and then given the right hand of fellowship by the presbyters. Charges were given to the new minister and the congregation addressed suitably after which the service was concluded, presbytery resuming its meeting enrolled the new minister as a member. (50)

It would appear that some presbyteries in dissenting churches voted to enroll new ministers although it seems that in the Established Church the view was taken that by virtue of ordination or admission to a parish ministers became a member of the presbytery and synod in whose bounds the parish lay. (51)

Once inducted to his parish or charge the minister might not find his rewards too gratifying. Describing the manse to which Thomas Chalmers went after his induction to the Parish of Kilmany, his son-in-law wrote:-

"The manse was ill-placed and old enough to warn its occupant not to be too lavish of his attentions lest he might cut off his hope of getting a new one built...It had, however, to be made habitable". (52)

At Dunbog the parish manse appears to have been very small in the early part of the nineteenth century. James Keyden, parish minister in 1816,

complained to the heritors that because there was no spare room, his wife, who was in ill-health, had to sleep on the floor when they had guests who spent the night. (55) In 1823 the Heritors of Colleslie minuted the fact that the old part of the manse had been condemned and it seems likely that they regarded only an extension added at the end of the eighteenth century as being in good order. (54) In 1827 the minister of the first charge of Cupar petitioned the Presbytery of Cupar requesting the provision of a manse and followed that with a similar request to the heritors, but it required a decision of the Court of Session for such a manse to be provided and as late as 1840 the minister of the second charge had no manse. (55) Nevertheless it seems that the condition of manses may have improved since by 1840. Many of the parish ministers appear to have been satisfied with their accommodation. (56)

Many of the ministers of dissenting congregations also found themselves without manses. As late as 1855 the minister of Cupar Boston United Presbyterian Church had no manse and his death was attributed to a fatal illness which he contracted while raising funds for the erection of one. (57) At Newburgh the minister of United Secession Church there who was inducted to the charge in 1786 received an amount to pay the rent of a house and his successor had a similar allowance. (58) Nevertheless many of the dissenting congregations provided a house which was considered adequate to the ministers needs. The manse provided by the Burgher congregation of Auchtermuchty prior to 1826 consisted of a dining room, parlour, four bedrooms and a kitchen. There was an adjoining house which could be used as a stable or a byre and a walled garden stocked with fruit trees. (59)

The stipends paid could vary considerably. In 1794 when the Relief congregation of Cupar sought to call a minister they offered a stipend of one hundred pounds, the cost of communion elements, and the cost of keeping the horses of the ministers assisting the person on whom their choice fell. (60)

Auchtermuchty Burgher Church offered to pay Archibald Baird who was called in 1816 the sum of one hundred and twenty pounds, ten pounds for sacramental expenses, and ten pounds for a house until such time as a manse could be found. (61)

Stipend paid by congregations outside the Established church depended on the wealth of the congregation and when new congregations of these denominations were established the presbyteries had to be satisfied that a proper stipend would be available. (62)

This right they exercised also in respect of calls. When, in 1827 the Burgher congregation at Auchtermuchty sought to have a call moderated to the minister of their choice presbytery refused to act on the grounds that the stipend offered was insufficient. (63)

In spite of such precautions, however, the ministers of Ceres Relief Congregation found their stipends fluctuating considerably. In 1808 the stipend paid was one hundred pounds with taxes paid. In 1833 it had fallen to seventy pounds although a house and garden was then provided while in 1840 they felt able to pay ninety pounds with a house and garden. (64)

At Kilmany, on the other hand the support given to the minister by the burgher congregation seems to have increased steadily from 1781 when it stood at forty-four pounds and a house until 1837 when it totalled one hundred and nine pounds and a house. (65)

Towards the end of the period the stipends paid by congregations of the United Presbyterian Church apparently failed to increase in accordance with the general cost of living. A commentator on ecclesiastical affairs in the area writing about Kettle United Presbyterian Church in 1865 wrote:-

"Let us call attention to another item which is positively disgraceful...the minister has only the small pittance of one hundred and fifty pounds a year...if the church were vacant they will not get any but a far inferior and very second rate man" (66)

If the minister in that congregation was inadequately remunerated his stipend bore favourable comparison with those paid by surrounding congregations. In 1857 the stipend paid to the minister of Auchtermuchty

United Presbyterian (North) Church was one hundred pounds and a manse with the promise that the stipend would be increased in the event of the congregational debt being liquidated. (67) Three years later the congregation of the East congregation of the United Presbyterian Church in the same burgh was offering a stipend of one hundred and twenty pounds and a manse with ten pounds for sacramental expenses. (68) The situation of the former Relief Church at Newburgh, the second United Presbyterian congregation, was that the stipend which was eighty pounds in 1848 had increased to only one hundred and ten pounds in 1864, while within a few years the congregation were receiving aid from the Home Mission Board of their church to supplement the stipend which was by then considered too inadequate. (69) Between 1855 and 1863 the stipend paid by the Boston United Presbyterian congregation of Cupar fell from one hundred and twenty pounds to one hundred pounds. (70) Free Church ministers whose stipends were equally dependent on the ability of the laity of the church to pay them were probably cushioned by the operation of the Sustentation Fund. Writing in the late years of his ministry the Reverend J.W. Taylor of the Free Church who had left his living in the Parish of Flisk in 1845 was able to write:-

"When I gave up my living in the Established Church I never expected to receive an income exceeding one hundred pounds. I had no thoughts of again occupying a manse. Yet have I been dwelling since 1844 in a pleasant manse...and receiving an income of one hundred and thirty-eight pounds raised by the generous collection for pre-Disruption ministers to one hundred and seventy pounds..." (71)

Stipend of the clergy of the Church of Scotland was paid out of tiends and calculated in weights of grain, an arrangement preferred by ministers after 1707 and enjoined by subsequent legislation, although payment in kind was abolished in 1808. (72) By the middle of the eighteenth century the average annual stipend was fifty-two pounds but in some parishes there were no tiends available for further augmentation of stipend and consequently many parish ministers received much less. (73)

Although the matter came before the General Assembly in 1749 the heritors were reluctant to undertake additional expenditure and it was not until parliament intervened in 1810 that a minimum stipend of one hundred and fifty pounds was established by statute, which also provided funds to meet augmentations in parishes where the tithes had been surrendered. (74)

Prior to the passing of this act stipends had not been high although those paid to ministers of the Established Church were probably higher than those paid to dissenting ministers. In 1796 when John Robson of the Cupar Antiburgher Church was promised a stipend of seventy pounds it was considered to compare favourably with the eighty-three pounds six shillings and eightpence paid to one of the parish ministers. (75) The value of the stipend was subject to considerable fluctuation. The parish minister at Collessie towards the end of the eighteenth century valued his living, including the value of the glebe at one hundred pounds when grain was selling well. (76) About the same time the living at Dunbog, excluding the value of the glebe, was set between seventy and eighty pounds. The minister of that parish lamented:-

"Unless augmentation of stipends become an object of interest the clergy of Scotland must degenerate".

(77)

In 1808 parliament passed an act providing that stipends should be augmented only at intervals of twenty years. Thomas Chalmers, then Parish Minister of Kilmany, saw that this meant that the interval between augmentations might be lengthened by disputes in a manner that would be vexatious to ministers. This defect was brought before the General Assembly by Cupar Presbytery for whom Chalmers appeared but due to his ignorance of Assembly procedure the opportunity of presenting the overture was lost. (78)

The value of the stipend varied with grain prices and when as in 1822 there was an abundant harvest the income of ministers fell accordingly. The Fife Herald in the early part of 1823 carried letters from

clergymen complaining on this score. One writer complained that the value of his stipend and the stipends of almost two hundred others had fallen as low as one hundred and three pounds due to the fall in grain prices, while another expressed the opinion that the small livings in some parishes would undermine the principle of presbyterian parity and lead ministers to supplement their incomes by other additional employment at the expense of their calling. (79) The concern of Parish Ministers with their stipend gave the Established Church's critics a weapon with which to attack it. At a public meeting at Giffordtown in the Parish of Collessie, a weaver from the parish was reported as saying:-

"We feared the Zion of the Established Church... was to be regarded as an institution surrounded by state bayonets, having its central glory consisting of sixteen chalders..." (80)

The heritors too tended to be critical when ministers sought an augmentation of stipend. In 1795 when the reverend Samuel Martin took legal advice on the possibility of success in an application for an augmentation he asked the Reverend James Keyden, minister of Dunbog, to inform the Earl of Leven, his principal heritor. (81)

In spite of the difficulties stipends did increase appreciably during the first half of the century. At Dunbog where the minister had valued his living at seventy to eighty pounds at the end of the eighteenth century the stipend by 1840 consisted of £68. 11. -d. with the value of five chalders of grain. (82) If the target for most ministers in 1838 was still sixteen chalders both parish ministers at Cupar were receiving eighteen chalders, while the Parish Minister at Auchtermuchty received seventeen chalders with ten pounds in money having already received two augmentations in the preceding twenty-four years. (83) Probably stipends were in the region of two hundred pounds by 1840. At Moonzie where the stipend in grain was only ten bolls (or less than one chaldor) there was a cash payment of £177. 18. 3d. while at Creich where the stipend in grain consisted of only one chaldor the additional stipend in money was £209. 15. 8d. (84) These amounts were considerable increases over

the grain value of the stipends at the end of the eighteenth century. In 1822 the stipends of the parishes of Ceres Collesie and Abdie were all augmented and the stipend at Ceres was increased from the level of six chalders with forty-five pounds of money to sixteen chalders with ten pounds of money for communion elements. (85)

The enthusiasm and energy which ministers devoted to the discharge of their duties varied according to the inclinations of the individual. Of the Reverend J.W. Taylor of the Free Church at Flish it was recorded that:-

"In his own pastoral work, however, he was always diligent and painstaking. His visits to the sick were specially valued... Holding up as he constantly did, the duties of parents he sought to promote as much as possible home religious education; but he heartily sustained his congregational Sabbath School and took peculiar delight in the conduct of a week evening Bible Class." (86)

It would appear that the duties which were regarded as most important by ministers were those of catechising, visiting the sick, and pastoral visitation and it was these that the Reverend John Fraser of Auchtermuchty Burgher Church informed his congregation that he was no longer able to carry out towards the end of his ministry. (87) Not all ministers regarded their pastoral duties as demanding their whole attention. In 1805 Thomas Chalmers, then the Parish Minister of Kilmany wrote:-

"The author of this pamphlet can assert from...the authority of his own experience, that after the satisfactory discharge of his parish duties a minister may enjoy five days in the week of uninterrupted leisure for the prosecution of any science in which his taste may dispose him to engage."

His son-in-law commenting on his ministry at this time wrote that if he:-

"expended as much effort upon the religious improvement of his people as any minister within the bounds of his presbytery...the standards to which he appealed must have been miserably low. The sick and dying had not been neglected...but no solicitude was manifested as to their religious condition...it was only when specially requested ...he engaged in prayer. Two or three weeks were annually devoted to the visitation of his parish...with the general body of his parishioners he had little intercourse." (88)

Writing about the Established Church a little later one of the pupils of the Reverend David Ogilvie of Collesie, who was himself critical of

canterers, wrote:-

"The gospel as now understood was not usually preached or even owned in the Church of Scotland. Exceptions...were few in number and...were jeeringly called canterers...what we now call gospel preaching was...confined to the dissenters or seceders." (89)

Chalmers understanding of the Christian faith at this time could be summarised:-

"I revere Christianity...because it is built upon the solid foundation of impregnable argument, because it has improved the world by lessons of an ennobling morality and because by the animating prospects it holds out it alleviates the sorrows of our final departure hence..."

Chalmers unhesitatingly believed that scriptures were the word of God but the atonement was to him a mystery:-

"In what particular manner the death of our Redeemer effected the remission of our sins, or rather why that death was made a condition of this remission seems to be an unrevealed point in scripture."

He went further:-

"The tenets of those (who) are apt to imagine that...(God)...required the death of Jesus merely for the reparation of violated justice are rejected by all free and rational inquirers." (90)

Chalmers transition to evangelical faith took place between 1809 and 1811 when important modifications of his doctrinal views took place. In particular his attitude towards human depravity were changed by a sense of the pervading and defiling element of ungodliness and perhaps in consequence his theology with regard to the atonement also underwent important changes which enabled him to understand Christ as a true and proper sacrifice for sin. In a letter written many years later Chalmers summarised the change:-

"I am now most thoroughly of the opinion that on the system of 'Do this and live' no peace and even no true and worthy obedience can be reached. It is 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved'. When this belief enters the heart joy and confidence enter along with it." (91)

Amongst 'evangelicals' a conversion experience seems to have been not uncommon and the biographical notes on Adam Cairns reveal a similar experience occurring to him in his early life. (92) As the century wore

on it seems that amongst the ministers of the Established Church there were some at least whose views could be described as 'evangelical'. (95)

After 1811 Chalmers pastoral duties were marked by a greater enthusiasm. Time was spent in catechising, distributing alms to the poor and in his visitations he made himself acquainted with every family. (94) Some of Chalmers' negligence in the discharge of his duties may have been due to the fact that for some years while he held the living at Kilmany he also undertook to lecture at St. Andrews University a practice for which he was criticised at the Presbytery of Cupar and amongst the moderate ministers there may have been many who like David Ogilvie of Collespie drew from his critics the comment that he did not neglect his duties as far as he understood them:-

"He preached twice on Sundays...He ministered to the sick, physically at least, carrying tokens of his kindness to them with his own hands and to his housekeeper he entrusted every morning a canvas bag of half pennies with the order that one should be given to every beggar who asked alms at the door. He was not made of stuff to stand unchanged ingratitude and dishonesty. His heart within him turned against those people...though still doing the round of his charities among them. (95)

The churches of the area appear to have been fortunate in the men who exercised their ministries there, and many of them achieved distinction, and won fame considerably beyond the sphere of their normal work. Thomas Chalmers' achievements after his departure from Kilmany have probably won widest recognition but John Cook minister of Cults between 1832 and 1833 became moderator of the General Assembly in 1866, having first been depute and then principal clerk of the General Assembly and having published 'Styles of Writs and Forms of Procedure and Practice of Church Courts of Scotland', and by this publication anticipating and rendering unnecessary a similar work which one of his successors at Cults, James Anderson, who was also recognised as an authority on the law and procedure of the church was preparing. (96) Adam Cairns the first minister of the Free Church at Cupar subsequently became Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria in whose theological hall he was

both principal and professor of Divinity. (97) Amongst those who remained in Scotland Thomas Gillespie of Culter became Professor of Humanity at St. Andrews, John Cook of Kilmany demitted office to become Professor of Hebrew at St. Andrews in 1802, William Leitch of Monimail demitted office in 1861 to become Professor of Divinity and Principal of Queen's College Kingston in Canada in which country John Taylor who had been minister of the Burgher Church of Auchtermuchty went to become Professor of theology to the United Secession Church of Canada, while George Smeaton minister of Falkland at the Disruption became Professor of Divinity at the Free Church College at Aberdeen and later Professor of Exegetical Theology at the Free Church College at Edinburgh, but of all the churches in the area the record of the Cupar Baptist Church whose first four ministers all subsequently became presidents of the Baptist Union must make the ministries available to that congregation quite remarkable. (98) There is no reason to believe that the honours so bestowed were not merited. John Fleming the Parish Minister of Flish in the 1830's was widely recognised as an eminent Scottish Naturalist before he was appointed to the chair of Natural Philosophy at Aberdeen while a book published by John Craig minister of the Provost Wynd Relief Church at Cupar and entitled 'The Apostleship and Apostolical Succession' which gained him the degree of Doctor of Divinity from St. Andrews University, inspired a critic:-

"with a high respect for the author as a scripture expositor, an accomplished theologian, and a forcible writer." (99)

The records of the ministry in North Fife in the years under review are remarkable in that a predominantly rural area should have attracted so many men who subsequently revealed outstanding talent. The training for the ministry was predominantly academic and the record of academic achievement is not inconsiderable but the success of any ministry can only be measured in the spiritual health of the congregations and it is perhaps

significant that throughout the period under review the number of churches steadily increased reflecting the continual growth in the population.

IV(a) Ministers

- (1) Scott - Fasti vol.5 pp.145,144, 172, 166, vol.4 p.356, vol.3 p.446
- (2) Small - U.P.Church vol.1 p.162
- (3) Ibid. vol.1 pp.164, 168
- (4) Ibid. vol.1 p.197
- (5) Scott - Fasti vol.5 p.167
- (6) Wylie - Disruption Worthies vol.2 p.118
- (7) Hanna - Memoir vol.1 p.9
- (8) Small - U.P.Church vol.1 p.178f
- (9) Scott - Fasti vol.5 p.135
Taylor - Memoir p.11
- (10) Drummond - Scottish Church p.191
- (11) McKerrow - Secession p.418
Compendium vol.2 p.286
- (12) Fife Herald 12/10/1865
S. Mechie - Education for the Ministry in Scotland since the Reformation
Records of the Scottish Church History Society vol.15 p.2
- (13) McKerrow - Secession p.418
Compendium vol.2 pp.285f, 220.
Drummond - Scottish Church p.191
- (14) McKerrow - Secession p.418
Mechie - Education (SCHS vol.15 p.3)
- (15) Small - U.P.Church vol.1 p.167, 197
- (16) Taylor - Memoir p.10f
- (17) Scott - Fasti vol.5 p.172
- (18) Ibid. vol.5 p.166
- (19) Small - U.P. Church vol.1.p.185
- (20) Scott - Fasti vol.5 pp. 145, 147
- (21) Hanna - Memoir vol.1 pp. 24, 33
- (22) Anonymous - Recollections of my early Scottish Home pp.1f, 19
- (23) Rem. Cupar pp.88, 96f
- (24) Small - U.P.Church vol.1 p.186
- (25) Auchtermuchty Assoc Sess, Extract of Presbytery minutes 3/4/1827

- (25) Small - U.P.Church vol.1 p.163f
- (26) Ibid. vol.1 p.167f
- (27) Fife Herald 18/7/1833
- (28) Taylor - Memoir p.28
Scott - Fasti vol.5 p.135
- (29) Campbell - Balmerino p.480
Scott - Fasti vol.5 p.167
- (30) Ibid. vol.5 p.162
- (31) Rem. Cupar p.69
- (32) HRP - Petition to O.T. Bruce dated 8/3/1832
Fife Herald 18/7/1833
- (33) Campbell - Balmerino p.476f.
- (34) Rem. Cupar p.63
- (35) Taylor - Country Manse p.29 footnote
- (36) Dunbog OPR vol.3 accounts 10/7/1863
Proceedings of the High Court of Justiciary, Perth, 1865. The Crown v
Bell
- (37) Rem. Cupar p.67f
Dunbog OPR vol.3 accounts 21/12/1862, 8/1/1863, 10/7/1863
Kilmany OPR vol.1 accounts 6/3/1803, 9/3/1803, 12/5/1803
- (38) Campbell - Balmerino p.476f
- (39) Rem. Cupar p.67f
- (40) Monimail PCKS 1820 22/10/1828, 18/8/1843, 10/8/1862.
- (41) Rem. Cupar p.67f
- (42) Scott - Fasti Vol.5 p.172
- (43) Ibid. vol.5 p.154
- (44) Crown v Bell Precognition by the rev. J.P.Edgar. Precognition by the rev.
R. Williamson, Collessie
Dunbog OPR vol.3 accpunts 21/12/1862, 28/12/1862, 29/12/1862
- (45) Rem. Cupar p.88
Small - U.P.Church vol.1 p.157
- (46) A.J.H. Gibson - Stipend in the Church of Scotland p.41
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Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. Extract of presbytery minutes 3/7/1827,
24/7/1827

- (47) Ibid.
Auchtermuchty UP(E)KS Extract from presbytery minute 12/3/1853
- (48) Hanna - Memoir vol.1 p.33
Compendium vol.2 pp.285, 286
Mechie - Education (SCHS vol.14 p.124
Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. Extract of presbytery minute 3/7/1827,
24/7/1827.
- (49) Collessie FCKS 28/8/1855
- (50) Auchtermuchty UP(N)KS Extract of presbytery minute 5/8/1857
Auchtermuchty UP(E)KS Extract of presbytery minute 12/10/1853
Edenshead USC minutes Extract of presbytery minutes 21/10/1828
Collessie FCKS 28/8/1855
Taylor - Country Manse p.35f
Rem. Cupar p.107f
- (51) Compendium vol.2 p.186
- (52) Hanna Memoir vol.1 p.70
- (53) Dunbog HR 25/5/1816
- (54) Collessie HR 1775 29/4/1823, 18/3/1796
- (55) Cupar HR Papers 1830 Petition to the presbytery of Cupar dated 16/10/1827
by rev. L. Adamson
Cupar HR 1823 5/11/1827 committee meeting.
Leighton - Fife p.14
- (56) Ibid. pp.14, 51, 61, 79, 85, 94
NSA pp.781, 577, 652, 574, 774, 216
- (57) Small - U.P. Church vol.1 p.183
- (58) Ibid. p.196
- (59) Fife Herald 5/1/1826 (advertisement)
- (60) Rem. Cupar p.87
- (61) Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. Extract of presbytery minute 18/6/1816
- (62) Gibson - Stipend p.41
- (63) Fife Herald 29/3/1827
- (64) Small - U.P. Church vol.1 p.159f
- (65) Ibid vol.1 p.178f
- (66) Orr - Pulpit p.49
- (67) Auchtermuchty UP(N)KS Extract of presbytery minutes 7/4/1857
- (68) Auchtermuchty UP(E)KS Extract of presbytery minute 6/3/1860

- (69) Small - U.P.Church vol.1 p.199
Gibson - Stipend p.41
- (70) Small - U.P. Church vol.1 p.103
- (71) Brown - Annals p.405
- (72) T. Burns - Church Property p.69
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- (73) Gibson - Stipend p.29
- (74) G.S. Pryde - A New History of Scotland vol.2 p.179
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- (75) Small - U.P. Church vol.1 p.185
- (76) OSA vol.2 p.418
- (77) Ibid. vol.4 p.234
- (78) Hanna - Memoir vol.1 p.140
- (79) Fife Herald 20/2/1823, 6/3/1823 Letters to the editor.
- (80) Ibid. 22/2/1838
- (81) Monimail HR Papers Letter from James Keyden to the Earl of Leven dated
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- (82) OSA vol.4 p.234
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- (83) Ibid. pp.14, 217
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1 chalder = 16 bolls
- (85) Fife Herald 8/5/1823
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- (86) Taylor - Country Manse p.viii
- (87) Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. 30/11/1813 Letter from John Fraser
- (88) Hanna - Memoir vol.1 pp.93, 404
- (89) Recollections p.15f
- (90) Hanna - Memoirs vol.1 p.145f
- (91) Ibid vol.1 pp.155, 185f
- (92) Wylie - Disruption Worthies vol.2 p.119f

- (93) HMB - Testimonial to rev. R.J. Johnston
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- (94) Hanna - Memoir vol.1 pp.232f, 71
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- (95) Hanna - Memoir vol.1 pp.72, 86f.
Recollections p.15f
- (96) Scott - Fasti vol.1 p.371, vol.5 p.141
- (97) Ibid. vol.5 p.145
- (98) Ibid. vol.5 pp.140, 162, 167, 154.
Small - U.P. Church vol.1 p.164
Yuille - Baptists p.145
- (99) Leighton - Wife p.144
Small - U.P. Church vol.1 p.190

IV (b) Elders

Eldership is a characteristic of the presbyterian church and in the North of Fife it appears to have reflected the society in which the church lived. Elders of the Established Church represented all the walks of life to be found in the area. The Kirk Session of the Parish Church of Monimail in 1827 and 1828 included not only David Leslie Melville, Earl of Leven and Melville but also The Honourable Alexander Leslie Melville, while the same Kirk Session also numbered William Baillie, surgeon at Lotham. ⁽¹⁾ At Auchtermuchty four elders-elect were ordained in 1833. One was a wheel-wright, another a solicitor while the third was described as an 'agent'. The fourth was one of the bailies of the burgh. ⁽²⁾ At Cupar the Kirk Session included amongst its number two army officers but Kirk Sessions did not consist entirely of members of the professional classes. ⁽³⁾ In 1834 the Kirk Session of Auchtermuchty Parish Church added two elders to their number whose occupations were given as 'cooper' and 'gardener'. ⁽⁴⁾

In the more rural parishes tenant farmers took a prominent part in the life of Kirk Sessions of parish churches. In 1835 when the Parish minister at Dunbog, where there had been no Kirk Session for some time previously, named two elders-elect both of the nominees were tenant farmers in the parish, while at Kilmany three of the five members of the congregation invited to accept nomination in 1844 were tenant farmers, the others being Robert Russell of Hillcairnle, one of the local heritors, and a local smith. ⁽⁵⁾ It was not merely a desire to restrict the eldership to the upper and middle classes which led to the ordination of tenant farmers in these parishes. In rural areas congregational opinion appears to have been that it was desirable that such prominent local figures should grace the office of elder. In 1844 when the congregation of Dunbog Parish Church were asked to nominate elders their choice fell on George Moodie, tenant at Dunbog Farm and Henry Walker,

tenant at Collairnie.⁽⁶⁾ The economic position of tenant farmers gave them a high social status. Henry Walker of Collairnie farmed four hundred acres of land employing sixteen farm-workers and four domestic servants and the local residents may very well have looked to him and to men like him for a lead in local affairs.⁽⁶⁾

It would appear that there may have been some attempt in some areas to ensure that the Kirk Session represented a cross-section of the community. In 1851 the Kirk Session of Auchtermuchty Parish Church ordained two weavers to the eldership, while a few years later a local farmer and doctor were invited to join the session.⁽⁷⁾ In 1860 the same Kirk Session ordained the assistant school-master, a joiner and a weaver, while in 1862 one of the burgh's feuars was ordained to office.⁽⁸⁾ Nevertheless the success of this aim may have been very limited since at Strathmiglo the Kirk Session for many years from 1863 consisted of three individuals of whom one was a farmer and a second was a manufacturer.⁽⁹⁾

The Kirk Sessions of the congregations which stood outside the Established Church appear to have drawn their members from a similarly wide range of social status. At Auchtermuchty a list of three elders-elect was drawn up by the Kirk Session of the Free Church in December of 1843. Of the three men named two were weavers and the third a warper, although only the two weavers accepted their election and proceeded to ordination.⁽¹⁰⁾ On the other hand the Kirk Session of the Free Church at Collessie in 1848 included David Maitland Makgill Crichton of Rankelour and Captain James Maitland of Rossie, and in the early 1850's the name of Captain Lewis Maitland also appeared in the sederunt of the Kirk Session.⁽¹¹⁾ It was not only the Maitland family which was active in the eldership of the Free Church, James Heriot of Ramornie was another member of the landed interest who was to be numbered amongst the ordained elders of the Free Church.⁽¹²⁾ Even at

Collessie where local lairds played such a prominent part there was at least one tradesman numbered among the ruling elders for amongst them can be found the name of Robert Miller, wright in Collessie. (15)

The eldership of the other dissenting churches appear to have included a similar range of social stations. Amongst the occupations listed for the elders of the Burgher Church of Auchtermuchty at the end of the eighteenth century are those of clockmaker, merchant, weaver and tenant farmer while the Kirk Session of the Reformed Presbyterian Church at Strathmiglo in the 1860's numbered three weavers, a flosker and a merchant in its fellowship. (14)

It is apparent that, upon occasion, there could be reluctance amongst the men nominated for office to accept it. In 1843 when the Free Church at Auchtermuchty sought to ordain three elders, one of those elected declined the honour while in 1830 when the Kirk Session of Edenshead United Secession Church, in the Parish of Strathmiglo, invited the congregation to nominate elders-elect from amongst their number only four out of the six men nominated were prepared to attend a conference with the Kirk Session prior to the arrangements being made for their ordination. (15)

At Monimail the experience of the Free Church congregation was similar in 1858 when two elders-elect refused to come forward for ordination despite the repeated urging of the minister. (16)

Parish ministers too, experienced this difficulty. In 1832 the Reverend James Keyden of Dunbog reported to the heritors that he had been quite unable to obtain elders for the parish and in 1835 the Old Parish Register noted that the parish had long been without a Kirk Session. (17)

At Monimail the Parish Church had a long record of difficulty in finding elders. In 1833 the Presbytery of Cupar appointed the Reverend John McFarlane of Collessie as assessor elder. (18)

In 1836 the Kirk Session invited David Maitland Makgill Grichton, then an elder at Collessie Parish Church to join their meeting and assist at

as many meetings as his convenience would allow while in 1852 the sederunt at one Kirk Session meeting consisted of the minister of the parish and John Learmonth, elder of St. George's Parish, Edinburgh. (19)

In 1826 the Presbytery of Cupar ordered a list of elders to be submitted by every parish within the bounds. The result indicated that the experience of Monimail was not uncommon and that half the parishes in the area did not have sufficient elders to make a quorum while five or six parishes had no elders at all. (20) When a petition on this matter was raised some ten years later by the congregation of Ceres Parish Church part of the complaint was that there had been no Kirk Session for twenty years. (21)

With so many parishes lacking any Kirk Session meetings must obviously have been infrequent in many parishes, and even where there were Kirk Sessions meetings seem to have been held only as the need was thought to arise. The number of meetings of the Kirk Session at Auchtermuchty Parish fell from twelve in 1793 to seven in 1799 while from then until 1820 when there was one meeting recorded there is no record of any meeting at all. A further gap of twelve years occurs until meetings are recorded in 1832. In 1833 a new ministry started and in that year ten meetings of the Kirk Session took place. The number of meetings rose from then until it reached a peak in of sixteen in 1836 and thereafter fell to seven in 1839. (22) At the end of 1839 the Kirk Session decided its meetings should be held on the first Monday of each month, a practice which appears to have been followed since in 1840 and 1841 when twelve meetings were held each year, but in 1842 the number of Kirk Session meetings fell to five. (23) In the ministry of the Reverend John Forriex who followed this period the Kirk Session met fifty-three times in eight years with the annual number of meetings fluctuating between three and eleven, while his successor in the first eight years of his ministry presided over fiftyeight meetings. (24)

In rural parishes meetings were much less frequent. Between 1795 and 1826 the Kirk Session of Dunbog Parish met only nine times. (25) A great deal may have depended on the minister's wishes in the question of the frequency of Kirk Sessions meetings. During the ministry of the Reverend John McFarlane at Collessie Parish Church the Kirk Session met one hundred and fifteen times in ten years while during his successor's first ten years the Kirk Session was called together on only thirty-five occasions. (26)

The Kirk Sessions of dissenting churches appear to have met frequently by comparison with their colleagues in the Established Church. The Burcher Kirk Session of Auchtermuchty held one hundred and ten meetings in the ten years following 1793. (27) The Kirk Sessions of the Free Church met frequently although perhaps not so frequently as the Seceders. In 1848 and 1850 Collessie Free Church Kirk Session was constituted on seven occasions, in 1854 on six occasions and in 1855 on five occasions. (28) Again a great deal depended on the attitude of the minister. In 1864 the minister of the Free Church at Monimail reported that there had been no need for a Kirk Session meeting in 1863 except for the purpose of giving out tokens prior to the communion services, although the fact that the Kirk Session consisted of assessors appointed by presbytery may have influenced that decision. (29)

The numbers attending the meetings of the Kirk Sessions of congregations outside the Established Church seem also to have been higher than for their parish equivalents. It was a rare occasion when the attendance at the Auchtermuchty Associate Church fell until there was only a quorum in the years between 1803 and 1821 when the attendance is recorded, and only once was a meeting cancelled because only one elder appeared for it. (30) A fairly full attendance was also a tradition at Collessie Free Church although by 1864 it was becoming common place for only three of the court, including the minister to be present. (31) The attendance of only two elders at the Kirk Session of the Established Churches was by comparison fairly common. Throughout 1855, 1856, 1857 and 1858 the Kirk Session at Auchtermuchty had only two members other than the moderator, and at Strathmiglo although there were three elders

of the Parish Church between 1863 and 1865 it was unusual to find all three present at the same time. (32) At Collessie on the other hand meetings of the Session after 1860 were rarely attended by fewer than three elders although during the previous fifteen years it was a rare occasion when there were more than two in attendance. (33)

The office of the elder has been described as being that of watching over the flock, and Kirk Sessions appear to have carried out that responsibility principally in the punishment of the morally or spiritually culpable. (34)

At Monimail the Kirk Session of the Parish Church had thirty-four meetings between 1838 and 1842 and of these twenty-three involved the Kirk Session sitting as a disciplinary court while in the years following the Disruption the Kirk Session of that parish met twenty three times between 1844 and 1848 and at twelve of these meetings the Kirk Session considered offences by members of the congregation. (35)

At Strathmiglo four of the five meetings of the Kirk Session which took place in 1864 were concerned with scandal within the congregation and in 1865 all of the meetings involved such matters. (36) In 1850 the Kirk Session of the Free Church at Strathmiglo had eleven meetings and five of these were to consider the disciplinary action required in connection with offending members of the congregation, while in the year 1864 only two meetings in a total of seven were concerned with such matters. (37)

The admonition of offenders was not the only concern of the Kirk Session. All the preliminaries to communion were a concern of the session. (38) The Kirk Session was responsible for deciding the frequency of communion and in practice they also appointed the date for the celebration of the sacrament. (39) They decided in addition who should be admitted to the Lord's Table through the issue of tokens, by admitting first communicants and through their approval of those whose names were submitted to the Kirk Session as intending communicants. (40)

Until the Poor Law of 1845 it fell to the Kirk Sessions to supervise and

distribute the provision made for the poor and in some rural parishes, such as Balmorino, the Kirk Session remained the local authority for poor relief until 1894. (41) In consequence the elder became associated in the minds of the people with the collection plate and in some cases the accounts of churches contain the elders certification of the amount. (42) Other duties also fell to elders. In 1841 the Kirk Session of Kilmany Parish Church received forty pounds with the instruction that it should be paid in annual instalments of eight pounds as long as it should last to Mary Hutchison, the daughter of the owner who had died. In the event of Mary's death the balance was to be paid to her surviving brother and sister and their respective families. (43)

To assist in the supervision of the congregation the Secession churches appear to have divided the areas in which their congregations lived into districts and to have attempted to ensure that elders were drawn from each district. In 1798 the Kirk Session of Burgher Church at Auchtermuchty agreed to seek the election of seven new elders. They wished four to be drawn from Auchtermuchty, two from Strathmiglo, and one from Collessie and for this purpose the congregation in these areas were asked to meet to nominate individuals for ordination. (44) Some years later the districts are given as Auchtermuchty, Strathmiglo, Dunshelt and the North Quarter. (45) In 1828 the congregation of the Edenshead United Secession Church, in the Parish of Strathmiglo, was divided into four quarters, all apparently within the parish and the immediate environs of Gateside where the church stood. The purpose of this division was not pastoral supervision but the raising of money for the expense of the ordination of the Reverend Robert Redpath. (46) In 1836 the Kirk Session of the Parish Church at Collessie assigned districts to each elder, according to their place of residence and specified the duties of the elders in regard to them as being:-

- (1) regular visitation so far as for edification,
- (2) ascertaining whether or not new residents to the area were in communion with the church,

(2) regular visitation and prayer with the sick.

(47)

By the end of the 1850s there appear to have been five districts recognised within the parish.⁽⁴⁸⁾ At Auchtermuchty the parish was divided into ten districts by its kirk session in 1837, while at Monimail a similar division appears to have been recognised by the kirk session of that parish in 1846 between the village and the country areas.⁽⁴⁹⁾ After the Disruption of 1843 the Free Church appears to have continued this organisation of their congregations, with an elder empowered to visit the people and exercise such supervision as was thought necessary. In 1844 such arrangements were made by the Free Church Kirk Sessions at Collessie and Auchtermuchty and in the latter the congregation was divided into four quarters each with an elder and deacons appointed to it.⁽⁵⁰⁾

The election of elders historically lay with the existing kirk sessions but throughout the period the practice of inviting the congregation to submit the names of suitable individuals was common and in the Secession congregations was apparently the normal method.⁽⁵¹⁾ In the Burgher congregation of Auchtermuchty those members of the congregation who lived in an area where an elder was required met when asked to do so by the session, and nominated an elder-elect.⁽⁵²⁾ Thereafter the congregation were required to indicate their assent to those so nominated and in the event of only a small minority of the favouring the choice the moderator appeared to reserve the right to declare a nominee not to have been elected.⁽⁵³⁾ In 1854 the East Congregation of the United Presbyterian Church at Auchtermuchty, which had formerly been the Burgher congregation was still following this method of choosing its elders.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Subsequently the elders-elect were examined by the kirk session who on being satisfied as to their views fixed the date of ordination.⁽⁵⁵⁾ It would seem clear that the kirk session reserved to themselves the right to sustain all nominations. At Edenshead in 1830 the Kirk Session of the United Secession Church refer to their having sustained a call from the congregation to two of the members to be elders.⁽⁵⁶⁾ Parish churches upon occasion followed this practice although it was not universally adopted. In 1835 the Kirk Session of Collessie Parish Church decided by a majority that a meeting of heads of

of families being communicants should be held for the purpose of directing their attention to the qualifications and duties of the eldership.⁽⁵⁷⁾ A month later the kirk session examined the lists handed in by the heads of families, approved their recommendations, and nominated the persons named for the office of elder.⁽⁵⁸⁾ Not every individual nominated by popular election was approved by the kirk session. The Parish Minister of Dunbog reported that having visited a person nominated in this way he had found that the worship of God was not regularly maintained in his family and the kirk session decided to proceed no further with the arrangements for his ordination.⁽⁵⁹⁾ In the Free Church congregations the choice of members of the congregation to be nominated as elders-elect was also generally given to the popular election of their fellow members. A favoured method was the submission of written lists with the signature of those submitting them.⁽⁶⁰⁾ Perhaps because the same minister was moderator of the kirk session the Free Church at Collessie followed the pre-Disruption practice in that parish of giving the members of the congregation instruction with the request for the submission of a list of nominees.⁽⁶¹⁾ Nevertheless, not all elders were chosen by popular consent and in the later years of his life David Maitland Makgill Crichton of Bankeilour spoke with regret of the fact that his election to the eldership of Collessie Parish Church was by the minister and elders rather than the congregation and he also expressed his regret that he had been chosen because he represented property rather than piety.⁽⁶²⁾

The Burghers of Auchtermuchty, at the end of the eighteenth century observed the day on which elders were ordained as a day of humiliation and fasting and in 1813 it is noticeable that the ordination of elders was appointed to take place on the first fast observed by the congregation.⁽⁶³⁾ In 1826 the ordination of the first elders of the United Secession Church of Edenshead, in the Parish of Strathmiglo, was effected on the fast day prior to communion.⁽⁶⁴⁾ At Auchtermuchty the elders-elect appear to have undergone examination by the kirk session but after 1847 the practice of the East and North congregations of the United Presbyterian Church appears to have varied.⁽⁶⁵⁾ At the North Church the minister visited the elders-elect apparently to obtain their agree-

ment to ordination while at the East Church, which was the former Burgher congregation, the kirk session continued to meet with them to hear their views on accepting office.⁽⁶⁶⁾ In the Free Church the kirk session appears to have relied on their knowledge of the men nominated to office while the practice of the Established Church was probably very similar to that followed by the Free Church.⁽⁶⁷⁾ Nevertheless, a very great deal probably depended on the individual minister in every denomination. In 1842 the congregation of the Parish Church of Dunbeg had nominated Henry Walker for the office of elder but the then parish minister had found that the worship of God was not regularly maintained in his family and in the light of that information the kirk session decided not to proceed with his ordination.⁽⁶⁸⁾ Two years later a successor to that minister decided this criticism was incorrect and the kirk session decided to meet with Walker with a view to proceeding to ordination.⁽⁶⁹⁾

Elders-elect having agreed to their ordination an edict to this effect was served on the congregation and if no objections were offered to their life or doctrine they were, at the close of worship, set apart by prayer and given the right hand of fellowship, although there does not seem to have been any custom of ordaining elders in the area by the laying on of hands.⁽⁷⁰⁾ An account of the steps taken towards the ordination also may have been given to the congregation in whose presence the ordination usually took place.⁽⁷¹⁾ The records do not always record the recital of the prior steps, nor upon occasion does the ordination appear to have taken place before the congregation and although the kirk session appears to have been constituted in most instances this was not an invariable practice either. Robert Somers appears to have been admitted to the eldership by the Kirk Session of Collessie Parish Church in the presence of the kirk session only.⁽⁷²⁾ The minister of Collessie Free Church reported to his kirk session on the fourteenth of February 1853 that he had ordained four elders eight days previously, although this may merely represent the minuting of a fact otherwise unrecorded.⁽⁷³⁾

Each denomination put questions to elders-elect as to their orthodoxy prior to ordination. Amongst congregations of the United Secession Church, the United Presbyterian Church and the Free Church the questions were based

on the formula drawn up by the superior courts.⁽⁷⁴⁾ At Monimail Parish Church where elders were ordained in 1834 the elders-elect were asked to declare their adherence to the standards and government of the Church of Scotland and to agree to faithfully execute the office to which they were about to be ordained.⁽⁷⁵⁾ Four years later, at Kilmany, the prospective elders were asked if they were willing to sign the Confession of Faith and it seems likely that this was the standard of the Church of Scotland to which the Monimail elders-elect were asked to acknowledge their adherence.⁽⁷⁶⁾

The nineteenth century witnessed considerable changes in the life of the church but throughout the period the eldership remained an honoured feature of the presbyterian church. The office was frequently a valuable link between the minister and his congregation and must have been especially so where methods of popular nomination were in use. Kirk Sessions generally seem to have been based on a wide cross-section of the population regardless of the method of election adopted. It is probable that the possibilities latent within the system were not fully utilised and the long periods which many congregations experienced without any proper kirk session inevitably meant that the abilities of pious laymen within the congregations were not fully utilised.

IV(b) Elders

- (1) Monimail PCKS 1820 22/10/1828, 8/11/1827, 10/9/1829
- (2) Auchtermuchty PCKS 1832 5/7/1833
- (3) Cupar HR Papers 1830 5/7/1833 Extract from the kirk session minutes dated
5/10/1834
- (4) Auchtermuchty PCKS 1832 28/9/1834
- (5) Dunbog OPR vol.4 3/3/1835
Leighton - Fife p.54
Kilmany PC minutes 30/10/1844
- (6) Census Returns 1851 - Dunbog.
- (7) Auchtermuchty PCKS 1832 17/4/1851, 29/12/1854. The latter appears among the
1853 minutes and may be wrongly dated.
- (8) Ibid. 17/4/1860, 30/5/1860, 16/5/1862
- (9) Strathmiglo PCKS 1863 10/1/1878, 23/6/1879
- (10) Auchtermuchty PCKS 15/12/1843, 29/12/1843
- (11) Collessie PCKS 25/4/1848, 16/10/1848, 19/5/1852, 26/4/1853
- (12) Fifeshire Journal 26/10/1843
- (13) Collessie PCKS 3/11/1846
- (14) Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. 19/12/1792
Strathmiglo RPC minutes 6/2/1860
- (15) Auchtermuchty PCKS 15/12/1843
Edenshead USC minutes 25/10/?, 2/12/1830, 9/12/1830)Although no date
is given for the first minute it would appear to refer to events in 1830)
- (16) Monimail PCKS 7/2/1858, 22/3/1858
- (17) Dunbog HP 6/1/1832
Dunbog OPR vol.4 3/3/1835
- (18) Monimail PCKS 1820 4/12/1833
- (19) Ibid. 6/5/1836, 14/11/1852
- (20) Fife Herald 11/5/1826
- (21) Ibid. 6/10/1836
- (22) Auchtermuchty PCKS 1766 1793 - 1799, 1832 1832 - 1839
- (23) Ibid. 1832 16/12/1836, 1840 - 42
- (24) Ibid. 1845 - 52, 1853 - 60
- (25) Dunbog OPR vol.4 1795 - 1826
- (26) Collessie PCKS 1833 1833 - 1850, 1851 1851 - 1853

- (27) Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. 1793 - 1802
- (28) Collessie PCKS 1848 - 55
- (29) Monimail PCKS 28/3/1864
- (30) Nair - Digest p.22
Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. 1803 - 21. (An abandoned meeting is reported at 13/8/1810)
- (31) Collessie PCKS 1848 - 65
- (32) Auchtermuchty PCKS 1832 1855 - 1858
Strathmiglo PCKS 1863 1863- 65
- (33) Collessie PCKS 1833 1848 - 1850, 1851 1851 - 1865.
- (34) Nair - Digest p.127
- (35) Monimail PCKS 1820 1820 -56
- (36) Strathmiglo PCKS 1863 1863 - 79
- (37) Strathmiglo PCKS 1843 - 64
- (38) G.D. Henderson - The Scottish Ruling Elder p.48
- (39) Nair - Digest p.90
Auchtermuchty PCKS 1766 3/7/1793, 1832 9/7/1845, 1863 31/10/1864
Auchtermuchty PCKS 24/12/1847
Auchtermuchty UP(N)KS 17/1/1847
Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. 19/12/1792
Strathmiglo PCKS 14/7/1865
- (40) Auchtermuchty PCKS 1863 20/11/1865
Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. 24/1/1798, 27/1/1798
Collessie PCKS 1833 16/6/1833
- (41) Henderson - Elder p.233
- (42) Ibid. p.75
Strathmiglo Parish Church Church Door Collection 1854 - 84
- (43) Kilmany PC minutes 29/1/1841
- (44) Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. 16/10/1753
- (45) Ibid. Undated minute between 20/12/1823 and 2/6/1824
- (46) Edonshead USC minutes 8/10/1828
- (47) Collessie PCKS 1833 8/2/1836
- (48) Ibid. 1851 7/2/1858, 23/10/1859.
- (49) Auchtermuchty PCKS 1832 23/1/1837
Monimail PCKS 1820 30/10/1846

- (50) Collessie FCKS 19/3/1844
Auchtermuchty FCKS 7/5/1844
- (51) Mail - Digest p.135
Henderson - Elder p.223
- (52) Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess 16/10/1798
- (53) Ibid. 4/12/1798
- (54) Auchtermuchty UP(E)KS 8/6/1854, 4/7/1854
- (55) Auchtermuchty Assoc Sess. 4/12/1798
- (56) Edenshead USC minutes 21/12/1850
- (57) Collessie FCKS 1833 7/11/1835
- (58) Ibid. 28/12/1835
- (59) Dunbog OPR vol.4 8/1/1842, 22/4/1842
- (60) Monimail FCKS 20/10/1844
Collessie FCKS 21/12/1852
- (61) Ibid. 21/12/1852
Collessie FCKS 1833 7/11/1835
- (62) Taylor - Memoir p.38
- (63) Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. 4/12/1798, 7/1/1813
- (64) Edenshead USC minutes p.4
- (65) Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. 4/12/1798, 10/12/1812
- (66) Auchtermuchty UP(N)KS 2/2/1859
Auchtermuchty UP(E)KS 23/7/1854
- (67) Auchtermuchty FCKS 5/12/1843
Collessie FCKS 12/11/1845
- (68) Dunbog OPR vol.4 22/4/1842
- (69) Ibid. 28/6/1844
- (70) Monimail FCKS 1820 4/5/1834
Collessie FCKS 1833 17/1/1836
Auchtermuchty Assoc Sess. 20/12/1798
Auchtermuchty UP(E)KS 24/9/1854
Auchtermuchty FCKS 14/12/1853
- (71) Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. 20/12/1798
Collessie FCKS 25/11/1860

- (72) Collessie FCKS 1851 23/9/1860
- (73) Collessie FCKS 14/2/1853
- (74) Edenshead USC minutes 21/12/1830
Auchtermachty UP(N)MS 20/2/1859
Collessie FCKS 25/11/1860
- (75) Monimail FCKS 1820 4/5/1834
- (76) Kilmany PC minutes 30/12/1838
Henderson - Elder p.221f

IV (c) Other office-bearers

Shortly after its formation in 1824 the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Strathmiglo took legal advice on the best way of taking rights to a dissenting meeting house and was informed that it was to:-

"take it to the managers and their successors in office to be annually elected" (1)

The congregation proceeded to the election of a committee of managers from amongst whom their treasurer was appointed. (2) Elections were thereafter an annual event and at these elections the managers submitted an account of their transactions and a note of the state of their affairs and funds. (3) In this they were following the practice of other dissenting congregations in the area, all of whom gave the regulation of their financial affairs into the hands of managers. In 1820 a report from the managers and congregation came before the Kirk Session of Auchtermuchty Burgher Church to the effect that nearly a quarter of the congregation were in the habit of neglecting to support the gospel and it was left to the Kirk Session to take disciplinary action which was obviously felt to be outwith the authority of the managers of the congregation. (4)

Although they were without the authority which was vested in the Kirk Session the managers of these congregations appear like the Kirk Sessions to be a representative cross-section of the community. The first managers of the Reformed Presbyterian Church at Strathmiglo were drawn from the villages of Strathmiglo and Gateside which both lay in the parish of Strathmiglo and consisted of a local land-owner, two weavers, a merchant and a labourer. (5) Sixteen years later land and trade were still represented for at the election of 1840 two weavers, three farmers, and a wright were elected to the office by the congregation. (6)

After the Disruption the financial affairs of the Free Church were given into the hands of those appointed to an office which had become

virtually extinct in the other presbyterian churches of Scotland, the office of deacon.⁽⁷⁾ The Secession Churches had recognized this as a separate office but in practice had been inclined to replace it with annually elected and unordained managers.⁽⁸⁾ Almost immediately after the Disruption the Kirk Session of Monimail Free Church considered it would be desirable to appoint deacons to assist in the management of the church's affairs and resolved to call upon members of the congregation to give in signed lists of names of individuals thought suitable for that office.⁽⁹⁾ When these deacons were admitted to office it was done by the Kirk Session who also offered them the right hand of fellowship after they had solemnly engaged to perform the duties required.⁽¹⁰⁾ In 1850 the same congregation were said to be setting the deacons apart for the performance of that office.⁽¹¹⁾

As in the choice of elders the deacons were selected by the members of the Free Church congregations in the area but it was apparently the Kirk Session who decided when new deacons were to be elected and ordained.⁽¹²⁾ At Auchtermuchty the service of ordination for deacons was in the same pattern as that for the ordination of elders. After the sermon the appointed questions were put and on being satisfactorily answered the deacons-elect were set apart by prayer after which they and the congregation were suitably exhorted. The deacons were then given the right hand of fellowship by the Kirk Session and the Deacons Court.⁽¹³⁾ The men so chosen at Auchtermuchty in the years 1843 and 1844 were principally weavers and tradesmen.⁽¹⁴⁾

Although the financial affairs of the congregations were given into their hands of the deacons the elders were also members of the deacons' court and at Collessie attended the meetings of the court regularly.⁽¹⁵⁾ The frequency with which the courts met varied between congregations. At Collessie the deacons' court met regularly throughout the year but at the Free Church of Monimail the convening

of the deacon's court was an annual event at which the deacons met to approve the various accounts. (16) The frequency of meetings may to some extent have depended on the inclination of the minister but the minister apparently did not need to be in the chair and at Auchtermuchty one of the elders took the chair in the absence of the moderator at a meeting in 1862 called to appoint auditors for the congregation. (17)

In the Established Church where the stipend was paid out of the tithes and the maintenance of the property of the church was the responsibility of the heritors the only aspect of the church financial affairs which remained to be administered locally was the administration of the poor funds and this was specifically the responsibility of the Kirk Session. (18) In consequence separate financial courts were not an essential part of the Established Church's organisation and finance and church door collections were supervised by the Kirk Session, and at Strathmiglo the elders appear to have accepted responsibility for certifying the amount of the church door collections. (19) Nevertheless in 1862 the Kirk Session of the Parish Church at Auchtermuchty agreed to appoint deacons but in this instance the decision was made because of the difficulty of appointing elders. (20) It had earlier been intended to add to the number of elders but when it was found difficult to obtain the agreement of those chosen the moderator suggested that deacons should be sought instead. (21) It would appear that the deacons were considered to be assistant elders because their names were added to the roll of members of the Kirk Session, and the complete list of members of the Kirk Session as given in the minute book consisted of six elders and seven deacons. (22)

Outside of the Established Church the affairs of a congregation were divided between the spiritual oversight and the financial ordering of its life. In the Secession and Relief Churches and later in the United Presbyterian Church the practice in the north of Fife was to have a body

of elected managers, replacable annually and responsible exclusively for the financial affairs of the congregation.⁽²³⁾ This responsibility apparently stemmed from the fact that such legal rights to the property were vested in the managers. In the meantime the Kirk Session was left free to exercise its supervision in matters pastoral, although the United Presbyterian Church left the Kirk Session with responsibility for providing the poor of the congregation with any necessary aid.⁽²⁴⁾

The Free Church placing its financial affairs under the care of a deacons' court set its members apart for life and although it would appear that in some congregations the appointment was for a short time such short term appointments in north Fife must have been infrequent. In that area ordination was for life in exactly the same way as that of the eldership. Nevertheless in the Free Church it would appear that while deacons were not part of the Kirk Session elders were part of the deacons' court it being apparently assumed that the greater office embraced the duties of the lesser, although deacons attended some meetings of the Kirk Session at Collessie on a limited number of occasions.⁽²⁵⁾ In the quoad omnia parishes of the Church of Scotland before the passing of the Poor Law of 1845 the church collections were intended for the benefit of the poor and as such were the concern of the Kirk Session who were under a statutory obligation to discharge the responsibility and there no subordinate committee was required so that organisation of the church remained entirely in the hands of Kirk Session.⁽²⁶⁾

IV(a) Other Disbursements

- (1) Strathmillo RPO minutes 22/11/1824
- (2) Ibid. 26/3/1836
- (3) Ibid. 23/11/1826, 31/12/1827
- (4) Auchtormuachty Assoc. Sess 5/1/1820
- (5) Strathmillo RPO minutes 22/11/1824
- (6) Ibid. 5/1/1840
- (7) Henderson - Elder p.72
- (8) Ibid. p.73
- (9) Nominal FOKS July 1843
- (10) Ibid. 6/9/1843
- (11) Ibid. 6/1/1850
- (12) Collesio FOKS 21/5/1845, 3/5/1864
- (13) Auchtormuachty FOKS 28/4/1844
- (14) Ibid. 15/12/1843, 12/4/1844
- (15) Collesio FODC 12/2/1849, 18/6/1849
Auchtormuachty FODC Statement of accounts for the period beginning
July 1843.
- (16) Collesio FODC 1843 - 1865
Nominal FODC 1843 - 1865
- (17) Auchtormuachty FODC 10/3/1862
- (18) Henderson - Elder p.75
- (19) Strathmillo FC Collections
- (20) Auchtormuachty FOKS 1832 6/5/1852
- (21) Ibid. 2/4/1862, 6/5/1862
- (22) Ibid. 1/6/1862, 9/7/1862
- (23) Henderson - Elder p.72f.
- (24) Ibid. p.73
- (25) Collesio FOKS 17/6/1850, 20/6/1850, 14/6/1852
- (26) Henderson - Elder p.74.

IV d) Presbyterian Supervision of the Lesser Courts

In the presbyterian system of church government presbytery is the permanent guardian and superintendant of the ecclesiastical establishments within its bounds and it is a recognised function of the presbytery to supervise the work of ministers and Kirk Sessions. (1) Nevertheless, the zeal with which that supervision was exercised in the period under review varied widely. In 1826 it was estimated that half of the parishes of the Established Church under the supervision of the Presbytery of Cupar were without Kirk Sessions and that some of the parishes were without any elders. (2) In 1836 a petition from the congregation of Geres Parish Church complained that the parish had been without a Kirk Session for twenty years and although it seems improbable that the presbytery could have been totally unaware of the fact assessor elders were not appointed, nor were steps taken by the presbytery to ensure the election and ordination of elders to form a Kirk Session until the petition was received by the superior court. (3) Not all parishes were so neglected since in 1827 when all but one of the elders making up the Kirk Session of Monimail Parish had died the presbytery appear to have appointed assessor elders without any undue delay, while at Auchtermuchty a long period of infrequent Kirk Session meetings and even uncertainty as to whether there was a Kirk Session at all was ended in 1832 by the appointment of assessors. (4)

Of all the presbyterian churches in the area the Free Church presbytery appears to have exercised the closest supervision over its congregations. It carried out an annual inspection of the congregational records. Kirk Session and deacons' court minutes, and accounts, together with the communion roll of the congregation which had previously been read, revised and duly certified as such by the Kirk Session were despatched to the presbytery who returned them suitably attested. (5) Nor was this examination a purely formal one. In 1847 the presbytery

found some difficulty in reconciling some of the minutes of the deacons' court at Collessie and the clerk to that court was ordered to attend a meeting of presbytery.⁽⁶⁾ At a subsequent meeting the deacons' court condemned presbytery's action in this affair and when their minutes were examined the following year the critical minute was referred to the Synod of Fife who noted that the minute was couched in unbecoming language and stated that it was never competent for inferior courts to express opinions in their minutes on the actions of superior courts.⁽⁷⁾ In 1848 the Auchtermuchty Deacons' Court also was subject to presbyterial reproof. They had disapproved of their minister's action in preaching on a sabbath evening and making a collection for the school library.⁽⁸⁾

In practice the supervision exercised by the presbyteries of the other denominations seems never to have been so detailed, nor so inquisitorial. In 1854 the Established Church presbytery of Cupar examined the records of the Parish Church of Auchtermuchty when it noted with regret that many of the minutes of the Kirk Session over the previous twenty-two years had not been signed by the moderator.⁽⁹⁾ In 1856 when the recording of parochial births, deaths and marriages had ceased to be part of the responsibility of the Kirk Session of the parish the Established Church presbytery instructed the congregations within its bounds to procure and keep a register of baptisms, a register of proclamations and a register of communicants.⁽¹⁰⁾ At Collessie the Session Clerk reported to his Session that he had purchased a book to register baptisms, proclamations and burials all of which he regularly entered and that he also kept the names of communicants in a separate volume.⁽¹¹⁾ Even in the collection of money to pay the salaries of presbytery clerks and other officers these courts do not seem to have been over punctilious. Such fees were a feature of the accounts of all presbyterian denominations.⁽¹²⁾ The accounts of the

parish churches show that they frequently made these payments some years in arrears. Dunbog Parish Church appears to have made payments to the presbytery clerk in 1795 although they were due in 1792.⁽¹³⁾ In 1809 Strathmiglo Parish Church made two years payments.⁽¹⁴⁾

While the roll of the presbytery was central in the churches when calls were being moderated the presbyteries of the dissenting churches had powers which were not normally available to the equivalent courts of the Established Church. The presbyteries of the Relief and Secession Churches had to be satisfied, whenever a new congregation was proposed that a proper stipend would be made available.⁽¹⁵⁾ The presbytery of the United Secession Church exercised this authority in moderating every call. In 1825 they refused to moderate a call from the Second United Secession Church of Auchtermuchty because the stipend offered was not equivalent to the talents of the man whom they intended to call, while two years later the same court refused to act on a call from the First United Secession Church of Auchtermuchty.⁽¹⁶⁾ These actions were unpopular. The delay in the moderation to the First Secession Church at Auchtermuchty aroused the ire of one correspondent to the local press who described it as an

'act of tyranny reminiscent of the Roman Catholic Church.'⁽¹⁷⁾

Although the power was never used, the presbyteries of the Free Church and the various seceders had the authority to bring about unions and readjustments in the congregations under their supervision. The fact that the presbyteries in question did not exercise it does not mean that the question was not considered. In 1855 Monimail Free Church congregation were called to a congregational meeting because their presbytery, in the course of considering an application by Collessie for the moderation of a call to end a vacancy there, had taken in their consideration the advisability of forming Monimail and Collessie into one ministerial charge.⁽¹⁸⁾ At Newburgh the United Presbyterian

Presbytery attempted to bring about a union between the former Burgher and Relief congregations of the town in 1864, but popular opinion was so firmly against this course of action that the matter was dropped. (19)

In many respects the presbyteries of the Established Church were restricted in their supervision of congregations by their connection with the state. The administration of parishes in many matters was in the hands of the civil courts and presbyteries could not act unless the courts had already agreed. (20) When a readjustment of the boundaries of the parishes of Abdie, Flisk and Dunbog was decided upon the Presbytery of Cupar did not act until the decret of the Court of Tiends was produced to it. (21) Again in 1837 when the succession to the first charge of Cupar was in dispute the Presbytery of Cupar resolved unanimously to withhold the use of the pulpit from those candidates whose names appeared on a leet prepared by the patron. The Secretary of State on behalf of the crown, who was the patron, replied that the right of the presbytery to interfere with the crown's patronage was not admitted and at the same time a presentation to the charge was issued in favour of Adam Cairns whose name appeared on the leet. (21) The presentation was eventually upheld by the General Assembly.

The presbyteries of the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Churches felt that to be adequate their supervision required to include periodical exhortation to work for the revival of religion. In 1848 a deputation appointed by the Presbytery of the United Presbyterian Church visited Auchtermuchty North United Presbyterian Church where a meeting was arranged at which addresses on this subject were to be delivered. (22) In 1849 the Presbytery of the Free Church urged every Kirk Session within their bounds to treat every case of open sin in the same way as fornication had been hitherto. (23) While it was the practice to refer all cases of atrocious scandal, difficulty or general concern to the presbytery this further instruction of the presbytery

looks like a further attempt to ensure that the influence of presbytery would be felt in congregations.⁽²⁴⁾ The reasoning behind this requirement became clearer when in 1850 the same presbytery enjoined Kirk Sessions to inquire into cases of spiritual destitution in their own area, to consider means of remedying it and to furnish presbytery with reports on the matter before the first of January, 1851.⁽²⁵⁾

The difficulties which the churches other than the Established Church experienced in raising funds and in particular in raising funds towards the cost of stipend to be paid through their central organisations led presbyteries frequently to approach congregations with pleas for greater generosity in this direction. In 1847 the moderator of the Kirk Session of Collessie Free Church intimated a meeting of presbytery for conferring on the affairs of the sustentation fund to be followed by a public meeting in Cupar the same evening to publicise this cause.⁽²⁶⁾ In 1845 a lay committee of the presbytery had met with the deacons' court of Auchtermuchty Free Church and following the meeting the court decided an effort should be made to increase the number of contributors to the fund.⁽²⁷⁾ Such efforts at persuasion were followed by the superior courts of the United Presbyterian Church. In 1858 the Kirk Session of the North United Presbyterian Church of Auchtermuchty agreed to receive a deputation from a committee of Synod for the 'Better Support of the Gospel Ministry'.⁽²⁸⁾

The interests of the presbyteries were legion. From time to time they drew the attention of the congregations within the bounds as to the needs of the poor even beyond the bounds of Scotland. In 1822 the Burgher Presbytery of Perth appointed a special collection for the suffering poor in Ireland but even the needs of individuals came under their attention, and in 1804 the Established Church

Presbytery of Cupar recommended a poor preacher to the charity of Dunbog Parish. (29) In 1851 the Free Church Presbytery of Cupar followed the recommendation of its Synod by appointing a special mid-week service of thanksgiving for the harvest. (30)

With the activities of the presbyteries so liable to impinge upon the life of congregations Kirk Sessions right to elect a presbytery elder became important. In some Kirk Sessions, such as the Auchtermuchty Burgher congregation it was the practice to draw up a list of elders from which an election might be held. (31) It would appear to have been more common for a wealthy member of the Kirk Session to be given the appointment. At Collessie Free Church where the elder to the presbytery was appointed twice a year between 1845 and 1850 the appointment was held by David Maitland Makgill Crichton or Captain James Maitland on all but three occasions. (32) This arrangement may have been convenient because of the cost involved to the representative elder in attending presbytery. Some presbytery meetings must have been attended very thinly. When the Presbytery of Cupar debated a motion for the repeal of the Veto Act on the spring of 1840 only twenty-two votes were cast. (33) It may have been with that thought in mind that the deacons court of the Free Church of Auchtermuchty decided unanimously in 1851 that:-

"to enable the elder from this congregation to attend the meetings of presbytery in future his expenses to and from Cupar should be paid out of the congregation fund." (34)

Although in following this practice they were copying procedure which the Burgher Church of that town had instituted with regard to the elder they sent to the Synod of their church many years earlier. (35)

The theoretical power of presbyteries was almost unlimited but in fact the power of all presbyteries was clearly limited by forces which they could not control and could only hope to influence. Most clearly was this the case for the Established Church where the civil courts

exercised a restraining influence on the activities of presbytery which in practice left it only a limited area in which its supervision had any significance. It was in protest at these restrictions that the Disruption of 1843 and the earlier secessions had incurred. While the other presbyteries claimed to have a greater freedom than those of the Free Church they too were inhibited by the power of popular local opinion and even the Free Church presbytery which exercised its power with most enthusiasm obviously devoted part of its work to the persuasion of that local opinion on which it was so dependent. Nevertheless, it appears to have been the dissenting and Free Church Presbyteries which were most zealous in enforcing their supervision and that prior to the Disruption the work of the Established Church may have been seriously circumscribed by inadequate oversight of its presbytery. The Disruption and the disputes of the 1840's appear to have been of great benefit to the courts of the Established Church in that they were re-awakened to their proper responsibility and functions.

IV(d) Presbyterian Supervision of Lesser Courts

- (1) Mair - Digest p.156
Henderson - Elder p.178
- (2) Fife Herald 11/5/1826
- (3) Ibid. 6/10/1836
- (4) Monimail FCKS 1820 8/11/1827
Auchtermuchty FCKS 1832 24/9/1832
- (5) Auchtermuchty FCKS 12/6/1846, 6/4/1847
Auchtermuchty FCEC 2/7/1855, 2/4/1856
Collessie FCKS 23/4/1846
- (6) Collessie FCDC 9/5/1847, 11/5/1847
- (7) Ibid. 11/4/1848
- (8) Auchtermuchty FCDC 7/4/1848
- (9) Auchtermuchty FCKS 1832 12/9/1854
- (10) Collessie FCKS 16/11/1856
- (11) Ibid.
- (12) Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. Accts 15/3/1802 *passim*
Monimail FCDC accounts 1845
Dunbog OPR vol.3 7/12/1794
- (13) Ibid. 6/7/1795
- (14) Strathmiglo OPR vol.3 accounts 29/3/1809
- (15) Gibson - Stipend p.41
- (16) Fife Herald 30/6/1825, 29/3/1827
- (17) Ibid. 29/3/1827
- (18) Monimail FCKS 14/5/1855
- (19) Small - U.P. Church vol.1 p.199
- (20) Mair - Digest p.429
- (21) Rem. Cupar p.65
- (22) Auchtermuchty UF(N)KS 18/1/1848
- (23) Strathmiglo FCKS 29/9/1850
- (24) Mair - Digest p.386
- (25) Strathmiglo FCKS 29/9/1850
- (26) Collessie FCDC 5/7/1847

- (27) Auctermuichty FCDC 4/3/1845
- (28) Auctermuichty UP(N)KS 21/3/1858
- (29) Auctermuichty Assoc. Sess. 10/6/1822
Dunbog OPR vol.3 accounts 12/6/1804
- (30) Collessie FCKS 28/10/1851
- (31) Auctermuichty Assoc. Sess 27/5/1794
- (32) Collessie FCKS 5/11/1845 - 24/10/1850 Passim
- (33) Fifeshire Journal 2/4/1840
- (34) Auctermuichty FCDC 5/5/1851
- (35) Auctermuichty Assoc. Sess 18/4/1836

V. - THE NOTES OF THE KIRK

(a) Worship and Sacraments

By the end of the eighteenth century the services of worship as conducted in the churches of Scotland are generally thought to have fallen into a state of life-less formality and slovenly neglect.⁽¹⁾ In practice they remained fairly faithful to the outline suggested by the 'Directory of Public Worship' drawn up by the Westminster divines who had envisaged a pattern of three prayers, two before the sermon, reading from holy scripture and congregational praise expressed through the singing of the psalms during and also at the close of the service.⁽²⁾ In 1865 a visitor to the United Presbyterian Church at Rathillet in the Parish of Kilmany gave an account of the morning service there indicating only slight change from that given:-

"As we entered the congregation were singing the hundred and twenty-second psalm, after which the minister read Isaiah chapter six, giving a running commentary on it. Prayer followed, short yet comprehensive and full of devotion...(it) consisted of adoration, praise, thanksgiving, and supplication...it is almost an impossibility to stand twenty minutes or half an hour...in prayer. Not one of our preacher exceeded five minutes. Having sung again several verses of psalm one hundred and twenty-one he proceeded in the ordinary course of his lectures in John's gospel to read and expound the fourteenth chapter verses eighteen to twenty-six. After the lecture prayer was again offered and the service concluded with hymn two hundred and ninety-one."⁽³⁾

The preacher on this occasion was the Reverend James Borwick who in the afternoon delivered a sermon instead of a lecture. One of Borwick's predecessors at Rathillet had apparently lacked the ability, which the visitor commented on so favourably, of expressing himself briefly. James Johnston, whose ministry at Rathillet was contemporary with Thomas Chalmers' ministry at Kilmany, is reported to have protracted his service to an extent almost beyond parallel even in the early secession times. His lectures in the forenoon were within a few minutes of two hours in length and his sermon which was delivered after a short interval, except in the winter when there was no interval,

was never less than one and a half hours. In addition he appears to have spent half an hour prefacing the psalm and a similar time in offering prayer.⁽⁴⁾ His contemporary, Thomas Chalmers, on the other hand was reputed to have preached generally very short sermons, bestowing in the early part of his ministry very little time or care on his pulpit preparation, sometimes not even beginning until the Sunday morning.⁽⁵⁾

The general practice of congregations of all denominations appears to have been for two services a day to have been held as they were at Rathillet throughout the period. It is possible that some churches may have held only one service of worship in the winter months since the Parish Minister of Ceres, in reporting on the state of his own church in 1837 specifically mentions that he held two services summer and winter.⁽⁶⁾ In 1835 the Kirk Session of Monimail agreed that the hour for assembling for worship should be five minutes past eleven and that the interval between the morning and afternoon services should be three-quarters of an hour.⁽⁷⁾ Despite the difficulties besetting the Free Church in the weeks following the Disruption the Free Church at Cupar appears to have been holding two services each week by meeting in the Relief Church at ten in the morning and four in the afternoon.⁽⁸⁾ The Burgher congregation of Auchtermuchty on occasion held three services on a Sunday. On the twenty-ninth of December, 1822 collections were recorded in the morning, afternoon and evening while seventeen years later a note in the accounts book of the congregation records:-

"Commenced at this date (20.1.1839) to collect in the afternoon for the reduction of the congregational debt and a discourse in the evening monthly."⁽⁹⁾

This practice was followed for more than eleven years.

A feature of the life of many of the congregations was the devotional meetings which were held in addition to the regular diets

of worship. The Kirk Session of Edenshead United Secession Church resolved in 1833 that each of their meetings should be opened by one of the elders with praise, the reading of a portion of scriptures and prayer, while the Deacons' Court of the Free Church at Collessie reported the fact that it held a meeting for the reading of the word and for prayer in 1846, when the meeting was led by an elder and a deacon and closed by the minister.⁽¹⁰⁾ Not surprisingly congregational prayer meetings were also held and the collections taken up on these occasions are recorded in the accounts of Collessie Parish Church.⁽¹¹⁾ In 1860 the Kirk Session of Auchtermuchty East United Presbyterian Church decided to recommence a monthly prayer meeting for the congregation which had been discontinued for some time, while at Strathmiglo the Kirk Session of the Free Church reported that there was a weekly congregational prayer meeting conducted by the minister, two prayer meetings each week in different districts in the village, with in addition two monthly meetings, one of mothers, for prayer, scripture reading and consideration of the subject of family training, and the second of other females for prayer for the conversion of the Jews.⁽¹²⁾

While the minister was largely responsible for the form of worship the precentor was the leader of the congregational praise, and it was generally considered that his appointment was a matter in which the views of the congregation ought to be considered even although the appointment was made by the Kirk Session.⁽¹³⁾ At Collessie Free Church in 1847 the precentor was chosen by popular election but six years earlier in the Parish Church there the prospective precentor having officiated in the church with the approbation of the Kirk Session, to the entire satisfaction of those members of the congregation who had subscribed towards an increase in the precentor's salary, and as far as could be ascertained, with the approval of the congregation, he was nominated for the office and when the Kirk Session had satisfied

themselves that his character was above reproach and he was qualified to teach the psalmody, they elected him.⁽¹⁴⁾ The duties of the precentor at Collessie Free Church in 1848 were described as attending on the sabbath and the days connected with the sacrament and also at the monthly prayer meetings. As an additional requirement that year he was required to take lessons in psalmody.⁽¹⁵⁾ At Auchtermuchty the precentor at the Parish Church was required to sit in the precentor's desk and not with the church band or elsewhere, to take a weekly class in sacred music for three months of the year, and when presiding at a service he was to wear a black suit with a white neck-cloth.⁽¹⁶⁾

In the worship of the Established Church the psalms had pride of place although in 1781 the General Assembly had given permission for the use of paraphrases.⁽¹⁷⁾ Samuel Martin, Parish Minister of Monimail, had been a member of the committee appointed by the assembly and had himself contributed one of the paraphrases to the collection but he had been disappointed with the collection and never used it at all.⁽¹⁸⁾ Adam Cairns, who had left the first charge of Cupar in order to lead the Free Church in the Burgh introduced an overture to the Free Church Assembly asking for the revision of the paraphrases and complaining that many of them lacked any Christian content.⁽¹⁹⁾ Clerical favour for them was limited. When in February of 1840 the Church Band of St. Andrews Parish gave a concert in St. Michael's Church in Cupar their programme consisted principally of psalm tunes including French, Suffolk, Miriam's Song, Wiltshire, Jackson's, New Lydia, St. Stephen's, St. Leonard's, Montrose and Redemption.⁽²⁰⁾

While the psalms remained the principal vehicle of congregational praise in the area a changing society seemed to many to necessitate new praise forms. Some of the younger ministers of the Relief Church, apparently always the most liberally minded denomination in Scotland,

published a hymn book in 1792, but although it received synodical approval it was not widely used.⁽²¹⁾ Undiscouraged by this fact, Robert Walker, minister of Cupar Relief Church, compiled a volume of hymns which were used by his congregation from the time they were collected in 1811.⁽²²⁾ Other churches did not receive innovation so easily. When the paraphrases were introduced to the Antiburgher congregation of Cupar, both they and another innovation which on this occasion was associated with them were met with no small opposition.⁽²³⁾

In the seventeenth century the compilers of the Directory of Publick Worship had recognised that among congregations there might be many individuals who were illiterate and they had attempted to make provision for this by adding as their final word on the subject of the psalms:-

"But for the present, where many in the congregation cannot read, it is convenient that the minister, or some other fit person appointed by him and the other ruling officers do read the psalm, line by line before the singing thereof."⁽²⁴⁾

What had commenced as a temporary arrangement had by the end of the eighteenth century become in the minds of some members of the church a hallowed custom. It was, nevertheless, not a custom which had universal approval. In 1826 a letter to the Fife Herald suggested that the practice of having the line read before it was sung was contrary to the intention of the compilers of the Directory who in the opinion of the writer did not intend the singing to be interrupted by the reading of the line.⁽²⁵⁾ In 1830 another correspondent complained that the practice of reading the psalm line by line after it had been read by the minister, a custom which he thought confined to country parishes, had a tendency to mar the beauty of the service.⁽²⁶⁾ Innovators are generally met by opposition and when the run line was abolished in the worship of Cupar United Secession Church concurrently with the introduction of the paraphrases:-

"Some...not only refused to join in the objectionable singing, but gave forth a protest, either by an amazingly sour and sullen visage, or by putting on their hats with a very audible effort at such an adjustment as the most violent tempest should not disturb and by walking to the door with a tramp meant to strike terror in the hearts of preacher, precentor and people." (27)

In the whole of North Fife it would appear that the Baptists and the Episcopalians were those who led the way in new ways of worship. In the early days of its existence the Baptist congregation had sung hymns composed by their own precentor and about 1854 the precentor's desk in that church was abolished and a harmonium introduced to public worship. In consequence of some opposition it was used at first only in the forenoon, but it gained in favour and was rapidly introduced to all the services. (28) It was much later in the century before the presbyterian churches were able to follow this lead.

At the outset of the period mid-week fasts and thanksgiving services were a regular feature of church life. A national fast was annually held on a Thursday in the early months of the year between 1793 and 1802 and it may have been the intention of Collessie Kirk Session to separate fasts and thanksgivings in the minds of the people since they appear to have held all their thanksgivings on Tuesdays. (29) After the beginning of the nineteenth century Thursday became the day on which both kinds of services were generally held. (30) Other changes of day may have been dictated by the appearance of a new kind of economic world. In the earlier part of the period services of thanksgiving for the harvest were mid-week services and although the Free Church still regarded them as such as late as 1851, in 1854 the Kirk Session of the East United Presbyterian Church of Auchtermuchty appointed Sunday as the day of thanksgiving for the harvest. (31) Most surprising of all were the number of occasions when there were no services, particularly in Parish Churches. During vacancies the Established Church presbytery provided sermon only once a fortnight

while other occasions might arise which meant that no service would be held and the accounts of the heritors at Collessie show that on six Sundays in 1824, four in 1825, seven in 1826 and eight in 1823 there were no services held in the Parish Church there. (32) Such occasions may have reflected the state of the minister's health but equally it may have reflected the difficulty of travel in a rural area in bad weather. (33)

The administration of the sacrament of baptism according to the Directory of Publick Worship ought to take place in public in the place of worship and before the congregation. (34) This injunction does not appear to be one which was widely followed. At Collessie between 1856 and 1865 it would appear that the bulk of the baptisms carried out by the parish minister did not take place in the church and that a great many, if not most of them, were private ceremonies in the manse or the parents' home and it is quite unusual to find the presence of the congregation noted. (35) At Monimail on the other hand more than half of the baptisms which the parish minister there administered in 1828 took place in the church and it was reported that in 1836 the Parish minister of Auchtermuchty refused to baptise the child of his precentor in private although he did periodically baptise children privately. (36) The practice of the Free Church at Auchtermuchty on the other hand appears for baptism to have been witnessed by the congregation but even with this congregation the practice varied and baptisms were administered in the neighbouring villages to Auchtermuchty and in an emergency a baptism might take place in the presence of one elder. (37) This latter practice suggests that a serious attempt to have baptisms witnessed at least by members of the Kirk Session was made by this congregation, and in some of the Parish Churches a similar effort might very well have been made. In 1865 a woman appeared before the Kirk Session of Newburgh Parish Church wishing to have the births and

baptism of her five children who had been born more than ten years earlier recorded. The registration had been omitted apparently because of the ignorance and poverty of the parents. Four of the children had been baptised in the session house while the fifth had had the sacrament administered in her father's house. (38) At Newburgh the custom of baptising children in the session house appears to have been common towards the middle of the century and it may have represented an attempt to have members of the Kirk Session present for the sacrament. (39)

Baptism was administered only where the parents or one of them was in full communion with the church and any breath of scandal could debar parents from presenting their children for baptism. In 1836 the moderator of the Kirk Session of Auchtermuchty Parish Church introduced to the court a motion that no married person should have their child baptised until nine months at least after marriage and the motion was unanimously adopted. (40) Where the parents or parent were subject to disciplinary action by the church another adult member of the child's family often acted as sponsor and frequently when a child was illegitimate its maternal grandfather would accept this role. (41) On the other hand baptism was sometimes withheld until the Kirk Session were satisfied that the parents were suitably repentant. At Auchtermuchty the Kirk Session of the Free Church refused to permit the baptism of a child in 1848 until they had some appropriate tokens of the father's contrition for his absence from church and other irregularities of life. (42)

In practice the Westminster divines' injunction that baptism was not to be delayed unduly was strictly observed. In the Parish of Kilmany between 1793 and 1813 most of the children whose baptisms are recorded had the sacrament administered within fourteen days of birth while at Collessie, during the early part of the nineteenth century, a similar practice appears to have been followed. (43) Nevertheless, as the

century were on it appears that the fashion for early baptism declined and from the 1830's the general practice at Kilmany appears to have been for children to be baptised between fourteen and thirty days after birth. (44) The fashion may have been set by the upper classes who, even at an earlier period, appear to have allowed a month or more to elapse before the baptism of their children. (45)

During the ministry of Jonathan Watson, the first baptist minister in Cupar, the congregation's church there lacked a baptistry, but a member of the congregation lived at Ceres Mill where there was a convenient dam. At this time, when the congregation had candidates for baptism, they, accompanied by other members of the congregation resident in Cupar, walked the two and a half miles from Cupar to the dam where they were joined by members of the congregation who lived at Ceres. At the Mill dam Watson conducted his baptismal services and immersed his candidates for baptism in the waters of the dam. (46)

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper, according to the Directory of Publick Worship, was to be frequently celebrated but discretion as to its frequency was left to ministers and 'other church governors' in each congregation although presbyteries were required to:-

"call for an account of the reasons"

if the sacrament was not celebrated for a whole year. (47) In the years after 1793 most congregations appear to have celebrated the sacrament every year as a general rule. At Newburgh the Parish Church had its annual communion season in July and although it was held in March of 1803 this was probably because the sacrament had not been celebrated in 1801 or 1802 although when it was omitted in 1809 it was celebrated as usual the following year. (48) At Auchtermuchty August was the month most commonly chosen for the communion season between 1800 and 1807 although in 1805 the sacrament was celebrated in November. (49) The B urgher congregation of Auchtermuchty, on the other hand, celebrated

the sacrament twice a year from the outset of the period. (50) As the nineteenth century wore on this practice became increasingly common. In the Parish of Collessie the Established Church celebrated the sacrament twice in 1838 while in the 1860's the Parish Church of Auchtermuchty had adopted June and December as its 'sacramental' months as had the Free Church at Collessie. (51)

By the close of the eighteenth century the 'holy Fairs' which had been associated with communion seasons were in decline and the occasions were regarded with great seriousness. (52) Amongst the members of the Secession Churches there were those who:-

"were regular guests from the distance of forty miles who were expected by the Saturday services and who would stay on until the Monday duties were over." (53)

The Kirk Session of Collessie Free Church regarded the preparation of their own souls as a matter of importance as the period appointed for the celebration of the sacrament approached, and in 1848 their minutes record the fact that after they had dealt with other matters they proceeded to devotional exercises in view of the impending communion season. (54) The Kirk Session of Strathmiglo Free Church took more prosaic view of the matter in 1850 when the minutes of one of their meetings records that:-

"In consequence of the approach of the period appointed for the dispensation of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper the communion roll was revised and corrected." (55)

In addition to the Sunday services diets of public worship took place on an additional three days. Saturday was kept as a day of preparation, Monday following the celebration of the sacrament as a day of thanksgiving. (56) The whole season was opened by a day of fasting and public humiliation which in the earlier period appears to have been normally a Wednesday but later became more commonly a Thursday although at Dunbog, Thursday was observed as the 'fast' day as early as 1796. (57) Fast days in exceptional circumstances might be dispensed with and in 1862

for the Session of Monimail Parish Church, where in consequence of a long vacancy the sacrament had not been celebrated for a considerable period, at the suggestion of the moderator of the session the services leading up to the sacrament began on a Saturday. (58) A few years later the Kirk Session of Collessie Parish Church decided to dispense with the church services on a Saturday before the communion services in the winter season because of small attendances due to the distance that the congregation had to travel after their Saturday morning's work. (59) It probably reflects a changing attitude towards the communion seasons.

Attendances at some of these services on weekdays must have been small in the later part of the nineteenth century. In 1835 the Wife Herald described the Thursday prior to the communion services in Cupar in the month of July as being half gala day and half fast day. (60) In 1841 the fast day in July was held as a holiday on which the banks, principal offices, and shops closed but small congregations were reported at the morning and afternoon services. (61) In 1852 the fast day at Auchtermuchty was marked by respectably attended churches although it was also reported that some individuals had gone to the Kinross Games. (62) The collections taken in 1797 at the preparatory services at Strathmiglo Parish Church were substantially greater than the normal sabbath collection. On the Sunday before communion the collection totalled four shillings and twopence, while on the fast day and preparation day the offerings totalled nine shillings and sixpence halfpenny on each day and on the Monday at the thanksgiving service the collection amounted to twelve shillings and fourpence half-penny. (63) Sixty years later, in July of 1855, the fast day and preparation day collections at the Parish Church had fallen considerably, totalling two shillings and three pence half-penny and two shillings and two pence respectively, while the collection at the thanksgiving amounted to one shilling and ninepence.

Collections in general had fallen considerably by this time and on the Sunday before communion Sunday the collection had totalled only three shillings and three pence and earlier in the year the Sunday collection had fallen as low as one shilling and a penny. (64)

At Monimail it appears to have been the practice of the Free Church to distribute on the fast day the communion tokens which were used to prevent those who were unworthy from presenting themselves at the table. (65)

The Kirk Session of the Burgher Church at Auchtermuchty at the end of the eighteenth century carried out this part of their duties on the fast and preparation days after the normal services and those individuals on whose characters there was any shadow the Kirk Session were ready to inform that they expected they would not apply for admission to the table. (66)

At Strathmiglo in 1807 the distribution of tokens took place before fast day. (67)

The uses of tokens during the period underwent some changes. In 1830 the Fife Herald approvingly reported that at the communion service at Cupar Parish Church the tokens had been marked with numbers denoting at which service its holder would be present. It was thought that this innovation gave a degree of order and regularity which had been surprising to the congregation. (68)

Fifteen years later the Kirk Session of Auchtermuchty Free Church were informed that in some of the Edinburgh congregations of the Free Church a distribution of cards was made to members of the congregation before they received tokens and the Auchtermuchty elders decided to follow this practice. (69)

The demands made on ministers by the communion seasons have been considered to be quite severe. (70)

With the Reformation the altar of the mass gave way to the long communion tables which were originally temporary structures erected for communion and then dismantled, but with the passage of time an increasing number of churches introduced arrangements whereby pews could be converted to seat communicants at a table in the approved manner. (71)

At Creich Parish Church before 1830 the table ran from east to west with the minister in the middle of one

of the long side and the communicants were requested to enter to the table by the east door and retire by the west. When the new church was built at Creich in 1832 there were two passages running from the vestibule by which the church was entered to the pulpit and so seated that with a slight adjustment of the pews they were converted to a communion table with seats on either side and the minister at one end. (72)

Inevitably with such arrangements the elements required to be dispensed more than once. At Creich in 1833 the table was served six times and as a rule each table was addressed twice once before the communicant received the elements and again before they left the table. (73) Six tables involved the minister in twelve addresses. In practice ministers shared in the work of their neighbours' communion seasons, closing their own churches to do so. (74)

When the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was celebrated at the Parish Church of Kilmany in 1811 Thomas Chalmers recorded in his journal that on the fast day two visiting ministers preached and at dinner on the same day five of the neighbouring ministers were his guests. At the beginning of the nineteenth century a note in the journal of a minister who assisted at the communion services of Ceres Relief Church ran:-

"Preached twice on Thursday, twice on Saturday; exhorted at five tables on the Sabbath. Took the evening service and preached twice on Monday." (75)

At Creich Parish Church in 1833 the services were shared by three ministers who between them distributed the elements to two hundred and ten communicants. (76) The hospitality of manse was extended to many guests on these occasions. On Martinmas day 1811 which was his communion Sunday Thomas Chalmers recorded that he had twenty-two guests for dinner. (77) The residents of the parish may also have found the necessary hospitality burdensome. Following the passing of the Licensing Act (Scotland) in 1853 when the sale of liquor on Sundays was limited to bona fide travellers the Kirk Session of Dunbog Parish

Church felt it was necessary to provide refreshments to communicants travelling from a distance. (78)

Attitudes towards communion practices were at this time, like much else, undergoing change. In 1834 the second minister of Cupar proposed that communion should take place twice a year on the understanding that there should only be two services on the fast day, one on the preparation day, and one on the thanksgiving day. This had apparently been the practice earlier. (79) Part of the strain of the communion season arose from the fact that outside the church the assembled congregation were exhorted by an assisting minister who addressed the crowd from a shelter known as the 'tent'. At the end of the eighteenth century the accounts of Strathmiglo Parish Church record accounts paid to Alexander Elder

"for work on tent and tables". (80)

In 1832 the accounts of the former Burgher congregation at Auchtermuchty continued to carry payments for the erection of a tent at the communion season while at Strathmiglo payments to Alexander Elder

"for services at the sacrament"

continued until 1850 when they made their final appearance. (81) Since no further payments of this sort are recorded it is apparent that the communion arrangements had been altered, and it is possible that the mass communions of an earlier period were in the process of dying out. For in 1863 the practice of the United Presbyterian Church at Auchtermuchty appears to have been for two of the neighbouring ministers in the town to share in each others services at their respective communion seasons.

The long communion table of early Reformation practice was also losing favour during the nineteenth century. The General Assembly of the Church had condemned the practice of communicating in ordinary pews as early as 1825. (82) The practice appears to have gained ground

and in 1836 it was reported that at the celebration of the sacrament at the United Secession Church of Pitlessie all the members of the congregation had communicated at the same time. (83) In the opinion of the correspondent who reported the event it was a mode of communicating that was continually gaining ground. At Collessie Parish Church in 1839 the minister complained about the arrangements proposed in the new church with regard to the celebration of communion

"the whole communicants would be obliged to sit fronting the clergyman without having the benefit of a proper table before them" (84)

This was settled to his satisfaction but almost thirty years later another minister in that charge informed the heritors that he proposed to provide, by voluntary subscription a communion table and choir as well as a font. (85) Clearly changes in the local practice were taking place and there were many individuals who sympathised with them.

V(a) Worship and the Sacraments

- (1) O. G. Herie - The Public Worship of Presbyterian Scotland p.310
- (2) Directory for the Publick Worship of God
- (3) Fife Herald 17/8/1865
- (4) Small - U.P.Church vol.1 p.179
- (5) Hanna - Memoir vol.1 p.405
- (6) MSA p.529
- (7) Monimail FCKS1820 1/5/1835
- (8) Rem. Cupar p.115
- (9) Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess.acts 29/12/1822, 20/1/1839, after 1/8/1850
- (10) Edenshead USC minutes 9/7/1833
Collessie FCDC 19/5/1846
- (11) Collessie PC Collection 1837 - 47
- (12) Auchtermuchty UP(E)KS 8/7/1860
Strathmiglo FCKS 15/3/1866
- (13) Collessie FCDC 7/4/1847
Collessie FCDC 7/6/1848
Nair - Digest p.128
- (14) Collessie FCKS 4/4/1847
Collessie BCKS 1833 19/11/1841
- (15) Collessie FCKS 7/6/1848
- (16) Auchtermuchty FCKS 1863 12/2/1864
- (17) Herie - Worship p.285f
- (18) Ibid. p.290
- (19) Drummond - Victorian Church p.183
- (20) Fifeshire Journal 6/2/1840 (Advertisement)
- (21) Drummond - Victorian Church p.183
- (22) Rem. Cupar p.87f
- (23) Ibid. p.95f
- (24) Directory
- (25) Fife Herald 12/1/1826
- (26) Ibid. 15/4/1830

- (27) Rem. Cupar p.95f
- (28) Ibid. p.129f
- (29) Collessie FC Accounts 1772 18/6/1793 - 5/11/1801 passim.
- (30) Ibid. 20/10/1803 - 6/2/1812 passim
- (31) Collessie FC 1772 5/11/1801
Collessie FCKS 28/10/1851
Auchtermuchty UP(E)KS 1/10/1854
- (32) Collessie HR Acots 1813 12/8/1832 - 16/12/1832, 9/2/1823 - 19/11/1826 passim
- (33) Ibid. 15/1/1832 - 29/7/1832 passim, 9/2/1823
Monimail Parish Church Kirk Session Accounts 1794 - 1800 15/5/1796
19/6/1796
- (34) Directory
- (35) Collessie FC Proclamations 1856 -1865
- (36) Monimail Old Parish Register vol.3
Fife Herald 8/9/1836
- (37) Auchtermuchty Free Church Baptismal Register 1843 - 61 2/7/1843
(Child to James Stark and Margaret Law), 29/5/1844 (Son of Robert White).
- (38) Newburgh Parish Church Kirk Session minutes 1859 - 1923 1/3/1865
- (39) Ibid. 2/5/1847
- (40) AuchtermuchtyFCKS 1832 2/11/1836
- (41) Monimail OPR vol.2 14/3/1802, vol.3 30/12/1846
- (42) Auchtermuchty FCKS 29/3/1848
- (43) Kilmany OPR vol.1 baptisms 1793 - 1813
Collessie OPR vol.1 18/1/1816
- (44) Kilmany OPR vol.2 baptisms
- (45) Collessie OPR vol.1 5/8/1795, 18/7/1804, 15/5/1795. Vol.3 1/10/1843.
- (46) Yuille - Baptists p.145
- (47) Directory
Hair - Digest p.90
- (48) Newburgh FCKS 1773 14/7/1793 - 13/7/1817
- (49) Auchtermuchty OPR vol. 2 accounts 2/8/1800, 30/7/1807 passim
- (50) Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. 19/12/1792, 18/5/1793

- (51) Collessie FC Collection 17/6/1838, 2/12/1838
Auchtermuchty FCKS 1863 31/10/1864, 30/5/1865
Collessie FCKS 29/5/1861, 2/10/1861
- (52) G. B. Burnet - The Holy Communion in the Reformed Church of Scotland p.225f
- (53) Taylor - Country Manse p.11
- (54) Collessie FCKS 4/12/1848
- (55) Strathmiglo FCKS 5/7/1850
- (56) Cant - Communion (SCHS vol.4) p.84
- (57) Ibid
Dunbog OPR vol.3 accounts
- (58) Monimail FCKS 1862 24/8/1862
- (59) Collessie FCKS 1851 25/11/1866
- (60) Fife Herald 30/7/1835
- (61) Ibid. 29/7/1841
- (62) Fife Herald 5/8/1852
- (63) Strathmiglo Parish Church Account of Collections 1794 - 1807 26/11/1797
29/11/1797, 2/12/1797, 4/12/1797.
- (64) Strathmiglo FC collections 1854 26/7/1855, 29/7/1855, 30/7/1855 15/7/1855
27/5/1855
- (65) Monimail FCKS 13/12/1842 - 21/6/1848 passim
- (66) Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. 16/1/1799, 19/1/1799, 9/8/1821
- (67) Strathmiglo FC Collections 1794 2/6/1807
- (68) Fife Herald 3/7/1830
- (69) Auchtermuchty FCKS 29/4/1845
- (70) Burnet - Communion p.229f
- (71) Hay - Architecture pp.178, 181
- (72) Cant - Communion (SCHS vol.4) p.82
- (73) Ibid. p.85
- (74) Strathmiglo OPR vol.3 accounts 20/7/1817, 10/8/1817, 7/2/1819
- (75) Small - U.P.Church vol.1 p.158
- (76) Cant - Communion (SCHS) vol.4 p.85
- (77) Hanna - Memoirs vol.1 p.215
- (78) Dunbog OPR vol.3 accounts 31/7/1854

- (79) Cupar HR 1823 17/10/1834
- (80) Strathmiglo PC Collections 1794 8/6/1798
- (81) Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. Accts. 6/8/1832
Strathmiglo PC Accts 1846 29/7/1950
- (82) Hay - Architecture p.183
- (83) Fife Herald 1/12/1836
- (84) Collessie HR 1775 1/4/1839
- (85) Collessie HR 1841 18/6/1867

V.(b) Discipline

At the Reformation those who compiled the First Book of Discipline were conscious of the need to ensure the correction of moral and spiritual turpitude.

"As no commonwealth can flourish or long indure without good laws and sharp execution of the same so neither can the Kirk of God be brought to purity neither yet be retained in the same without the order of Ecclesiastical Discipline which stands in reproving and correcting of the faults which the civil sword either doth neglect or not punish." (1)

Over the years much was left to the wisdom and discretion of Kirk Sessions but in 1707 the Form of Process codified and standardised the procedures and censures of the church but still founded church discipline on the same warrants as the earlier standards while continuing that ministry in the hands of Kirk Sessions with the exception of scandals involving ministers and probationers of the church who were subject to the jurisdiction of presbyteries. (2)

At the end of the eighteenth century and during the first half of the nineteenth century the range of scandals coming before Kirk Sessions for censure remained fairly wide. Infrequent or non-attendance at church, the use of premises for cock-fighting, brawling in the streets, all came under the judicial review of the session. (3) The Secession Churches appear to have exercised a more severe discipline than the sessions of the Established Church and among their session minutes can be found a wider range of offences reprimanded such as drunkenness, and tippling to the hurt of their family. (4) In the year 1805 in particular the Burgher Church of Auchtermuchty appears to have had the greatest difficulty with its young people. In November William Ritchie junior and Effie Ritchie were admonished by the Kirk Session for attending a service at a church of a denomination other than their own, while in December the same Kirk Session heard a report that some of their young people had behaved badly on a sabbath evening in the time and place of

worship by smiling and laughing to one another instead of hearing the word of God and joining in the other parts of worship with due reverence. (5) With regard to this latter offence the Kirk Session recorded their detestation and abhorrence of such horrid profanation of both the Lord's Day and divine ordinances and unanimously decided to proceed with church censure against all guilty of it. This may have represented a threat rather than a decision to censure those involved on the occasion reported to the Kirk Session since a public intimation to this effect was made the following sabbath.

While intoxication, levity, 'promiscuous hearing', brawling and even theft appear among the offences censured by Kirk Sessions the offences which most frequently occupied their attention were those involving sexual promiscuity which were classified as fornication, antenuptial fornication, and adultery which was held to have occurred when one of the offenders was married. (6) Between 1852 and 1860 the Kirk Session of Collessie Free Church took under their consideration ten cases of fornication, four of antenuptial fornication, and one of adultery while the remaining individual censured was guilty of intemperance. (7) During the same period the Kirk Session of the Parish Church was considering twenty-four cases of fornication, seventeen cases of antenuptial fornication while the remaining individuals to come before them were censured for breach of the peace in one instance and in the other failure to attend ordinances. (8) At the end of the eighteenth century the numbers involved were smaller but the pattern was not dissimilar. The Kirk Session of the Parish Church at Collessie, between 1793 and 1800 censured nine cases of fornication, two of antenuptial fornication and one of adultery while the four remaining censures were given for the offence of irregular marriage. (9) In the Parish of Strathmiglo the Kirk Session of the Parish Church censured twenty-five couples for the sins of fornication or antenuptial

fornication between October 1863 and July 1865 while in the same period they considered only one case involving a non-sexual offence. (10)

During the same time the Kirk Session of the Free Church in that village took under their discipline the perpetrators of four sexual offences and only one other offender. (11)

The infrequency of references to sins other than sexual offences in the records of the Kirk Sessions probably reflected the difficulty of establishing the fact that a sin had been committed. It may also have reflected the changing outlook of society which as the nineteenth century wore on made Kirk Sessions aware that those whom they had disciplined might have recourse to the civil courts to protect their reputations. In 1859 the Kirk Session of Auchtermuchty Parish Church received a report detrimental to their precentor whom they suspended from office and church privileges without at that time pronouncing any opinion as to guilt. (12) The precentor raised an action for damages against the moderator of the Kirk Session in Cupar Sheriff Court claiming damages of £300. (13) Subsequently the Kirk Session heard the case in full found him guilty on two separate counts and suspended him from church privileges. (14) Eventually the precentor's case was dismissed at the sheriff court with costs to the Kirk Session. With this possibility before them Kirk Sessions must have exercised considerable caution. In 1844 when a complaint came before the Kirk Session of Collessie Free Church about the use of improper language by a member of the congregation the Kirk Session told the complainant to reconsider the matter and in the event of their insisting to specify the particulars and to provide a list of witnesses. (15) The Form of Process cautioned Kirk Sessions to be wary in instances of sexual offence in which there was no child and as early as 1799 the Kirk Session of the Burgher congregation at Auchtermuchty wanted to know why a man should confess to the sin of fornication when no child had been born. (16)

Those who brought accusations against their fellows had to be particularly confident of the evidence of guilt. The Kirk Session of Auchtermuchty Burgher Church heard reports of a woman's fornication with two brothers in 1805. On enquiry the evidence was found to be insufficient to support the charge which was dropped by the session but the woman who had originally spread the story was admonished by the Kirk Session for her rashness. (17) More than fifty years later a charge of adultery investigated by the Kirk Session of the Parish Church at Auchtermuchty proved similarly unsupported and the accusation again rebounded onto the head of the accuser and even when the accuser asked for a certificate of membership so that he might attach himself to another congregation the certificate was endorsed with the details including the fact that the accuser had been given the opportunity to express regret so that he might retain his membership but that in view of his failure to do so the privileges of church membership had been withheld from him. (18)

The inquiries of the Kirk Sessions could be inquisitorial in the extreme. At Edenshead, in the Parish of Strathmiglo, in 1848 a young bride gave birth to her first born child six and a half months after her marriage. The Kirk Session of the United Secession Church there having the matter brought to their attention appointed two of their number to call on those present at the birth to confirm that the child was perfectly normal and without any sign of having been born prematurely. This being confirmed in written statements by the women who had acted as mid-wives the Kirk Session decided to suspend the parents from church 'fellowship'. (19) The need to be absolutely certain of the grounds on which they proposed to proceed must have led Kirk Sessions to conduct many similar inquiries. Nevertheless, confession before a Kirk Session was for some individuals at least no mere formality but a welcome opportunity to be purged of a sense of sin. In 1859 Auchtermuchty Kirk

Session received a confession from a woman who admitted to committing adultery in America some thirty years previously and whose sin must have been totally unknown in the parish. (20) Eight years earlier Collessie Free Church Kirk Session heard the confession of a couple who had never been members of the church but who came confessing themselves guilty of antenuptial fornication and asking to be taken on the discipline of the church. (21) While this couple may have been motivated by the desire to secure the administration of the sacrament of baptism for their child the minutes of the same session record that in 1856 a lady, on whose Christian deportment and regularity at church ordinances the Kirk Session remark appeared before them confessing to having committed an act of fornication fourteen years earlier. (22) It would appear that for her too the confession and exercise of church discipline was no mere social convention.

From the discipline no one was, in theory, free, but in practice while the records frequently give no indication of the social status of those appearing before Kirk Sessions it would appear that it was the middle and lower classes whose conduct received the closest supervision. At Collessie the tenant farmers came within the orbit of the session's activities even as late as 1847 when tenant farmers had become men of some importance in the area, while at Auchtermuchty an inquiry was instituted by the Kirk Session of the Parish Church into the conduct of one of the burgh's baillies and at Newburgh a baillie of the town acknowledged himself to be guilty of the sin of Antenuptial fornication before the session of the parish there. (23) A local merchant was rebuked by the Auchtermuchty Burgher Kirk Session for his excessive drinking in 1805, while at Strathmiglo and Newburgh manufacturers names found their way into the disciplinary records of the churches. (24) Nevertheless it was generally the weavers, farm workers and others of the lower orders whose names found there way into such records, but if the

burden of church discipline rested heavily on such people it rested most heavily of all on the elders and deacons themselves. In 1836 a rumour circulated in Auchtermuchty about the sobriety of one of the elders of the Parish Church and an investigation was instituted which eventually concluded that the rumour was not proven. (25) A deacon of the Free Church of Strathmiglo was less fortunate. Summoned to appear before his session and confessing himself guilty with his wife of unseemly altercations which had been witnessed by others, he was suspended from his office until such time as he had afforded evidence of a deportment consistent with his Christian calling. (26) At Newburgh an elder of the Parish Church who was reportedly seen in a state of great intoxication resigned from office on confessing his guilt. (27) It was not merely for the obvious sins that elders were subject to reproof. At the North United Presbyterian Church of Auchtermuchty the moderator of the Kirk Session complained in 1854 that he was being assailed by one of his elders who was critical of his ministry. (28) At a subsequent meeting of the session suspended the offending elder from office and later as a result of his refusal to meet with them he was suspended from membership. (29)

In his refusal to meet with the Kirk Session this individual was far from unique. At Collessie a weaver who had spoken disrespectfully of the parish minister and the Established Church of which he was a member was cited to appear before the Kirk Session but there is no record of his ever having done so. (30) The fact that this offence took place at a political meeting and that the political atmosphere of the time was one of hostility to the Established Church may explain this refusal to appear but in 1844 the Reverend Henry Cook of Kilmany Parish Church reported that the father of an illegitimate child had absconded only to be urged by the heritors to make further efforts to trace the man whose child they seemed likely to have to support. (31) In 1836 a man who had

been accused of fornication before Newburgh Parish Church Kirk Session failed to appear before the session although he had been summoned on three separate occasions while eleven years earlier a weaver who had been named as the father of an illegitimate child refused to attend a meeting of the same Kirk Session when summoned by the church officer to appear. (32) In 1840 the editorial comment of the Fife Herald claimed that in six cases out of every seven individuals were never censured because the individuals concerned refused to submit to the church courts. (33)

The refusal of those accused of offences to accept the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts probably reflects a decline in the acceptance of the traditional authorities which was a feature of the political life of the century. In 1820 an elder of Newburgh Parish Church complained that a member of the congregation had insulted him in a very unbecoming way while he had been employed in collecting the offerings at the church door. Confronted with the accusation the member involved admitted she might have been guilty of spitting in going past him but she had had no intention of giving offence. (34) At a meeting of the Kirk Session of Auchtermuchty Burgher Church in 1799 an accused individual admitted to having a loaded pistol in his pocket and subsequently handed over to the moderator two pistols. (35) At Strathmiglo the Kirk Session of the Free Church having met to censure one of their members for the sin of intemperance which had occurred a month earlier decided the individual's condition made it impossible for the process to follow the normal course.

"The session judged it inexpedient for the moderator to address him in his present state as from his indistinct utterance and improper behaviour he seemed to be in a state of intoxication." (36)

A great deal of discretion was allowed to sessions as to the form that their censured should take and no doubt this latitude was used by ministers and elders. (37) The general tendency was for the practice of public rebukes to fall into disuse. At the close of the eighteenth century it was the general custom of sessions to require those undergoing

censure for what the sessions considered to be serious offences to be rebuked before the congregation on more than one occasion. At Newburgh in 1793 a couple who had confessed to the sin of antenuptial fornication were rebuked by the Kirk Session and subsequently publicly rebuked and absolved from censure. (38) Seven years later public rebukes were still a feature of life in the parish churches of Monimail and Collessie, while at Newburgh the practice was still followed in 1810. (39) While it is not entirely clear from the records in every case it is certain that at least upon occasion fines were associated with these public rebukes. (40)

Not all offences were considered to be sufficiently severe to justify a public rebuke. When a couple appeared before Auchtermuchty Burgher Kirk Session in 1816 confessing that they had been married in Edinburgh after having made a false declaration as to their period of residence in that city the Kirk Session thought it sufficient to rebuke them and intimate the fact to the congregation. (41) At Newburgh a rebuke before the Kirk Session of the Parish Church was also thought in such a matter to be sufficient. (42) The Kirk Session of Auchtermuchty Burgher Church, probably one of the more conservative and strict courts in the area regarded the offence of drunken swearing, damning the excise officer, minister and elders of the congregation and blaspheming as insufficiently serious to require public rebuke. (43) In 1815 John Fisher, a manufacturer in Newburgh, was accused of fornication. When he appeared before the Kirk Session of the Parish Church he made a request to which the session agreed that he should be rebuked before the Kirk Session and restored to church privileges on advancing five guineas for the poor. (44) A similar process may have taken place at Newburgh in 1808 and it is clear that about this time changes were taking place in the practice of the parish churches. (45) In 1814 the Kirk Session of Collessie Parish decided that although it was very general to rebuke delinquents before the session and fine them rather

than rebuke them before the congregation they would not determine anything for a constant rule but deal with offenders according to the circumstances. (46) By 1825 the changes in practice were far advances. A correspondent to the Life Herald writing under the pseudonym 'A Session Clerk' claimed:-

"Session books have of late years become a far less formidable record of parish scandal than formerly and cutty-stools...are with a very few exceptions fallen into disuse." (47)

Among the exceptions were the Auchtermuchty United Secession congregations who continued to follow the practice of administering public rebukes, even after the union of 1847. (48) Nevertheless in these most conservative of congregations the attitudes of the neighbouring sessions began to have its effect. In 1854 the minister of the East congregation of the United Presbyterian Church in Auchtermuchty moved that the Kirk Session consider it sufficient to administer a rebuke in the Kirk Session only to persons under the scandal of fornication when the offence was unattended by any aggravating circumstance. (49) It was agreed to let the matter lie on the table until a future meeting but a year later the Kirk Session agreed that a rebuke before the Kirk Session was sufficient and went on to record the fact that they thought it would be appropriate where the scandal was associated with aggravating circumstances that a time of probation should be appointed before the individual concerned was readmitted to their former standing in the congregation. (50) Once this congregation had accepted the idea of change from the old ways changed followed rapidly. In 1861 the minister suggested that in cases where there was no special aggravation, instead of meeting to examine and admonish offenders and then meeting again at some future date to rebuke and absolve from scandal as they had formerly done, the Kirk Session should meet and examine those who were to be censured and thereafter cause them to retire for a few minutes so that the session might

consider the merits of the case and whether the appropriate proceeding would be to 'exhort', 'admonish', 'rebuke', 'suspend', or 'depose', after which parties might be recalled to have the appropriate censure imposed following which they would be restored to their former status in the congregation. To this suggestion the Kirk Session unanimously agreed.⁽⁵¹⁾

Other churches having abandoned the cutty-stool tended to vary the number of appearances in accordance with the seriousness of the offence. When in 1845 Monimail Free Church considered the cases of two couples, the first confessing to antenuptial fornication and the second to fornication, the first pair were admonished and restored to the privileges of church membership at that meeting while the latter two were admonished and informed that sometime must elapse before the Kirk Session could restore them to their privileges.⁽⁵²⁾ Despite the fact that in 1844 a groom accused of fornication and brought before the Kirk Session of Kilmany Parish was restored to church privileges at the first appearance, it appears to have been more normal to regard antenuptial fornication as less serious an offence than fornication.⁽⁵³⁾ In 1827 when the Kirk Session of Edenshead United Secession Church were considering the appropriate penalties for these offences they recorded their decision that in cases of antenuptial fornication only one appearance should be made while for fornication there should be two appearances before the session.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Even in this area of offence changes lightening the censures imposed did occur. In 1829 a fornicator appearing before Monimail Parish Church Kirk Session made three appearances before he was re-admitted to church privileges, while in 1862 those guilty of the same offence were absolved from scandal soon after a meeting in private with the minister and one appearance before the Kirk Session.⁽⁵⁵⁾ This later censure may have been felt to be over lenient for in 1864 two appearances before the Kirk Session before

restoration took place seem to have been the norm in cases involving fornication. (56) Until 1856 the Kirk Session of Auchtermuchty Free Church allowed a communion season to elapse between the first and second appearances where these were thought necessary but in that year they decided that they would depart from their usual practice in one instance and in the following year they again decided it would not be for edification to postpone re-instating three individuals until after the celebration of the sacrament and resolved to restore them immediately to their privileges. (57) It does seem that as the nineteenth century wore on the discipline administered by Kirk Sessions became a much less fearsome function.

Not all the censures were administered in the name of the Kirk Sessions. Cases involving atrocious scandal, difficulty or general concern such as incest adultery, trillapse in fornication, murder, atheism, venting heresy, separation from the ordinances of the church, processes inferring the highest censures and continued contumacy all had to be referred by Kirk Sessions to the appropriate presbytery. (58) While such cases were not in the nature of things the most common offences many were referred to their presbyteries by Kirk Sessions although most commonly referred to the higher court were those involving adultery and trillapse in fornication. (59) Nevertheless other cases do occur. Auchtermuchty Burgher Kirk Session referred to their presbytery a case of adultery involving cousins german, while Collessie Parish Kirk Session referred two cases to presbytery due to the difficulty which arose because the alleged father persistently denied prateruity. (60) The form of censure in such cases was decided by presbytery but in many cases it appears to have been left to the discretion of the Kirk Session to decide when to ask for the censure to be lifted. (61) In 1810 the Kirk Session of Auchtermuchty Burgher congregation decided to apply to presbytery to have the penalty of lesser excommunication laid

on one of their members by that court lifted after the culprit had made several public appearances. (62) In 1862 Collessie Free Church Session made a similar request to the Free Church Presbytery of Cupar on behalf of one of their members from whom presbytery proceeded to lift the punishment they had laid upon her. (63) In 1843, on the other hand, the Moderator of the Free Church Presbytery rebuked an adultress from the Auchtermuchty congregation and remitted her to the Kirk Session for absolution and restoration to church priveleges. She was then rebuked by her own minister and restored. (64) Not everyone approved of such proceedings and an earlier editorial comment on them in the Fife Herald in 1840 contained the remarks:-

"We thought the church had long ago got over the absurdity of such exhibitions...we have no objection that the minister and Kirk Session in private take such cases under paternal care". (65)

Proceedings against ministers and probationers of the church were instituted before presbyteries and the power to enquire into the affairs of ministers was used by them. (66) The power sometimes operated to protect ministers from the over zealous activities of their congregation as in 1832 when the minister of the United Secession Church of Cupar proposed to marry a woman who had been recommended to him as a servant, and his congregation voted in favour of his immediate resignation. (67) The Established Church Presbytery of Cupar investigated the affairs of the Parish of Strathmiglo in 1834 and after a prolonged battle the parish minister whose infirmity had been the source of trouble which led to the investigation surrendered his parish into the hands of presbytery as if it were vacant. (68) The power of the Established Church presbytery was as in many other ways inhibited in such matters by its connection with the state, and where ministers demitted office a great deal of negotiation may sometimes have taken place in private. In 1852 following reports of scandal attaching to the Reverend John Ferrier, Parish Minister of Auchtermuchty he demitted office but it is

clear that before he had done so O.T. Bruce, the patron of the parish, had entered into an arrangement with him to pay \$100 immediately and \$70 per annum until he had received a total of \$600. (69)

There is a danger in such a review of the disciplinary activities of the church courts that they are made to appear legalistic and formal. No doubt often they may have been. This impression is heightened by a report that Cupar Baptist minister and his office-bearers felt that they were not doing their duty if they did not have someone to censure each week. (70) Nevertheless there are occasions when the records suggest that Kirk Sessions realised that this was part of the cure of souls and no purely legal formality. The Burgher Kirk Session of Auchtermuchty record in their minutes that they spent some time conversing with a member being censured for adultery for his conviction. (71) The records of Collessie Free Church too contain evidence of this realisation. In 1850 a censured member complained of his treatment by the Kirk Session who replied that they had acted in all tenderness and affection because he had a soul to be saved. (72) Individual members of the Kirk Sessions also were sensitive to the weaknesses which often moved human beings. In 1825 after Thomas Chalmers, then at the height of his popularity, had preached in Cupar the Kirk Session of Cupar Secession Church took into their consideration the fact that a number of their congregation stole away to hear him. It was decided that the moderator should deal with such 'promiscuous hearers'. Having visited the nearest offender the minister listened to her account of Chalmers' sermon and as he left informed her of his errand and added,

"I do not like to say anything to you about it, for I fear if I had as little to hinder me as you had I would be there too." (72)

The growth of understanding and tolerance of this sort united with a rapidly changing society in which the traditional authorities were losing their powers made the retention of the church's disciplinary function difficult and explains the desire to lighten the burden which offenders were asked to carry.

v(b) - Discipline

- (1) J.K. Cameron (Editor) - The First Book of Discipline p.165
- (2) Mair - Digest pp.376, 377, 386, 389.
I.M. Clark - A History of Church Discipline in Scotland p.142
- (3) Auchtermuchty PCKS 1832 19/8/1833, 22/1/1846, 1863 4/6/1867
Auchtermuchty UP(N)KS 4/12/1858
- (4) Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. 11/11/1805
Auchtermuchty UP(N)KS 4/12/1858
- (5) Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. 11/11/1805, 6/12/1805
- (6) Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess 5/1/1820
Mair - Digest p.387
- (7) Collessie PCKS 1852 - 60
- (8) Collessie PCKS 1851 1852 - 60
- (9) Collessie PCKS 1772 1793 - 1800
- (10) Strathmiglo PCKS 1863 1863 - 5
- (11) Strathmiglo PCKS 1863 - 5
- (12) Auchtermuchty PCKS 1832 8/10/1859, 12/10/1859
- (13) Ibid. 7/4/1860
- (14) Ibid. 16/4/1860, 17/4/1860
- (15) Collessie PCKS 19/8/1844
- (16) Mair - Digest p.556
Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. 2/9/1799
- (17) Ibid. 19/9/1805
- (18) Auchtermuchty PCKS 1832 3/2/1857
- (19) Edenshead USC minutes 4/7/1848, 9/7/1848
- (20) Auchtermuchty PCKS 1832 12/4/1859
- (21) Collessie PCKS 4/7/1851
- (22) Ibid. 13/5/1856
- (23) Collessie PCKS 1722 25/3/1798
Collessie PCKS 1833 12/6/1833, 19/4/1835, 7/11/1847
Auchtermuchty PCKS 1832 4/10/1836.
Newburgh PCKS 1773 14/9/1805
- (24) Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. 27/10/1805
Strathmiglo PCKS 1863 14/10/1863
Newburgh PCKS 1773 27/6/1830, 11/11/1832

- (25) Auchtermuchty PCKS 1832 4/10/1836
- (26) Strathmiglo PCKS 8/1/1847
- (27) Newburgh PCKS 1773 22/3/1840, 29/3/1840
- (28) Auchtermuchty UP(N)KS 9/2/1854
- (29) Ibid. 11/2/1854, 20/4/1854
- (30) Collessie PCKS 1833 18/12/1838
- (31) Kilmany PC minutes 13/7/1844
- (32) Newburgh PCKS 1773 9/6/1839, 23/6/1839, 17/7/1839, 7/8/1828
- (33) Fife Herald 9/7/1840
- (34) Newburgh PCKS 1773 11/7/1820
- (35) Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. 25/2/1799
- (36) Strathmiglo PCKS 3/7/1863
- (37) Clark - Discipline p.163
- (38) ~~Newburgh~~ PCKS 1773 23/6/1793, 30/6/1793
- (39) Collessie PCKS 1772 2/3/1800
Nonimail PCKS 1725 2/3/1800
- (40) Collessie PCKS 1772 20/3/1796
- (41) Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. 20/10/1816, 27/10/ 1816
- (42) Newburgh PCKS 1773 30/6/1793
- (43) Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. 3/2/1794
- (44) Newburgh PCKS 1773 1/4/1815
- (45) Ibid. 13/3/1808
- (46) Collessie PCKS 1772 13/3/1814,
- (47) Fife Herald 25/8/1825
- (48) Auchtermuchty UP(N)KS 14/1/1849, 30/5/1849
Auchtermuchty UP(E)KS 8/6/1854
- (49) Ibid. 25/9/1854
- (50) Ibid. 16/8/1855
- (51) Ibid. 29/1/1861
- (52) Nonimail PCKS 6/4/1845
- (53) Kilmany PC minutes 11/2/1844
- (54) Edenshead USC minutes 29/3/1827

- (55) Nonimail FCKS 1820 30/5/1829, 28/6/1829
Ibid. 1862 7/12/1862, 11/12/1862
- (56) Ibid. 31/1/1864, 8/10/1865, 20/10/1865
- (57) Auchtermuchty FCKS 1/5/1865, 28/4/1857
- (58) Hair - Digest p.386f
- (59) Auchtermuchty FCKS 10/3/1849, 10/5/1850
Jumbog OPR vol.4 12/4/1850
- (60) Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. 26/5/1811
Collessie FCKS 1772 8/12/1793, 6/5/1804
- (61) Hair - Digest p.387
- (62) Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. 13/5/1810
- (63) Collessie FCKS 6/8/1862, 30/9/1862, 6/11/1862
- (64) Auchtermuchty FCKS 3/1/1844
- (65) Fife Herald 9/7/1840
- (66) - Digest p.389
- (67) Fife Herald 13/7/1826
- (67) Ibid. 8/3/1832, 15/3/1832
- (68) Ibid. 8/12/1834, 11/6/1835
- (69) HMB - Letter from O.T. Bruce to rev. R. Williamson, Collessie dated
10/12/1852
- (70) Rem. Cupar p.127
- (71) Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. 5/2/1810
- (72) Rem. Cupar p.72f

VI - SOCIAL CONCERNS

(a) Poor Relief

Until the passing of the poor law of 1845 the relief of the poor rested in the hands of Kirk Sessions supported by the heritors in rural areas and the magistrates in burghs. ⁽¹⁾ The funds available for this purpose were drawn from several sources - the dues collected for the use of the parish mortcloth, mortifications for the benefit of the poor, the proceeds of fines, extra collections at the celebration of the sacrament of communion, ordinary collections at the church door from which the Kirk Session were obliged to pay half to the heritors and in some parishes the rent of seats in the parish church. ⁽²⁾ At the close of the eighteenth century these resources appear to have been adequate for the requirements of the various parishes. In some parishes heritors and Kirk Sessions were empowered to grant a badge to paupers entitling them to beg within the bounds of the parish. ⁽³⁾ A great deal of unlicensed begging also seems to have taken place. The first minister of Cupar at the end of the eighteenth century complained of the number of beggars in the burgh during his ministry writing:-

"Perhaps there is no town in Scotland of the same extent where a greater number are daily seen infesting the street." ⁽⁴⁾

Nevertheless at that time there were only five who were classified as begging poor by the same writer. ⁽⁵⁾ In the rural parishes begging was probably uncommon although it was reported of Monimail Parish that there no begging was allowed. ⁽⁶⁾

Two classes of poor were admitted. The infirm or ordinary poor received allowances as a legal right, having their names placed on the poors' roll while those who were temporarily in need owing to illness or accident were allowed to receive help at the discretion of Kirk Sessions whose members were normally the almoners as well as overseers of the funds, although heritors did take some interest in the affairs of

the funds. (7) In practice the burden of administering the funds sometimes devolved on the parish minister. In 1857, when Henry Cook, Parish Minister of Kilmany died, the heritors and parochial board noted the fact that until the Poor Law of 1845 came into force the management of the funds for the poor was a responsibility that was left entirely to him, while in 1832 the minister of Dunbog Parish where there were no elders, resigned the poors' fund into the hands of the heritors because he no longer felt able to undertake its supervision and distribution due to his age and infirmity. (8) In the Parish of Collessie the minister of the parish received a sum of £2. 1. 8d. for aid to the occasional poor from June to the end of December 1844, a payment which suggests that he may have disbursed this amount personally. (9)

The amount paid to individual paupers was so small that it can have only been intended as a supplement to relief from other sources. A minister writing in 1793 remarked:-

"They scarce get more than what is necessary to buy shoes" and went on to add that the poor:-

"commonly get from some friend or neighbour". (10)

This was true of Cupar area as well. In 1793 the roll of regular poor at Auchtermuchty numbered thirteen and the total amount disbursed to them in January amounted to only eighteen shillings and sixpence. (11) In 1801 at Newburgh the amount normally paid to individual paupers on the roll was two or three shillings each month although in that parish there were two who received very much more, one receiving eight shillings and eight pence and the other five shillings each month. (12) Two years later the monthly rate at Newburgh had fallen and many of the 1801 pensioners had had their allowances cut by one shilling to two shillings a month and the amounts normally paid there declined to somewhere between one shilling and two shillings, although there were still individuals who received pensions considerably above this. Even these larger sums showed signs

of having been reduced since the beneficiary who had received eight shillings and eight pence in 1801 now had only six shillings and eight-pence. ⁽¹³⁾

The minutes of Newburgh Kirk Session in 1800 contain references to the high price of provisions and in 1801 to the:-

"present season of scarcity"

and the decline in the allowances paid in that burgh may have reflected the fact that the price of food had fallen in the intervening period. ⁽¹⁴⁾

As the nineteenth century wore on it appears that the relief afforded to regular paupers increased. In 1819 it was reported to the heritors of Monimail that there were twenty-one beneficiaries receiving allowances totalling four guineas each month, while in 1820 twenty-two monthly pensioners were regularly receiving £5. 2. -d. ⁽¹⁵⁾

In 1828 the treasurer of the fund laid his accounts before a meeting of the Kirk Session whom he informed that the poor roll consisted of sixteen names receiving usually an allowance of four shillings a month. ⁽¹⁶⁾

The increase did not reflect a uniform level of relief in every parish.

In 1834 the paupers' roll at Collessie had ten names and the maximum allowances paid in January amounted to two shillings and sixpence per week while the remaining recipients received amounts varying between sixpence and two shillings. ⁽¹⁷⁾

Allowances at Balmerino, on the other hand, appear to have remained at the lower levels prevailing in some of the other parishes earlier in the century. In 1840 the usual pensions paid there by the Kirk Session were still in the region of three to four shillings a month. ⁽¹⁸⁾

The available funds were administered with great care. An entry in the accounts of Collessie Parish where the funds were largely raised by church door collections and augmented as necessary by the heritors, reads:-

"This day Mrs. Drysdale gave up her weekly allowance of one shilling and sixpence and Annie Staig was raised from one shilling to two shillings." (19)

The accounts at Strathmiglo record the payment of one shilling to a disabled soldier while a further six shillings was paid to drive him to the Parish of Auchtermuchty. ⁽²⁰⁾ Not all relief was given in cash. In 1836 it was reported that the practice in the Parish of Dunbog was to give help in cash very rarely and for the tenant of the land on which a pauper lived to be authorised by the Kirk Session to give the appropriate value in meal and potatoes. ⁽²¹⁾ An allusion to this method of payment may occur in the accounts of Newburgh for 1801 when an entry indicated that a pauper was paid at:-

"the rate of a peck of bear meal or three shillings", while the 1803 accounts note payments at the rate of a firloot and a peck of oatmeal. ⁽²²⁾

Some aid was generally given in kind. Often this took the form of the payment of house rent or the purchase of clothing but the aid most generally given this way was a supply of coals which in many parishes appears to have been given annually. ⁽²³⁾ At Auchtermuchty this practice persisted as late as 1864 when the distribution provided every recipient with four hundredweights of coal. ⁽²⁴⁾ A distribution of meal also appears to have taken place in the winter months in some parishes. ⁽²⁵⁾

One of the concerns of Kirk Sessions was to ensure that the children of impoverished parents should not be deprived of a suitable education or training that would enable them to make themselves useful members of society. The accounts of most parishes note the fact that payments were made for education of children in the parish school. ⁽²⁶⁾ The Kirk Session of Auchtermuchty made arrangements for two young people to be indentured to a firm of pin manufacturers in Edinburgh in 1799. ⁽²⁷⁾ This latter course saved the session the necessity of supporting them and therefore may have been a demonstration of thrift rather than concern for the children.

The First Book of Discipline distinguished between those who were able to work and those who were note-

"We are not patrons for stubborn and idle beggars...who make a craft of their begging...But for the widow and fatherless, the aged, impotent or lamed who neither can or may travel for their sustentation we say that God commands his people to be careful". (28)

Kirk Sessions appear to have been careful to make this distinction. In 1819 it was reported to the heritors of Monimail that they had twenty-one pensioners all of whom were unable to work except for six:-

"who work a little". (29)

In 1831 the list of pensioners at Collessie included one lady who was noted as being blind. (30) Even those who were unable to work did not necessarily have their names added to the paupers roll. In January 1840 the daughter of a weaver appeared before Collessie Kirk Session in an attempt to have her father's name added to the session's list of pensioners. His age was about sixty-five and he had been unable to follow his usual employment for about two months as a result of illness and general infirmity. The Kirk Session heard the application and decided this was not a case that warranted them in affording any stated parochial relief, since the man had two sons and a daughter living with him and well able to support themselves and him. Nevertheless in view of the fact that legal proceedings were threatened they referred the matter to the heritors. They, having heard the minister, decided that the applicant was not permanently disabled but ordered the Kirk Session to give him ten shillings as a temporary relief with the suggestion that if he was displeased he must transmit to them a statement in writing of his own situation and the situation of each member of his family. (31) Some reluctance was apparently felt by many individuals who might normally have been entitled to relief to submit themselves to this type of examination and in some parishes special funds were kept for the assistance of such individuals. In 1814 Thomas Chalmers reported that he had received fifteen guineas for the poor over two years and that he had distributed this separately from the Kirk Sessions money since many of the parishioners of Kilmany who were reluctant to accept money from the Kirk Session were less

reluctant to be given financial assistance from individuals.⁽³²⁾ It is also clear that Chalmers felt that some beneficiaries would receive money more willingly if their names did not appear in the records and the suggestion that a degree of ignominy attached to the acceptance of such money cannot be ignored.

Despite the fact that some parishes such as Cupar and Strathmiglo had almshouses at some time during the nineteenth century the maintenance necessary for the support of the mentally deranged was a heavy burden on the funds available for the poor.⁽³³⁾ In 1840 it was reported that the cost to Balmerino's heritors of keeping two 'idiots' in the Dundee Asylum was twenty pounds a year, the necessary sum of money being raised by a voluntary assessment.⁽³⁴⁾ Eighteen years earlier even the provision of suitable accommodation for a mentally disturbed person seems to have provided problems for Newburgh. In 1822 the wife of a resident of that burgh became insane and she was originally confined in Perth Prison, the expense being paid by the poor's fund of her home town.⁽³⁵⁾ After a period of three months detention there she was returned to Newburgh where an apartment was fitted up for her in the town house but after a further three months she was finally sent to the asylum at Dundee.⁽³⁶⁾ The financial support for this unfortunate woman was a problem to the burgh as well. While she was confined in the town house at Newburgh the Kirk Session authorised one of the town officers to go through the town making a special collection for the poor in general and for the support of the insane woman in particular.⁽³⁷⁾ In 1825 the Town Council of Cupar took into their consideration an extract minute of a meeting of the heritors when they had agreed to raise fifty pounds for the support of some poor deranged persons. The town council agreed to contribute ten guineas on the understanding that they did not hold themselves liable for any assessment for such purpose.⁽³⁸⁾ Relief was not always given in such a churlish spirit. Collessie heritors receiving a report, accompanied by a medical certificate that a young person in the parish was mad,

accepted the expense of supporting the individual in view of the poverty of his parent and suggested to the doctor that he should consult with the patient's mother as to whether she would prefer him to be sent to Perth or Dundee Asylum. (39) The physically handicapped were also given provision and Monimail Parish supported a deaf and dumb girl at the institution for those so handicapped at Edinburgh in 1815. (40)

For those who were classified as 'casual poor' the aid given was very varied. At Strathmiglo help was given to one woman so that she might take her daughter to a doctor in Kirkcaldy, while another woman received a mutchkin of wine while she was ill and a third was given assistance with the cost of repairing her spinning wheel. (41) At Monimail a man was given ten shillings to take him sea-bathing, and at Dunbog a bed was made out of the parish's old communion tent for the wife of a man who had joined the army. (42) The same Kirk Session allowed a widow a guinea when she lost a cow while in 1842 they made a payment to a benefit society so that one of their beneficiaries might not forfeit his rights. (43)

Under normal circumstances aid to the occasional poor represented a small part of the amount paid out by the Kirk Sessions but the proportions varied with circumstances. During the Napoleonic Wars payments were frequently made to members of the armed forces and their families travelling across the country. (44) At Cupar where the number of beggars had been a greivance at the beginning of the nineteenth century it was reported that in 1816 £10. 1. -d. had been paid out in one day to soldiers wives, widows and children and for Cupar the travelling poor remained an expense even in 1843. (45)

Nevertheless the most important factor in deciding the numbers of casual poor even very early in the nineteenth century was the economic condition of the area. In 1808 when the payments to paupers on the roll at Auchtermuchty were in the region of four pounds a month the occasional poor did not require to be paid more than nineteen shillings and sixpence in any month and frequently received very much less. (46) In 1801 when

the Kirk Session of Newburgh had been concerned about scarcity and high priced provisions the amount paid to the casual poor at Auchtermuchty was frequently in excess of seven pounds a month, while the regular paupers received only a total amount in the region of two pounds a month. (47) Such fluctuations inflicted a great strain on the entire system of poor relief and if the amounts required to help the poor do not seem large they were sufficient to be a burden to those who were expected to make the necessary provision. In 1812 and 1813 a failure of trade created widespread distress which led to a meeting being called in Cupar to consider the state of the poor. The gathering decided:-

"that the ordinary collections at the church doors were totally inadequate to relieve the increased number and additional wants of the poor at this time"

and it was accordingly resolved:-

"that a general subscription should be opened for the benefit of the poor of this parish" (48)

Less than five years before the Kirk Session of Newburgh Parish had appointed an extraordinary collection to be made for the poor and such actions were to constitute a feature of the years that lay ahead. (49)

In 1817 at Strathmiglo the heritors and other prosperous residents of the parish raised £117. 8. 8¹/₂d. by private subscription and voluntary assessment of the heritors for the relief of distress amongst the labouring poor in the severe depression that affected the entire area. (50) At Cupar in that

depression the fund similarly raised was entrusted to a special committee. (51) To increase the supply of food into Cupar this latter committee offered premiums of three guineas, two guineas and one guinea to those who brought the largest quantity of white fish whether fresh or slightly salted to Cupar Market in the three months following the tenth of January 1817, but this plan was dropped in favour of the opening of a soup kitchen. (52) A scheme of public works was commenced at Cupar but by April of 1817 the committee was obliged to ask the several congregations of Cupar to make a collection for the labouring classes and poor and it

was not until August of that year that equipment of the soup kitchen was sold. (53) At Strathmiglo the committee appointed there made its last contribution towards the relief of the poor in February 1818. (54)

The distress of 1816 and 1817 was caused by lack of work coupled with the high prices for food and in the subsequent years there were many occasions when trade was depressed. (55) Very early in the nineteenth century there were widespread complaints that there were insufficient funds to relieve the poverty which existed in many parishes. In 1836 concern was being expressed about the inadequate level of church door collections at Auchtermuchty. The parish minister spoke to the congregation on the subject and there was an improvement but one of the heritors refused to pay voluntary assessments and was suspected of having abandoned the traditional method of support for the poor while anxiety was being expressed that a legal assessment would become necessary. (56) Even as early as 1832 a committee of Cupar heritors had met to consider the necessity of a legal assessment. (57) Ministers seem to have opposed the introduction of legal assessments. (58) Nevertheless the question of such a method of providing the resources needed continued to raise its head. (59)

By 1839 the position at Newburgh had become quite critical. Disbursements there exceeded income as a result of the increased number of paupers. The Kirk Session decided that in the circumstances it was necessary to curtail the amount of relief that individuals received in order to avoid the imposition of an assessment on the parish. The names of two widows were struck from the roll and the names of children above nine years of age were also apparently removed. (60) In that same year Cupar heritors assessed themselves to the extent of two hundred and forty pounds but there is evidence that the burghs were reluctant to take any part in such assessments. A year elapsed before Cupar paid its proportion of the 1839 assessment and at Auchtermuchty too the

town council appear to have been disinclined to take any share in the relief of poverty. (61) In 1841 some of the Cupar heritors also refused to pay their proportion of the amount agreed and a committee of the heritors there decided that unless these contributions were paid a compulsory assessment would be imposed and in 1843 the heritors authorised a joint general meeting with the provost and magistrate of the burgh and the Kirk Session to make the necessary arrangements for its imposition. (62) In 1844 it was finally agreed:-

"to tax and stent the haill inhabitants within the parochion" according to the estimation of their income. (63) The heritors at Auchtermuchty sought legal advice on how to operate a legal assessment in 1842 and in September of that year at a meeting of the magistrates Kirk Session and heritors it was proposed to impose a legal assessment for the year beginning second August 1842. (64)

It was not only the burghs that experienced this difficulty. In 1840 the Kirk Session of Collessie Parish met to consider the poor fund and there too noted the increased expenses and decreasing income. (65) They urged greater liberality on the heritors and offered to renounce the administration of the fund in order to allow the heritors to appoint a clerk and managers. In 1843 the funds available for the poor at Collessie were exhausted and the Kirk Session appealed to the heritors for funds with the warning that should fresh supplies not be forthcoming the weekly allowances to the poor would be stopped and prosecutions might then be raised by the poor against the heritors. (66) In this parish the Disruption was an additional blow as it must have been to many other parishes. The heritors meeting in 1844 heard that collections at the new Free Church draw support away from the Parish Church while the Free Church congregation contributed nothing to the support of their poor. The meeting decided to draw the attention of Makgill Crichton, by then an elder of the Free Church of Collessie, to this aspect of the situation. (67)

The Seceders appear to have supported their own poor before the Disruption. In 1813 the Burgher congregation made regular payments of two and three shillings and as early as 1794 the accounts record allowances made to the poor of the congregation. (68) The amounts involved in providing for the poor of this congregation were not large and in 1830 never exceeded four shillings a month although in 1829 they did rise to seven shillings. (69) In addition to such provision the dissenting congregations of Auchtermuchty did upon occasion make contributions to the parochial poor fund. In 1805 the Relief, Burgher and Antiburgher congregations of Auchtermuchty contributed a total of £9. 13. 6d. and in 1808 a similar amount of which the Burgher congregation contributed three pounds. (70) These payments may have reflected the response to a special appeal since in 1817 the Committee for the Relief of the Distress at Cupar appealed to the several congregations in the town to make a collection for the labouring poor. (71)

After 1844 Collessie Free Church did begin to provide some assistance to its poorer members. Sometimes this occurred after the communion service but special collections were raised for driving coals to the poor although after 1845 poor relief was regulated by the new poor laws and such assistance must be seen as a supplement to what was received from the parochial board. (72) At Auchtermuchty provision was being made for the Free Church poor by the congregation and regular payments commenced as early as August 1844. (73) The practice adopted at Auchtermuchty appears to have been that of taking a regular amount from the church door collections. In May of 1848 the Free Church General Assembly passed a declaratory act 'Anent Church Door Collections and Ministers' Supplements' which led the deacons' court to discontinue this method in compliance with its terms and for the future they decided to have special collections for that object but these appear to have taken place at infrequent intervals. (74) This practice was in conformity with the procedure adopted by the East congregation of

the United Presbyterian Church in Auchtermuchty who had an annual collection for their own poor. (75)

The passing of the Poor Law of 1845 while effecting a major change did not mean that the Kirk Sessions of the parish churches had nothing further to do with the welfare of the poor. The accounts of the established Churches still record payments to the needy although it is clear that in most parishes this was intended as a supplement to what was given by the parochial board. (76) In some parishes the parochial board remained the same individuals as those who had previously had the administration of the funds while in some areas the parish minister remained to become chairman of the new authority and in some after 1846 voluntary assessments were retained. (77)

From the outset of the period the changing economic structure of the society had created a situation in which cyclical unemployment was liable to create such an increase in the numbers of the temporarily unemployed that any voluntary system such as had been able to deal with all but the most serious of earlier problems would be unable to deal adequately with the consequent distress. The repeated appeals for subscription became necessary as the cycle of trade depressions made increasing demands on the resources available. Although there was a strong feeling amongst the clergy and probably amongst the heritors against a legal assessment the 'hungry forties' lead some heritors at least to refuse to make any further voluntary contributions. The strain was greatest in the burghs where the populations were most dependent for their prosperity upon the success of the linen trade and it was there that the need for a new structure became most apparent but even in some rural parishes Kirk Sessions had observed the increasing difficulties and there must have been many on both sides of the distribution of poor relief who regarded the new system with satisfaction.

VI(a) Poor Relief

- (1) E. Mechie -- The Church and Scottish Social Development 1780 - 1870 p.65
- (2) T. Ferguson -- The Dawn of Scottish Social Welfare p.186f
 Mair - Digest p.116
 Strathmiglo OPR vol.5 Abstract of Accounts.
- (3) Ferguson - Welfare p.167
- (4) Leighton - Fife p.26f.
- (5) OSA vol.17 p.149
- (6) Ibid. vol.2 p.405
- (7) Mechie - Social Development p.66
 Nonimail, Heritors' minutes with Accounts 1810 - 1840 p.57f.
 Collessie HR 1775 20/2/1840
- (8) Kilmany PC minutes 31/10/1857
 Dunbog HR 6/4/1832
- (9) Collessie HR accts 1813 31/12/1844
- (10) OSA vol.8 p.371
- (11) Auchtermuchty PCKS 1766 21/1/1793
- (12) Newburgh F 1773 4/5/1801
- (13) Ibid. 3/12/1803
- (14) Ibid. 7/8/1800, 4/5/1801
- (15) Nonimail HR 1810 pp.57f, 63
- (16) Nonimail PCKS 1820 4/2/1828
- (17) Collessie HR Accts. 1813 After 17/1/1834
- (18) Leightc. - Fife p.80
- (19) Collessie HR Accts 1813 - 16/9/1833
 Leighton - Fife p.106
- (20) Strathmiglo PC Disbursements 29/3/1798
- (21) Leighton - Fife p.94
- (22) Newburgh PCKS 1773 4/5/1801, 3/12/1803
- (23) Nonimail HR 1810 17/7/1818
 Auchtermuchty PCKS 1832 4/5/1840
 Strathmiglo OPR vol. 3 18/3/1808
 Strathmiglo PC Disbursements 29/10/1796
 Collessie HR Accts. 1813 (Coal Account) 1813 - 1848

- (24) Auchtermuchty PGKS 1863 5/1/1864
- (25) Strathmiglo OPR vol.3 9/4/1816, 27/2/1818, 18/1/1812, 11/1/1814
- (26) Dunbog OPR vol.3 21/11/1797, 1/11/1798
Collessie HR Accts. 2/4/1820
- (27) Auchtermuchty PGKS 1766 2/6/1799
- (28) Cameron - Discipline p.112f
- (29) Monimail HR 1810 p.57f
- (30) Collessie HR Accts. 1813 Oct. 1831
- (31) Collessie PGKS 1833 12/1/1840
Collessie HR 1775 20/2/1840
- (32) Kilmany OPR vol.1 12/8/1814
- (33) Leighton - Fife p.27
Strathmiglo OPR vol.3 9/4/1816, 27/2/1818, 18/1/1812, 11/1/1814
- (34) Leighton - Fife p.80
- (35) Newburgh PC Accts 1812 31/8/1822
- (36) Ibid. 26/11/1822
- (37) Newburgh PGKS 1773 14/12/1822
- (38) Cupar HR 1807 23/9/1825
- (39) Collessie HR 1775 11/12/1840
- (40) Monimail PGKS Accts 1815 6/3/1815
- (41) Strathmiglo OPR vol.3 15/5/1808, 8/1/1809, 27/1/1814
- (42) Monimail Parish Church Kirk Session Accounts 1804 - 1814 15/6/1813
Dunbog OPR vol.3 Accounts 20/6/1805
- (43) Ibid. 21/6/1803, 1/8/1842
- (44) Strathmiglo OPR vol.3 17/6/1809, 7/10/1809, 17/7/1811, 28/2/1812
- (45) Cupar HR 1802 2/8/1816,
Cupar HR 1839 18/9/1843
- (46) Auchtermuchty OPR vol.2 Accounts 6/4/1801, 4/5/1801, 19/5/1801, 4/8/1801
- (47) Newburgh PGKS 1773 4/5/1801.
- (48) Cupar HR 1802 14/1/1813
- (49) Newburgh PGKS 1773 1/8/1812
Fife Herald 14/12/1826, 9/1/1832, 28/4/1842
Fifeshire Journal 23/6/1842

- (50) Strathmiglo HR 1817 31/1/1817
- (51) Cupar Heritors Committee for the Relief of the Distressed 1816 - 1818
13/12/1816
- (52) Ibid. 27/12/1816, 10/1/1817
- (53) Ibid. 17/1/1817, 29/3/1817, 22/8/1817.
- (54) Strathmiglo HR 1817 3/2/1817, 4/2/1817
- (55) Cupar Heritors Committee for the Relief of the Distressed 1816 - 1818
10/1/1817
- (56) HMB Letter to O.T. Bruce dated 24/5/1836
- (57) Cupar HR 1829 24/10/1832
- (58) Ibid. 24/10/1832
HMB Letter to O.T. Bruce from the Rev. R.J. Johnston dated 17/5/1836
- (59) Cupar HR 1829 5/10/1833
- (60) Newburgh FCKS 1773 14/5/1839
- (61) Cupar HR Papers 1830 12/7/1839, 2/7/1840, 24/7/1840
- (62) Cupar HR 1839 21/7/1841, 9/8/1843
- (63) Ibid. 5/9/1844, 6/9/1844
- (64) HMB Memoir containing the opinion of the solicitor general for P.G. Skene and O.T. Bruce dated 6/9/1842. Excerpt from a minute of a meeting of the magistrates, heritors, and kirk session dated 9/9/1842
- (65) Collessie FCKS 1833 24/8/1840
- (66) Ibid. 7/5/1843
- (67) Collessie HR 1841 19/7/1844
- (68) Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. Accts 5/12/1813, 29/12/1794
- (69) Ibid. 17/1/1830 - 18/11/1830 passim, 18/1/1829 - 20/12/1829 passim
- (70) Auchtermuchty OPR Vol. 2 Accounts 24/1/1805, 24/1/1808
Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. Accts. 17/1/1808
- (71) Cupar Heritors Committee for the Relief of the Distressed 1816 - 1818
29/3/1817
- (72) Collessie FCDC 22/6/1846, 26/11/1849
- (73) Auchtermuchty FCKS 4/3/1844
Auchtermuchty Free Church Cash Book 1844 - 1859 11/8/1844
- (74) Auchtermuchty FCDC 7/8/1848, 5/3/1853
- (75) Auchtermuchty UP(E)KS 12/1/1862

- (76) Strathmiglo PC Accts 5/1/1852
- (77) Campbell - Balmerino p.418f
Dunbog OPR vol.3 accounts 14/8/1862
Collesio HR 1841 24/10/1845

VI(b) Education

The Scottish reformers believed whole-heartedly in the education of both old and young and it was part of their intention that

"every severall kirk have one school-maister appointed"

but enlightened as this scheme, was during the following three centuries it never became more than an outline of what might have been. ⁽¹⁾ In

1696 an 'Act for the setting up of Schools' was passed by the Scottish parliament imperfectly realising the ideal of a school in every parish. ⁽²⁾

On the heritors was settled the responsibility for providing a

commodious house for the school and raising a salary for the schoolmasters of not less than one hundred merks and not more than two

hundred merks per annum. Where disagreement arose presbyteries were given leave to apply to the commissioners of supply for the county

who might see to the business of establishing a school and providing

the schoolmaster's salary. ⁽³⁾ Subsequent legislation gave statutory

authority to what may have prevailed as a general practice that

supervision of the parish schools was in the hands of the parish

minister and that the schoolmaster after his election by the heritors

should be examined by the presbytery and required to sign the confession of faith and the formula of the Church of Scotland. ⁽⁴⁾

At the end of the eighteenth century discontent with the state of Scottish Education was fairly general in the country. Reports in the Old Statistical Account deplored the decline in mental standards but the

blame was placed less upon the teaching profession than upon those who were unprepared to provide the necessary emolument to attract educated

men. ⁽⁵⁾ The accounts of Falkland and Auchtermuchty drawn up in 1792

and 1793 respectively both comment on the fact that the schoolmasters

in these burghs were badly paid, while in the rural Parish of Dunbog

it was noted that the schoolmaster's salary was only one hundred merks,

the inadequacy of which the writer considered to be one of the greatest

evils since, in his opinion, no man fit to teach could live on such an amount. (6)

In 1803 the government recognised that some improvement had to be made in the position of the profession and its remedy was provided by the 'Parochial Schoolmasters (Scotland) Act' which raised the salary of teachers to a minimum of three hundred merks and a maximum of four hundred merks, amounts which in sterling totalled £16. 13. 4d. and

£22. 4. 5d. (7) The act also provided for a revision of salary every twenty-five years with the value of a chalders of oatmeal to be used as a criterion when the revision took place with maximum and minimum limits of two chalders and one and a half. (8)

The opportunity was not welcomed as one to be generous. At Dunbog where the poverty of the schoolmaster had constituted a grievance earlier the heritors met and agreed to increase the salary to the new minimum allowing a further two bolls of oatmeal each year to compensate for the lack of a garden. (9)

The following month they announced his salary as being twenty pounds and in the subsequent disagreement the schoolmaster appealed to the Quarter Sessions at Cupar where the court fixed his salary at twenty pounds with two bolls of oatmeal. (10)

Not all dominies were so poor. If the master at Dunbog received only hundred merks his colleague at Collessie had eight pounds sterling, while the schoolmasters at Cupar were comparatively prosperous since in 1795 the rector of the Grammar School in the burgh had a salary of thirty pounds in addition to the fees paid by his pupils and the master of the English School seventeen pounds. (11)

After 1803 schoolmasters never returned to the grinding poverty that must have marked their lives earlier. In 1829 the heritors of many parishes took the opportunity to increase the amount paid to the maximum permissible. Its value by then amounted to £34. 4. 4½d. and in some parishes allowances were still being paid for the lack of a garden. (12)

Most parochial schoolmasters had additional sources of income. At Monimail forty pounds Scots of a mortification

was available to the holder of the office. The Kirk Session regarded it as being paid to the schoolmaster and precentor but it may have been the schoolmaster's by right. (13) Independent of such benefaction his colleague at Auchtermuchty, David Ballingall, was appointed Session Clerk and Treasurer of the poor in 1795, while his successor, Archibald Dickson, was Session Clerk with his wife as a clerk at the Post Office. (14) At Kilmany the dominie was Session Clerk and heritors clerk towards the middle of the century, and at Dunbog the additional offices were Session Clerk and precentor to which was added registrar for the parish and postmaster with his wife as postmistress. (15) The amounts earned in these assorted offices varied but in 1840 the school teacher at Kettle was thought to earn between sixty and seventy pounds a year despite the fact that his pupils fees did not yield very much. (16)

During the 1840's some schoolmasters felt that their situation needed amelioration and the feeling found expression in a letter to the Fife Herald in April of 1848 when the writer complained that his profession had been deserted by the ministers of the Church of Scotland. (17) Nevertheless the sympathy which had been notable in the attitude of ministers to teachers at the beginning of the nineteenth century had not completely disappeared for that same month saw the Presbytery of Cupar prepare a petition for parliament on this very subject. (18) If the situation was felt to be bad in 1848 six years later it became worse. In 1854 when the heritors met to consider the salaries of the dominie for the next twenty-five years the average value of a chaldar of oatmeal had been fixed at £13. 6. 3⁴d. which meant that the statutory maximum salary had been reduced to £26. 12. 7¹d. (19) The heritors obviously felt that this new level was totally inadequate and in many parishes it was decided to retain the old level of salary for at least one year. (20) In 1859 legislation permitted the heritors to meet again for the purpose of modifying the figures fixed five years before and on this occasion

the new maximum salary amounted to £27. 11. 9d. and again in some parishes the higher figures prevailing before 1854 were continued. (21)

With sympathy so clearly felt even by those responsible for fixing and providing their payment it could only be a matter of time before a more satisfactory situation was established and in 1861 the passing of the 'Parochial and Burgh Schoolmasters Act' ensured that the minimum salary should not fall below thirty-five pounds while the maximum was established at eighty pounds per annum. (22)

Other schools existed alongside the parochial schools, since anyone could start a school subject to a right of supervision by the local presbytery. (23)

In 1840 Kilmany had two female schools in addition to the parochial school, Collessie a female school with another school at the village of Monkston, Newburgh two general schools and three female schools, and Strathmiglo a subscription school, two unendowed schools and an infant school. (24)

In addition to the schools existing in that year the Disruption of 1843 led to the appearance of a system of Free Church Schools when the courts of the Established Church chose to exercise its power and dismiss those teachers who connected themselves with the Free Church. (25)

The livelihoods of such members of the profession as were attached to these schools must have been precarious in the extreme. In 1840 the unendowed school at Monkston in the Parish of Collessie had twenty-five pupils on whose fees the teacher was entirely dependent. (26)

Even the Free Church schoolmasters did not enjoy an income comparable with those of their parochial equivalents despite the efforts and organisation of their church. In 1847 the Deacons' Court of Collessie Free Church were hoping to obtain twenty pounds per annum for their teacher. (27)

Incomes could be very much lower even than this for in the Parish of Dalmerino the salary paid to the mistress of the female school in 1840 amounted to ten pounds with the fees paid by her pupils who numbered about forty. (28)

Traditionally other sources of income had been allowed in addition

to the offices which were open to them. Shrove Tuesday, known in Scotland as Fastern's E'en, had been the occasion of cock-fighting from which schoolmasters had drawn additional resources but by the early part of the nineteenth century this practice was dying out and the principal source of income other than the salary arose from pupils' fees. (29) Being fixed by the heritors these varied between parishes but probably on the whole the area had a rough standard rate. (30) At Monimail the fees at the close of the eighteenth century were one shilling a quarter for English, two shillings for writing, two shillings for arithmetic, two shillings and sixpence for latin while a course in book-keeping cost ten shillings and sixpence. (31) In 1829 the fees in the same school varied between two shillings and five shillings per quarter while book-keeping courses were priced at seven shillings a course for single entry and fourteen shillings for double entry. (32) In 1838 the fees at Kilmany Parish School varied similarly between two shillings and five shillings per quarter while those who wished to take all the subjects with latin were charged ten shillings a quarter. (33) At the Free Church School in Monimail a similar level of payment was levied although in this school the fees were based on a four week month which meant that pupils being charged eight pence for English reading, ten pence for English reading with elementary writing, arithmetic and geography and one shilling for the more advanced classes while appearing to pay less were in fact paying almost the same, although at this school the charges specifically included six pence for coals at the beginning of each winter quarter. (34) Even as late as 1861 little change had taken place in the level of fees. At Collessie in that year attendance at the parochial school for reading cost twopence a week, writing, arithmetic, grammar and geography a half-penny, the maximum amount payable in fees being three and a halfpence per week. (35) The value of the fees was probably reduced by the fact that it was apparently the local practice for the master to receive fees for only three quarters each year. (36)

Outside the parochial system many of the schools might not have survived without wealthy benefactors. One of the female schools in the Parish of Collessie was housed in a building erected by the Earl of Leven and Melville who also partly endowed it while in Hazleton Wells in the Parish of Kilmany another such school was supported by Mrs. Gillespie of Montquhanny who paid the teacher a salary of ten pounds per annum. (37) At Ceres there were schools associated with local mills and also with the Secession Church. (38) Some of them probably also owed their existence to their remoteness from the parish school. When a meeting was arranged at Ladybank in 1853 to organise the erection and opening of a new school to be supported by public subscription the fact that Ladybank was three miles from the parish school and one mile from any other school was given as one of the reasons for the undertaking. (39)

The Parish of Cupar was unique in the area in that there appears to have been no parochial school although it seems that there may have been a burgh school. About 1795 two schools met in the burgh in a building erected by the magistrates and council who were the patrons some seventy years earlier. The principal teachers were both paid by the town and in one known as the Grammar School, Latin, French, geography and other subjects were taught while in the other, known as the 'English School', the subjects were principally English, writing, arithmetic and book-keeping. (40) Over the years these schools were used by the children of the landward area as well as those of the burgh but in 1823 the establishment of an Academy was proposed and the use of the old school building granted for this purpose. (41) In October of that year a petition was presented to the Presbytery of Cupar complaining of the lack of a parochial school and observing that the lack had not been felt until alterations in the fees of the burgh schools had precluded many families from obtaining instruction for their children. (42) Presbytery appointed a committee of ministers to call a meeting with

the heritors and report back. ⁽⁴³⁾ In February of 1824 the heritors obtained a legal opinion to the effect that they need not supply a school and presbytery finding it difficult to make any progress in the matter referred it to the General Assembly. ⁽⁴⁴⁾ In the summer of 1824 the Assembly approved of presbytery's action and as it was thought that the matter might have to be resolved in the civil courts presbytery was urged to watch the situation taking such steps as might lead to the erection of a parochial school or a school connected with the Established Church to which parishioners had access. ⁽⁴⁵⁾ In 1827 Cupar Presbytery appointed a committee to consult with the Burgh's provost and magistrates and at a subsequent meeting the desirability of having a parish school was agreed and the suggestion had been made that a motion would be raised at a meeting of the council urging that body to accept part of the cost even though they did not accept that any legal liability rested upon them. ⁽⁴⁶⁾ The heritors at that time continued to insist that the statutory responsibility lay with the Town Council. There the matter rested and although the Town Council intervened to have fees at the academy reduced some years later the matter was never conclusively settled and as late as 1861 the burgh still lacked a parochial school. ⁽⁴⁷⁾

Generally throughout the area each parish had a school and many had several and in consequence few families must have lived so far from a school that it was impossible for their children to receive an education even in a rapidly expanding population where children must have represented a significant proportion of the total. In the Parish of Collessie in 1860 the parochial school had seventy pupils and the Ladybank Subscription School attracted one hundred and twenty-five while in 1864 the number of scholars were eighty-four and ninety-five respectively. ⁽⁴⁸⁾ Earlier, in 1847, the number of pupils of the Free Church School in that parish had been in the region of one hundred in

the winter and between eighty and ninety in the summer. (49) At Monimail the attendance at the Parish School demonstrated this fluctuation between summer and winter attendance. In 1820 the heritors noted the attendance at the school as being seldom under seventy in the summer and between ninety and a hundred in the winter. (50) In that parish the trend was probably explained by a complaint in 1836 that children of eleven and twelve were sent to learn trades or to herd cattle and therefore received little education. (51) At Kilmany, where social conditions must have been similar to those in Monimail, it was nevertheless reported in 1838 that all the children over the age of seven could attend school and that there was almost no one in the parish who could not read and that a great part of the lower classes could also write and keep accounts. (52)

During the period the Presbytery of Cupar exercised its right to examine both schools and school teachers. In 1807 and in 1811 teachers from Balmerino appeared before the presbytery in order to be authorised to teach. (53) The accounts of the parish churches carried a note in the early part of the century of the cost of printed schedules for the purpose of reporting the examination of the schools, and in 1823 and 1824 committees of presbytery examined the schools of the Burgh of Cupar. (54) Such occasions could provide an opportunity for favourable advertisement, especially for the non-parochial schools. In 1823 a testimonial was given to a subscription school in Auchtermuchty taught by a certain William Peterkin:-

"We, underscribed ministers of the Presbytery of Cupar, being appointed a committee for the examination of the schools in the western district of the presbytery...certify that we have repeatedly examined the school taught by William Peterkin in Auchtermuchty and have uniformly been particularly well satisfied with his manner and diligence in teaching and with the accuracy and progress of his scholars...and we have willingly given him this public testimony..."

It was signed by four parish ministers including the parish minister of Auchtermuchty and appeared in the Fife Herald. (55) The annual

inspections reveal that the system of parochial schools had become dwarfed by the system of private schools which had grown up in the area. In 1824 in addition to the nineteen public schools which employed twenty-four masters there were twenty-eight private schools with thirty masters and twelve female schools.⁽⁵⁶⁾ In 1826 it was estimated that there were only four dissenters who were teachers but the local press regarded this figure as suspect since few of the reports made the distinction.⁽⁵⁷⁾ By 1840 it had become apparent that only about one third of the children attending schools were being educated by the parochial schoolmasters and with the Disruption still to come it was apparent that the existing system was no longer able to deal with the needs of the community.⁽⁵⁸⁾

The buildings in which the schools met were sometimes unsuitable for the use being made of them. In 1820 the schoolmaster at Monimail drew the heritors attention to the fact that his schoolhouse covered an area no more than twenty feet by fifteen and a half feet and was able to accommodate no more than forty or fifty pupils, and four years earlier their attention had been drawn to the fact that the accommodation was inadequate for the number of pupils then attending and that he had anticipated an increase of twenty or more.⁽⁵⁹⁾ At Collessie in 1830 the parochial teacher complained to the heritors that he needed better seating accommodation for his pupils and invited the heritors to visit the school.⁽⁶⁰⁾ The committee who made the visit reported that the school was very defective having several holes in the floor which were dangerous to the pupils. They had ordered repairs to the floor and also to the plasterwork but the roof also required repairs and additional seats and desks were desirable.⁽⁶¹⁾ The buildings that housed the schools had often had a varied career. In 1795 the two burgh schools in Cupar were housed in a building erected seventy years before. It consisted of two flats one of which was occupied by the classical and

drawing departments. This flat had housed a small theatre and for some time several French officers who were prisoners of war had been detained there. (62) As the nineteenth century wore on an increasing number of parishes were provided with new school-houses but in many cases the provision of these new premises may have been forced on the heritors by the increasing population for in 1862 the Collessie heritors were informed that for fourteen years their schoolmaster had been teaching seventy children in premises incapable of accommodating more than sixty and that at that stage his successor had eighty pupils. (63) Not surprisingly that meeting decided that a new school-house should be provided.

Equipment in the schools may have been sparse. In 1850 the government inspector of schools recommended that Collessie Parish School should be provided with globes and diagrams of objects. (64) In 1862 an inventory of equipment in the school listed thirteen maps, a sketch of the geological crust of the eastern hemisphere, two sheets of illustrations of natural philosophy, while the art department possessed a selection of diagrams and drawing models and the reader is left to wonder what equipment had been provided for the school before the official recommendation. (65) Maps were provided for Free Church School at Collessie in 1846 and when Monimail heritors enabled a subscription school in the parish to balance its accounts they are recorded as having obtained maps, instruments and furniture. (66) If expenditure on equipment does not appear prominently in the accounts payments made for books occur more frequently and are spread over almost the entire period. (67)

The subjects taught varied over a wide range of subjects. English reading was obviously the basic subject. At Monimail the charge for teaching this subject at the Parochial School was two shillings per quarter, while at Monimail Free Church School the charge was eight pence for every four weeks, and charges at this level were made in other

parishes. (68) John Birrell one of the ministers of the Parish of Cupar in 1840 commending the success of the educational system in that parish wrote:-

"There is not a child in the parish of five years of age and upwards but is able to read, or is at school acquiring that power."

while of the rural Parish of Dunbog it was noted in 1840

"There is no person in the parish above the age of childhood but what is able to read and write." (69)

The educational opportunities available to children in the area were able to provide more than the ability to read. At Kilmany Parish School in addition to reading and writing, arithmetic, English grammar, geography and Latin were offered to students. (70) At Monimail the syllabus offered by the parochial school of Monimail listed English, reading, spelling, writing, arithmetic, geometry, algebra, logarithms, land surveying, latin, Greek and book-keeping. (71) In towns the range of subjects could be even wider. At Newburgh in addition to the three 'r's pupils were offered latin and Greek and as befitted a river port, navigation and nautical astronomy. (72) In 1822 the presbyterial inspection of the local schools revealed that in spite of the number of schools which offered a wide range of subjects of the three thousand pupils in the area only one hundred and twenty included latin among the subjects they were studying. (73) Nevertheless in 1823 when Miss Gray's School for Young Ladies was examined before a large audience in Cupar her pupils were able to present reading, recitation, writing, French, music, drawing, geography, and needlework. (74)

The men appointed to the post of parochial schoolmaster were in consequence expected to be omniscient. An advertisement for a teacher for Strathmiglo Parochial School in 1836 required the candidates to have:-

"A knowledge of Greek, Latin, French, and the elementary parts of mathematics"

in addition to other branches, while a similar post at Dairsie demanded from those who applied a knowledge of English, writing, arithmetic, mensuration, geography, Latin and French. (75) Those qualified to teach such a range of subjects were not elected by the heritors until they had satisfied themselves as to their character and often other considerations might enter into the thoughts of those who were responsible for selecting the successful applicant. (76) In 1841 the minister of the Parish of Auchtermuchty seems to have been influenced in recommending a candidate by the desire to obtain the advanced methods of teaching then being followed in the Edinburgh Sessional School for his own parish. (77) Prior to the passing of the Parochial and Burgh Schoolmasters Act of 1861 all appointments were subject to authorisation by the Established Church Presbytery and even the teachers of private schools were required to take an oath of loyalty to the government and to subscribe the Confession of faith and formula. (78) Religious orthodoxy was required in all schools that were specifically denominational and when the teacher of Meninail Free Church School left that communion he was dismissed. (79) Many of the schoolmasters so appointed had received a considerable education. It was reported of the parochial schoolmaster appointed to Balmerino in 1830 had studied at St. Andrews University while others were known to be licentiates of the Established Church. (80) Sabbath schools made their appearance very early on in the period but local opinion for many years appear to have seen them as having two quite distinct functions. Thomas Chalmers understood them to be for the purpose of giving religious instruction and felt that they were quite unnecessary in Scotland. (81) The heritors at Cupar a few years later agreed with this understanding of their function and thought them useful for removing idle and disorderly boys from the streets on a sabbath evening. (82) At Collessie, on the other hand, the Sabbath School was attended by adults and children and was apparently seen as an opportunity

of retaining a familiarity with educational attainments acquired before leaving school. (83) Perhaps not surprisingly in view of the emphasis on bible study and catechising to be found in week day schools the scriptural and religious emphasis eventually predominated even at Collessie where in 1864 the precentor of the parish church was informed that he would be expected to officiate at the parish church sabbath school immediately after the services of public worship. (84)

By the 1840's dissatisfaction with the educational system prevailing began to be clearly heard. In addition to the complaints of the schoolmasters interdenominational criticism was leveled at the schools, but the divided voices of the churches created problems. Both the United Presbyterian Church and the Free Church were agreed that the system of parochial schools was unsatisfactory. In February of 1850 the Free Church Presbytery of Cupar arguing that the parish schools had ceased to answer the design for which they had been erected urged the value of the system adopted by the Free Church which if aided by government grant would furnish a better security for the continuance of religious instruction in schools which in the opinion of the presbyters was an indispensable part of the education of youth. (85)

The United Presbyterian Church took the view that the parochial schools were based on objectionable principles and in particular attacked the provision of religious instruction in schools on the grounds that it is the duty of parents and churches to provide such education. (86) In the 1850's when the matter was before parliament the Established Church Presbytery of Cupar argued that the parish schools were an original part of the presbyterian church which had been established at the Reformation and the separation of these schools would essentially alter the constitution of the system impairing the efficiency and causing the quality of instruction to deteriorate while it would also endanger the only security for the godly upbringing of the young, founded on a

fixed standard of faith and doctrine. (87) In March of 1854 the Established Church Presbytery sent a petition to parliament expressing their alarm at the provisions of the bill then under consideration and in particular at the provision which would have had religious instruction at separate hours from the ordinary business of the schools and the lack of tests of the Christian faith and principles of teachers. (88) By then the existing system had only a short time to survive. In 1861 the 'Moncrieff Act' deprived presbyteries of their power to examine teachers and restricted the church's control in educational matters to the influence which could be exercised by the local minister who remained a member of the appointing body. (89)

The necessity of the national system of education was becoming clear by the middle of the nineteenth century when the statistics available indicated that the bulk of the population of school age received their education outside the parochial system. The intervention of the state had been recognised as necessary from 1834 when financial aid was made available for Scottish schools. (90) State finance carried with it obligations and to ensure their enforcement government supervision carried out by inspectors became unavoidable. (91) While the act of 1861 left the church almost without any authority in a sphere where it had exercised exclusive powers of supervision it was not until 1872 that the state assumed the full responsibility for a duty which the church had perhaps never been entirely able to bear but which it had discharged not completely without honour.

VI (b) Education

- (1) Cameron -- Discipline p.130
Hechie -- Social Development p.136
- (2) H. M. Knox -- Two Hundred and Fifty Years of Scottish Education p.3f
- (3) Ibid. p.3f
- (4) Hechie -- Social Development p.137
- (5) J. Scotland - The History of Scottish Education vol.1 p.174
- (6) OSA vol.4 p.447, vol.6 p.346
- (7) Scotland - Education vol.1 p.175
- (8) Knox - Two Hundred p.23
Scotland - Education vol.1 p.175
- (9) Dunbog HR 1799 6/9/1803
- (10) Ibid. 25/10/1803, 15/12/1803
- (11) OSA vol.17 p.153
Rem. Cupar p.37
- (12) Dunbog HR 1799 25/3/1829
Collessie HR 1775 3/4/1829
Campbell - Balmerino p.481
- (13) Monimail HR 1810 5/7/1822, 30/1/1824, 7/6/1825
- (14) Auchtermuchty PCKS 1766 2/2/1795, 20/2/1820
Census Returns 1851 - Auchtermuchty (section vi p.33)
- (15) NSA p.555
Dunbog OPR vol.3 9/11/1838
Dunbog HR 1799 6/8/1856

Crown v Bell Precognition of Barbara Honeyman or Black.
- (16) Leighton - Fife p.240
- (17) Fife Herald 13/4/1848
- (18) Ibid. 20/4/1848
- (19) Kilmany FC minutes 4/5/1854
Collessie HR 1841 17/5/1854
Dunbog HR 1799 14/5/1854
Monimail Heritors Minutes and Accounts 1840 - 1875 4/5/1854
- (20) Ibid.
- (21) Dunbog HR 1799 14/5/1854

- (21) Dunbog HR 1799 22/11/1859
 Monimail HR 1840 21/10/1859
 Kilmarnock PC minutes 12/11/1859
 Collesdale HR 1841 28/10 /1859
- (22) Knox - Two Hundred p.32f
- (23) Mechie - Social Development p.138
- (24) Leighton - Fife pp.63, 106, 172f, 196.
- (25) Mechie - Social ^udevelopment p.147
- (26) Leighton - Fife p.106
- (27) Collesdale FCDC 9/5/1847
- (28) Leighton - Fife p.80
- (29) Campbell - Balmerino p.481
- (30) Scotland - Education vol.1 p.125
- (31) CSA vol.2 p.405
- (32) Monimail HR 1810 29/4/1829
- (33) Leighton - Fife p.63
- (34) Monimail FCDC 16/10/1849
- (35) Collesdale . 1841 7/1/1862
- (36) NSA p.527
- (37) Leighton - Fife pp. 106, 63.
- (38) NSA p.527
- (39) Collesdale HR 1841 30/9/1853
- (40) Rem. Cupar p.37
- (41) Cupar IL 1823 12/12/1823
Fife Herald 9/1/1823, 16/1/1823
- (42) Ibid. 2/10/1823
 Cupar HR 1823 12/12/1823
- (43) Ibid.
- (44) Ibid. 27/2/1824
 Cupar heritors Papers Bundle dated 1797 - 1830 Minute dated 25/5/1824
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- (45) Fife Herald 24/6/1824
- (46) Ibid. 12/7/1827
 Cupar HR 1829 20/11/1829

- (47) Fife Herald 17/3/1835
Westwood - Directory p.57
- (48) Collessie POKS 1851 after 1/1/1860, after 25/12/1864
- (49) Collessie FCDC 9/5/1847
- (50) Monimail HR 1810 21/7/1820
- (51) NSA p.45
- (52) Ibid. p.555
- (53) Campbell - Balmerino p.477
- (54) Newburgh PC Accts. 1812 9/2/1819
Dunbog OPR vol.3 accounts 8/12/1818
Fife Herald 18/3/1824, 21/8/1823
- (55) Ibid. 31/7/1823
- (56) Ibid. 6/5/1824
- (57) Ibid. 11/5/1826
- (58) Ibid. 7/5/1840
- (59) Monimail HR 1810 21/7/1820, 2/8/1816
- (60) Collessie HR 1775 24/11/1830
- (61) Ibid. 7/5, 40
- (62) Rem. Cupar p.37
- (63) NSA pp.530, 110, 780.
Westwood - Directory pp.24, 47, 99.
Collessie HR 1841 7/1/1862
- (64) Ibid. 27/12/1850
- (65) Ibid. 7/1/1862
- (66) Collessie FCDC 17/3/1846
Monimail HR 1840
- (67) Monimail PC Accts 1804 January 1811
Dunbog OPR vol.3 accounts 1/8/1842
- (68) Monimail HR 1810
Monimail FCDC 18/10/1849
NSA pp.653, 575, 608, 432, 45.
- (69) Leighton - Fife p.172
- (70) NSA p.555
- (71) Monimail HR 1810 29/4/1829

- (72) Leighton - Fife p.172
- (73) Fife Herald 9/5/1822
- (74) Ibid. 21/8/1823
- (75) Ibid. 10/3/1836, 22/10/1835
- (76) Monmail HR 1793- 23/9/1804
- (77) HMB - Letter to O.T. Bruce from rev. R.J. Johnston dated 28/5/1841
- (78) Knox - Two Hundred p.52
Campbell - Balmerino p.477
- (79) Monmail FCDC 21/10/1850
- (80) Campbell - Balmerino p.481
Fife Herald 26/12/1822
Leighton - Fife p.127
- (81) Hanna - Memoir vol.1 p351
- (82) Cupar HR 1802 11/12/1819
- (83) NSA p.37
Fife Herald 3/1/1833
- (84) Collessie HR 1841 30/9/1853
Monmail HR 1810 29/4/1829
Monmail P 1862 8/8/1864
- (85) Fife Herald 14/2/1850
- (86) Ibid. 5/4/1849, 30/3/1854
- (87) Ibid. 10/2/1854
- (88) Ibid. 30/3/1854
- (89) Scotland - Education vol.1 p.229f
- (90) Ibid. p.231
- (91) Ibid. p.232

CONCLUSION

The burgeoning population of the North of Fife during the first half of the nineteenth century accompanied a notable if unequally distributed increase in the general prosperity of the area; both developments heralded the possibility that a greater number of churches would be required and could probably be supported. There was, also, a tradition of dissatisfaction with some aspects of the life of the Established Church which had already found expression in the formation of dissenting congregations, even before the close of the eighteenth century while the parish churches were faced by a serious challenge from the non-religious developments during the first fifty years of the nineteenth. The dependence of the parish system on endowments and financial support which was regulated by the civil courts and over which the spiritual courts had little control was a handicap which made change and innovation difficult at a time when parishes with an industrial, rather than a rural, character were attracting growing numbers. Nevertheless, the advance of the Secession and Relief Churches was not a planned progress but the result of a haphazard combination of events which, significantly, resulted in the new congregations appearing in the growing burghs and villages. It was not until the Disruption of 1843 that any attempt at a planned setting up of churches took place under the authority of the Free Church. Even then, the arrangements of the establishment were not reproduced exactly and it was again the agriculturally based parishes which were often left unprovided with a place of worship for those who came out of the Established Church in 1843. The exceptional cases of Abdie, which had a Free Church, and Newburgh, which lacked one, merely highlight this state of affairs since the Free Church for the rural parish of Abdie was erected in the suburbs of the town of Newburgh. It is noteworthy, too, that in the years of declining population which followed 1851 the congregations of the United Presbyterian and Free Churches were those which suffered most severely from reduced numbers and experienced the greatest anxiety over money matters. Numerically the appearance of so many congregations separated from the Established Church had the effect of reducing that body to the status of a

Christian sect although it remained the most numerous denomination in the North of Fife. Inevitably, too, the number of competing congregations whose membership was drawn from parishes beyond the bounds of those in which their places of worship stood created strong denominational loyalties which the 'Voluntary Dispute' and the 'Ten Years Conflict' heightened.

In spite of the toll of children's lives taken by disease, families of four or five were common, and, in consequence, children represented a considerable part of the population and their education was an important responsibility for the community. The supervision of their instruction was entrusted to the courts of the Established Church, and while almost every parish was provided with a parochial school little had been done over the years for their improvement or extension, or towards increasing the total number in the area, since the arrangements for providing the necessary finance lay outwith the powers of the church. As the period drew to a close many of the parochial schools were found to be suffering from considerable over-crowding. Alongside the parochial pattern other establishments had emerged to supplement the official educational system. Like the expansion of ecclesiastical dissent these institutions represented an unplanned exploitation of local circumstances and it was left to the Free Church, in the years following 1843, to begin a more systematic development along sectarian lines. At the beginning of the 1840s the number of these schools had increased to the extent that only a minority of children were receiving their education from the parochial schoolmasters. The old system had become increasingly inadequate, and while the establishment could not adapt to the new requirements others were prepared to fill the vacuum. In the light of the totally unregulated nature of this extension some system of unified supervision was needed but since the disunity of the churches, in the aftermath of the struggles of the 1830s and 1840s, made this impossible, the ground was prepared for the subsequent intervention of the state.

The freedom with which wage-earners were able to travel between employ-

ment also created problems for the churches. Despite periodical decisions by Kirk Sessions who wished to ensure that new members were in full communion with the congregations they had left, the multiplicity of unco-operative denominations and the rapidity with which some men moved between employers made it possible for disgruntled communicants to move between the various ecclesiastical bodies. The principal problem of worker mobility recorded in the session minutes was that of individuals who absconded and thereby managed to avoid the discipline of the church. Whether this was a cause of the decline in the severity of the church's censures or merely a symptom of an already weakened authority can only be a matter for speculation, but as the nineteenth century wore on an increasing number of offenders chose to ignore citation by the spiritual courts. The development of the bothy system was regarded by many ministers in rural parishes as a cause of moral and spiritual destitution, while those who lived in bothies frequently changed their place of work and were more likely to be sympathetic to those who chose to flout the rebukes of the Kirk Sessions. Despite attempts to ensure that the eldership was drawn from a wide social background some Kirk Sessions were composed predominantly of the more prosperous members of society, and in an area where the chartist movement had made many people aware of the differences between the relatively prosperous voters and the non-voters the decline in the disciplinary power of the church may also be indicative of a reluctance amongst the lower classes to accept the rebukes of their social superiors. Nevertheless, there were many people to whom the strictures of ministers and elders were a necessary social convention, and some for whom it represented a means whereby the burden of guilt might be lifted from their souls, and undoubtedly for many Kirk Sessions it remained an important feature of the cure of souls.

It was not merely the increasing population which changed the face of the church. The area was able to support its more numerous inhabitants, and there is an indication that a real increase in wealth had taken place, since many enjoyed a better standard of living, and textile workers, whose

standard of living was so liable to decline, increased in number throughout most of the period. While the Corn Laws were enforced those whose livelihood depended on the land enjoyed appreciable gains. Outside of the Establishment every denomination was dependent on the generosity of worshippers and church door offerings represented their principal source of income. Such offerings also reflected the general prosperity of the area and as the nineteenth century advanced toward its mid point these churches held their own. The debts with which many of them were almost permanently burdened never became unupportable and it is significant that it was during the so-called 'hungry forties' that the Free Church came into existence and carried through an ambitious plan of church and school building at considerable cost.

The Established Church was, of course, financially dependent on the system of endowments and on a body of heritors whose prosperity was associated with the profitability of land and was, therefore, free of the anxiety caused by the need to raise money for its own support. In the North of Fife, the tie to the land of many parishioners was becoming tenuous and the opposition to the Corn Laws created barriers between the land-owning heritors and those whom the churches were intended to serve. This contrasted unfavourably with the situation in the Secession and Relief Churches where, although the congregations were often dependent on the wealthier members of their fellowship, these were frequently merchants and tradesmen whose opposition to tariff protection for agriculture was well-known.

Although ministers of all denominations tended to be drawn from families of the middle and professional classes and underwent a very similar preparation for admission to their ministries, the numbers available to the Relief and Secession Synods for induction and ordination was smaller in total than the candidates for the ministry of the parish churches. The applications for a vacancy in a parochial charge were frequently so numerous that it was necessary, when the patron allowed some degree of popular choice, for a short list to be prepared. For the dissenting congregations the

situation was quite different; having presented a call to a minister or probationer they might find that he was the subject of more than one. In these latter churches, too, there was a more regular movement of preachers between congregations. At the outset of the nineteenth century there appears to have been relative equivalence between the stipends of the parish and other ministers, and although none were rich all enjoyed a more comfortable and secure existence than many who worshipped with them. Throughout the nineteenth century parish ministers enjoyed a rising income which by the middle of the century had given them a much more comfortable style of life than all but the wealthier residents of their parishes. Outside the Establishment, on the other hand, ministers' stipends did not appreciably increase and were at times subject to reduction. Commentators on the subject in the 1860s reflected unfavourably on the matter and ministers of some of the United Presbyterian congregations must have experienced a decline in their standard of living. Ministers of the Free Church were protected from the worst effects of an impoverished congregation by the operation of the central Sustentation Fund, and if their stipends were often somewhat less than those of their parochial colleagues they were not uncomfortable and often they enjoyed the considerable advantage of a more modern church and a more desirable manse.

Despite the identification of the Established Church with support for the views of the toxy party and of the dissenting churches with the views of those who advocated political reform during the 1830s the various congregations each attracted a cross-section of society. In practice the fact that the parish churches administered the Poor's Funds for most of the period attracted to its ranks many among the poorer sections of the community, particularly since other denominations made only irregular attempts to support the poor and restricted such aid to their own paupers. Nevertheless, no hard and fast rules can be drawn. Where two congregations of the same denomination existed side by side they tended to draw their membership from different social groups. Land-owners,

while being popularly thought to favour the Episcopalian Church are to be found in the ranks of every denomination, although in the years following the Disruption some of these families were active in their support of the Free Church. Among merchants and traders there existed, in the fifty years from the beginning of the nineteenth century, a decided predisposition to worship within the congregations which came together to form the United Presbyterian Church. As the century wore on tenant farmers were often to be found prominently amongst the supporters of the parish churches and this group of men were both prosperous and respectable.

The eldership tended to contain a high proportion of the upper levels of society. Notable among the elders of the Establishment were the tenant farmers, representing a group that was enjoying an increasing prosperity but older established proprietors of land also held the office. In most other denominations a similar situation prevailed despite attempts to create some kind of balance; including popular election as a method of nominating elders-elect. Despite the apparent similarity in the men ordained the enthusiasm with which office-bearers embraced the work involved differed widely between the parochial Kirk Sessions and the sessions of other denominations. Dissenters and Free Church elders attended the meetings of their courts with a degree of regularity which indicates an enthusiasm for the responsibilities of the office. By contrast, the record of the parochial elders appears lamentable. Many parishes found themselves with insufficient elders to form a quorum and some were totally without elders sometimes for a period of several years. Evangelicals and non-intrusionists attributed this to the dead hand of moderate ministers but while the state of the eldership probably owed a great deal to the enthusiasm, or lack of it, displayed by the moderator of the session, there were clergymen opposed to moderatism and all its works who, nevertheless, experienced this difficulty. In the absence of clear indications of the reasons for this situation it can only be conjectured that the degree of sympathy entering into the relationship between minister and congregation must have been an import-

ant factor. The popular connection between the Established Church and the Tory party would have tended to make sympathy difficult for a minister whose congregation had different political allegiances, while for the parish minister of known non-intrusion predilection there might be difficulties, in an agricultural community, in finding elders to work with him.

Even among the churches which stood in the evangelical tradition of dissent men sometimes, possibly for religious reasons, evinced a reluctance to be ordained to the office. A study of the church in Aberdeen, published in 1974, suggested that in congregations where finance always represented a matter for concern the appointment of prosperous members to positions of authority indicated that they were expected to give a lead in financial, as in spiritual matters.¹ It is, therefore, possible that weavers and others of limited income might have some reluctance to accept an unspoken obligation that was beyond their capabilities. The support for the chartist movement among weavers and the working classes generally, in the area indicates that since both tories and whigs sometimes came under the whip of chartist scorn, political animosities in the years after 1830 would have added tensions within dissenting congregations that would have tended to create further hindrances to the acceptance of ordination. Regrettably, the information available among North Fife congregations provides no certain indications of the reasons for the refusals to accept the responsibility and attempts to suggest grounds for the difficulty which sometimes arose can only be guesswork.

The increased general prosperity enjoyed during the first half of the nineteenth century is reflected in the outburst of church building and rebuilding that occurred. It affected every denomination and as early as the 1830s the old austere structures were being replaced by premises which displayed a tendency to more elaborate architectural styles, culminating eventually in gothic buildings which came to be regarded as the appropriate kind of erection in which to worship. Many of the

heritors who bore the expense had episcopal connections and had travelled extensively in England. Initially, their influence was important in the introduction of this fashion, but it quickly won favour with dissenters whose buildings began to acquire similar characteristics. Prosperity did not find its expression exclusively in architecture. Inside the buildings a greater attention was paid to the comfort of the worshippers. Heating, and later, gas lighting were provided for the comfort and convenience of congregations and consideration was given to the internal decoration of previously unadorned buildings.

New ideas regarding the church were not, however, restricted to the fabric of the building. A fresh approach to worship became apparent. The disappearance of the long communion tables, criticism of the hallowed practice of lining out the psalms, an increasing formality associated with the admission of new communicants all indicated contact with a world of hitherto alien ideas. The extension of the railway system was accompanied by a new attitude to church obligations which was probably unacceptable to those who financed the other innovations. Cheaper travel made it possible for families to visit neighbouring towns and villages on the fast days and other 'holidays' associated with communion seasons. Services on these occasions were less well attended and early in the second half of the century there were signs that they were soon to disappear.

At the end of the eighteenth century the clergy of all churches had been strong supporters of the constitution although even then the parish ministers had felt free to write critically of the administration of the burghs. In the 1830s by contrast, the Established Church was identified as the opponent of reform, while dissenters were thought to be kindly disposed towards that aim. Political reform commended itself to many in the North of Fife, and in consequence, when the practice of financing churches by voluntary giving (a practice originally forced on the churches outside the Establishment by circumstances) was adopted by these churches as

an ecclesiastical principle it led to the two causes being united in the popular mind. The relationship between church and state was one which had long vexed the church in Scotland. 'Voluntaryism' represented a new look at that connection which was beginning to cause renewed embarrassment within the Established Church itself. The virulence of the attack on the establishment principle, however, owed a great deal to the fact that the ruling party in that church decided to attempt a scheme of church extension for which it pressed the desirability of endowment by the state. By drawing away less wealthy members, chapels of ease so financed and representing part of the Established Church created difficulties for other denominations, struggling to be self-supporting.

Church Extension, which represented a second view of the church's relationship with the state developed within the Establishment itself. Its advocates saw the future of the church lying in expansion through the erection of chapels endowed by the state and the recovery of the authority of the spiritual courts by the development and application of a theory of co-ordinate jurisdiction of civil and spiritual courts, particularly in the matter of the translation and induction of ministers. It was on this point, as is well-known, that the crisis which culminated in the Disruption was focussed. Far from being a dispute over obscure theological principles it was in this struggle and the debate over the financing of churches that the ideas were eventually formed that enabled the modern church to come to birth. The principal political parties at Westminster took little part in the events and the efforts of individual politicians only created additional confusion. The Tories to whom so many in the Establishment looked for a solution were probably inhibited and prevented from granting the non-intrusionists the repeal of patronage by fear of giving offence to the patrons among whom they numbered many supporters. The Whigs had a traditional support among dissenters many of whom were pressing for the disestablishment of the church and to whom the question of patronage was irrelevant. No simple solution was available and the

struggle was allowed to continue to its culmination in 1843. Religious differences within the country were exacerbated by it. The new Free Church was opposed to both the Established Church whose members were believed to have sold out, while it also carried the memory of the bitterness with which the leaders of the new United Presbyterian Church had attacked non-intrusionists over the question of endowments.

The years of contention between the churches were not entirely disastrous. While the Disruption unquestionably weakened the Establishment for a time, that body proved to have a totally unexpected resilience which enabled it to remain an important ecclesiastical force in the area. Relieved of the responsibility for the administration of a system of support for the poor which was no longer adequate to the requirements of modern society and having eventually been released from its obligations for education in a world where that duty was becoming more onerous, the Establishment emerged from 1843 with courts that had been awakened to their responsibilities, and congregations conscious of the need to support the proclamation of the gospel at home and abroad.

Among the older dissenting churches the 'Voluntary Dispute' had brought a popular realisation of the common ground which existed between them and made an important contribution to the union of the United Secession and Relief Churches. That union also cast an interesting light on the relationship of many congregations to the unions and divisions which marked the era. In 1847 those few congregations which chose to remain outside the United Presbyterian Church did so because the minister chose to do so, and it was only when the minister decided his final course of action that the future of the congregation was decided. Thus we may conclude that ministerial attitudes were often decisive and that many who left the parish churches in 1843, in all probability did so less from a firm attachment to the great principle of non-intrusion than from a sense of loyalty to a respected pastor.

The appearance of the Free Church on the Scottish ecclesiastical scene represented a new phenomena. Dedicated to the idea of establishment, certainly in its early years, it attempted to reproduce the parish system of churches and schools on the basis of an entirely voluntary support. Some degree of its success arose, undoubtedly, from the careful financial and other arrangements made (as we have seen earlier) even before the Disruption took place, and not least, from the promised creation of a sustentation fund for the payment of stipends. Although its life was in some ways overhung by financial anxiety it did demonstrate the possibility of erecting a national church without state financial support, except for peripheral aid in the sphere of education. In the subsequent years of the century it drew closer to the United Presbyterian Church which in the union of the two traditions of dissent had begun to move towards a similar conception of itself. These ideas became the means of creating the modern Church of Scotland which still carries within its fellowship residual congregational loyalties with roots in the first half of the nineteenth century.

NOTES

Conclusion

(1) A. A. MacLaren -- Religion and Social Class p.121

APPENDIX

Parish	1801	1811	1821	1831	1841	1851	1861	
Abdie	723	768	834	870	1,508	1,486	1,381	
Auchtermuchty Burgh Landward	2,060	2,403	2,754	3,225	2,394 962	2,673 1,031	1,215 2,070	Auchtermuchty suburbs inc. in burgh 1851
Balmerino	786	921	965	1,055	993	945	815	
Ceres	2,352	2,407	2,840	2,762	2,944	2,833	2,723	
Collessie	930	954	1,030	1,162	1,346	1,520	1,530	
Dreich	405	403	394	419	430	386	377	
Dults	699	766	853	903	889	915	800	
Dunpar Burgh Landward	4,463	4,758	5,892	6,473	(3,567 (3,191	4,005 3,422	4,980 1,770	
Dairsie	550	553	589	605	669	708	638	
Dunbog	232	185	176	197	219	220	207	
Dunkeld Burgh Landward	2,211	2,317	2,459	2,658	(1,313 (1,573	1,330 1,772	1,184 1,753	
Flisk	300	318	301	286	270	213	313	
Kettle	1,889	1,986	2,046	2,071	2,312	2,601	2,474	
Kilmarnock	787	781	751	707	659	662	656	
Kilgobbin	339	369	440	430	419	467	410	
Kilmail	1,066	1,160	1,227	1,230	1,162	1,102	1,054	
Kilninnery	201	183	209	188	174	198	179	

Parish	1801	1811	1821	1831	1841	1851	1861	
Newburgh Burgh Landward)	1,936	1,951	2,190	2,642	(2,491 406	2,638 348	2,281* 404	*Believed that part of the town was mistakenly inc. in the Burgh in 1851
Strathmiglo	1,629	1,697	1,842	1,940	2,187	2,509	2,261	
County of Dumfries	93,743	101,272	114,550	128,800	140,140	153,546	155,021	

Compiled from the tables in (1) Comparative account of the Population of Great Britain in the years 1801, 1811, 1821 and 1831. (House of Commons 19.10.1831) pp382f.

(2) Abstract of the Answers and Returns under the Population Act (3 and 4 Victoria C.99) 1841 pp30 and 31.

(3) Population Tables and Report - Census of Scotland 1861 pp 44 - 49.

ABBREVIATIONS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess.	Auchtermuchty Associate Session Minutes 1752 - 1827
Auchtermuchty Assoc. Sess. Accts.	Auchtermuchty Associate Session Accounts Book 1752 - 1850
	Auchtermuchty Free Church Baptismal Register 1843 - 1861
	Auchtermuchty Free Church Cash Book 1860 - 1904
Auchtermuchty FC roll	Auchtermuchty Free Church Communion Roll 1848 - 1882
Auchtermuchty FCDC	Auchtermuchty Free Church Deacons' Court minutes 1844 - 1872
Auchtermuchty FCKS	Auchtermuchty Free Church Kirk Session minutes 1843 - 1880
Auchtermuchty PCKS 1766	Auchtermuchty Parish Church Kirk Session minutes 1766 - 1820
Auchtermuchty PCKS 1832	Auchtermuchty Parish Church Kirk Session minutes 1832 - 1863
Auchtermuchty PCKS 1863	Auchtermuchty Parish Church Kirk Session minutes 1863 - 1923
Auchtermuchty OPH	Auchtermuchty Old Parish Registers
Auchtermuchty UP(E)KS	Auchtermuchty United Presbyterian (East) Church Kirk Session minutes 1852 - 1871
Auchtermuchty UP(E)KS Accts.	Auchtermuchty United Presbyterian (East) Kirk Session Accounts 1854 - 1885
Auchtermuchty UP(N)KS	Auchtermuchty United Presbyterian (North) Church Kirk Session minutes 1844 - 1886 Census Returns 1841, 1851, 1861
Collessie FCDC	Collessie Free Church Deacons' Court minutes 1843 - 1895
Collessie FCKS	Collessie Free Church Kirk Session minutes 1843 - 1885
Collessie HR Accts 1813	Collessie Heritors Accounts 1813 - 1848
Collessie HR 1775	Collessie Heritors' minutes 1775 - 1841

Collessie HR 1841	Collessie Heritors minutes 1841 - 1907
Collessie OPR	Collessie Old Parish Registers
Collessie PC Accts 1772	Collessie Parish Church Kirk Session minutes (Including)Accounts 1772 - 1818
Collessie PCKS 1833	Collessie Parish Church Kirk Session minutes 1833 - 1850
Cupar HR 1802	Cupar Heritors minutes 1802 - 1821
Cupar HR 1823	Cupar Heritors minutes 1823 - 1829
Cupar HR 1829	Cupar Heritors minutes 1829 - 1839
Cupar HR 1839	Cupar Heritors minutes 1839 - 1857
Cupar HR Papers 1797	Cupar Heritors Papers 1797 - 1830
Cupar HR Papers 1830	Cupar Heritors Papers 1830 - 1842
Cupar HR Papers 1842	Cupar Heritors Papers 1842 - 1856
Cupar HR Relief Cttee 1816	Cupar Heritors Committee for the Relief of the Distressed 1816 - 1818
Dunbog HR 1799	Dunbog Heritors Minutes 1799 - 1927
Dunbog OPR	Dunbog Old Parish Registers
Dunbog PCKS	Dunbog Parish Church Kirk Session minutes 1746 - 1938
HMB	Electoral Roll for the County of Fife 1793
Kilmany OPR	Hamilton Bruce Papers
Kilmany PC minutes	Kilmany Old Parish Registers
Monimail HR 1793	Kilmany Parish Church minute book of Heritors, Kirk Session, Parochial Board. 1837 - 1907
Monimail HR 1810	Monimail Heritors' minutes 1793 - 1804
Monimail HR Papers	Monimail Heritors' minutes with accounts 1810 - 1840
Monimail PCKS 1725	Monimail Heritors' Papers
Monimail OPR	Monimail Parish Church Kirk Session minutes 1725 - 1823
Crown v Bell	Monimail Old Parish Registers
	Proceedings of the High Court of Justiciary, Perth. 1865 Crown v Bell

Strathmiglo FCKS	Strathmiglo Free Church Kirk Session minutes 1844 - 1891
Strathmiglo HR 1817	Strathmiglo Heritors Committee for the Relief of the Distressed 1817 - 1818
Strathmiglo OPR	Strathmiglo Old Parish Registers
Strathmiglo PC Collections 1794	Strathmiglo Parish Church Account of Collections 1794 - 1807
Strathmiglo PC Disbursements	Strathmiglo Parish Church Disbursements for the behoof of the Poor. 1794 - 1807
Strathmiglo PC Accts.	Strathmiglo Parish Church Accounts of the Collections at the Church Door and Disburse- ments. 1846 - 1866
Strathmiglo PC Collections	Strathmiglo Parish Church: Church Door collections 1854 - 1884
	Strathmiglo Parish Church Kirk Session Communion Roll 1863 - 1869
Strathmiglo PC Male Heads	Strathmiglo Parish Church Kirk Session: Roll of Male Heads of Families. 1835
Strathmiglo FCKS 1863	Strathmiglo Parish Church Kirk Session minutes 1863 - 1879
Strathmiglo PC Board Retns	Strathmiglo Parish Church Returns to the Secretary of the Board of Supervision.
Strathmiglo RPC minutes	Strathmiglo Reformed Presbyterian Church minutes of the Managers and Congregation 1824 - 1878.

2 Manuscripts in the Possession of, or available through, parish ministers

Auchtermuchty FC Cash 1844	Auchtermuchty Free Church Cash Book 1844 - 1859
Collessie FC Collection	Collessie Parish Church Collection Book of the Poor 1837 - 1847
Collessie FC Roll 1850	Collessie Parish Church Communicants Roll 1850 - 1871
Collessie FCKS 1851	Collessie Parish Church Kirk Session minutes 1851 - 1889
Collessie FC Proclamations	Collessie Parish Church Register of Pro- clamations 1845 - 1864
Edenshead USC minutes	Edenshead United Secession Church minutes of the Congregation and Managers 1826 - 1883
Edenshead USC Birth Register	Edenshead United Secession Church Original Register of Births and Baptisms
Edenshead USC Seat Rents	Edenshead United Secession Church Record of Seat Rents 1834 - 1870
Monimail FCDC	Monimail Free Church Deacons' Court minutes and Accounts 1843 - 1877
Monimail FCKS	Monimail Free Church Kirk Session minutes 1843 - 1868
Monimail HR 1840	Monimail Heritors minutes and accounts 1840 - 1875
Monimail PCKS Accts. 1794	Monimail Parish Church Kirk Session Accounts 1794 - 1800
Monimail FC Accts 1804	Monimail Parish Church Kirk Session Accounts 1804 - 1814
Monimail PCKS Accts 1815	Monimail Parish Church Kirk Session Accounts Monimail Parish Church Kirk Session Communion Roll 1848 - 1869
Monimail PCKS 1820	Monimail Parish Church Kirk Session minutes 1820 - 1862
Monimail PCKS 1862	Monimail Parish Church Kirk Session minutes 1862 - 1908
Newburgh FC Accts 1812	Newburgh Parish Church Kirk Session Accounts of the Poor 1812 - 1831
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