

ART. XI. – *Robert Dawson (1589-1643), Bishop of Clonfert and Kilmacduagh*  
By W. G. WISEMAN

A small brass plate on the chancel floor of Kendal Parish Church records the following epitaph:

Hic jacet Reverendus in Christo Pater Robertus Dawson Episcopus Clonfertensis et Ducensis Hibernicus qui obiit die decima tertia Aprilis 1643

A member of a family which was to extend its branches into the turbulent Irish scene, Robert Dawson was an accomplished Cambridge scholar, chaplain to the Lord Deputy of Ireland and bishop of two united sees in County Galway during the troubled years which paved the way and led into the Rising or Rebellion of 1641.

A complete biography of Dawson and his family is impossible because the relevant Kendal registers have been missing for a number of years and many Irish registers and wills, including Dawson's, perished in the flames of a much later rising in 1921/2.

Most authorities appear to agree that Robert was the son of Christopher and was born in 1589. Burke<sup>1</sup> indicates that Christopher was of Acorn Bank, Temple Sowerby and that he had two sons, Thomas the elder who bought lands in Londonderry and founded a line of notable Irish gentry, and Robert who became Bishop of Clonfert. However, the family name at Acorn Bank was Dalston and despite the fact that their arms include three daws' heads,<sup>2</sup> I find little to support this idea. There was a relevant Christopher Dalston (died 1604) and he had a son named Thomas. There is no mention of a son Robert and no indication that this Thomas ever left his native Westmorland – indeed his will proved in 1615 requests burial in Kirkby Thore church and his family connections remain in that area.<sup>3</sup>

Robert died in his father's house in Kendal but I can find no suggestion that the Dalston's owned property there. Reference to a portrait in Acorn Bank of "one of Christopher Dalston's sons, who became an Irish bishop" is probably citing the Burke idea,<sup>4</sup> but sadly, I am unable to trace the present whereabouts of the portrait and certainly I can find no Irish bishop named Dalston.

Atkinson<sup>5</sup> states that Dawson was born in Kendal and here we appear to be on firmer ground. A Christopher Dawson is recorded in the *Boke off Recorde of Kirkbie Kendal*<sup>6</sup> under "unmarried and yonge ffolkes ffree" in 1575. Dawson was a well established Kendal name, many were wealthy mercers in the town and they owned considerable property. We know from a genealogical extract of Dawson's will that he had a brother Josias and certainly a Josyas Dawson, mercer, lived in Kendal in 1623.<sup>7</sup> There may also have been two unmarried sisters, Jeanne, who had lived in Stramongate and who was buried in Kendal Parish Church 3 September 1619 and Anne, who died in Highgate and was buried on 27 November 1620. Both left gifts, in their wills,<sup>8</sup> to a brother Robert.

Without confirmation from the missing registers we cannot be adamant as to his parentage and place of birth, but the known indicators, his place of burial at Kendal and the fact that references to him are in the name of Dawson rather than Dalston, tend to support Atkinson rather than Burke.

Robert attended Sedbergh School during the headship of John Mayre (1585-1623). The school, founded by Dr Roger Lupton, a native of Sedbergh, Provost of Eton and Canon of Windsor, had been in existence as a chantry school for some time prior to the date of its Foundation Deed in 1528. Dr Lupton was a generous benefactor and in 1527 had endowed six scholarships linked to St John's College, Cambridge, followed in 1535 by two further scholarships and two fellowships. Robert was nominated to one of the scholarships and on 8 November 1604 entered St John's *non juratus* (confirming that he had not attained the age of sixteen by that date).<sup>9</sup> Cambridge, at that time, was strongly aligned with Calvinism and was very much under the influence of teachers like William Perkins. So great was Perkin's reputation, that the young Dawson would almost certainly have studied his works and no doubt would have been influenced by them. He graduated B.A. by 1608/9 and on 6 April 1609 was elected to one of the Lupton Fellowships.<sup>10</sup> By 1612 he was M.A.<sup>11</sup> and on 24 September 1615 was admitted as Deacon of Peterborough Cathedral, followed the next day by his ordination as priest.<sup>12</sup> In 1620 he took the degree of bachelor of divinity<sup>13</sup> and it is possible that he had, at this time, a connection with a parish in Northamptonshire and Rutland, although the detail eludes me.<sup>14</sup> By 1621 he appears to have been married for, in that year, his son Robert was born at Alderbourne in Buckinghamshire.<sup>15</sup> During this period he became chaplain to Sir Henry Cary, first Viscount Falkland, a prestigious attachment which was to have a marked effect upon his ecclesiastical career.

Falkland, already Comptroller of the King's Household and member of the Privy Council, was appointed Lord Deputy of Ireland on 4 February 1622. He sailed to Howth, near Dublin, on 6 September that year and twelve days later was sworn into office.<sup>16</sup> It is almost certain that Dawson was with him at this time.

It is not the purpose of this paper to become involved in the detail of Irish politics, nor to delve too deeply into the state of the English Church there, but a brief, albeit simplistic outline is essential to continue the Dawson story.<sup>17</sup>

The complex pattern of political tensions evident in 16th century Ireland appear to be more than just Catholic versus Protestant, Old English versus Irish Gaelic or the English Government against Ireland. Like the pattern on a sheet of cracked glass, it was a delicate, interconnected permutation, with the increasing power of the English Crown widening the cracks.

The main centre of the English Administration, the Pale, was concentrated on Dublin and outside that small area the Irish chiefs generally still maintained their influence in their own principalities. During the reign of Elizabeth a more active policy of administrative control and a more positive form of Protestantism, under the shadow of war with Spain, witnessed a growing need for religious orthodoxy to be evidence of loyalty to the Crown. Despite the Crown's reliance upon Catholic support in time of war or rebellion it became the norm for Catholics to find themselves excluded from high office.

Over the years there were a number of insurrections, a manifestation of underlying tensions, but perhaps the most significant one was that which resulted in the battle of Kinsale in 1601 and which paved the way for a dominant English Administration in Ulster. The leaders of the rebellion, the Irish chiefs O'Neill and O'Donnell fled to Spain with the result that their lands were confiscated and "planted" by settlers from Scotland and England, mainly Protestants.

As a direct consequence of the Ulster Plantation, the Irish Parliament of 1613 had,

for the first time, a majority of Protestants and this was clearly a portent for the trend of political balance, although the Catholic influence could not be underestimated.

The effects of the Reformation, the Counter-Reformation and the economic divisiveness of the Plantation had a de-stabilizing effect. Uncertainties arose over land titles, support for the English church in Ireland fell and talk of an expansion of Plantation policy into other areas led to a deepening rift between the Old English (descendants of the Norman settlement) and the new Planter class. Religious differences were evident, the Planters were Protestant whereas the Old English appeared to be aligned to the Catholic Gaelic hierarchy.

While Falkland took stock of his considerable problems, Dawson began to consolidate his position. In May 1623 he was incorporated M.A. at Trinity College, Dublin<sup>18</sup> and then he set about acquiring benefices with vigour. On 9 July, despite a dispute as to right of presentation, he was appointed by the Crown as Dean of Dromore and as Praeceptor of Connor.<sup>19</sup> On 25 November he became Dean of Down, with the prebend of Donoghmore and Kiltegan (Diocese of Lismore) linked *pro hac vice*.<sup>20</sup> In 1624 he added the Rectory of Maghera (Derry)<sup>21</sup> and on 11 August 1625 he was presented as Rector of Balee and Kilkeel.<sup>22</sup>

In December 1625, Roland Lynch, Bishop of Kilmacduagh, died at Loughrea, having held the see of Clonfert *in commendam* since 1602. The bishopric of Clonfert was founded by St Brendan the Navigator c.558 when he built the "Abbey of Clonfert" and conferred episcopal status upon it. In common with the adjacent see of Kilmacduagh it was never a particularly rich establishment and in 1834 both were united to the diocese of Killaloe and Kilfenora, finally becoming absorbed into the diocese of Limerick in 1976. The church of St Brendan remains to this day a fine example of the Romanesque, with a particularly impressive west doorway.

Lynch was a native Galway man with little sympathy for the "English". His tenure (such as it was) of the see perhaps owed more to the influence of the Catholic earl of Clanricarde, the most powerful landowner in Galway, than to any control by the Archbishop of Tuam. His episcopal authority was minimal; the Dean and Chapter were declared to be recusants; they and his wife had persuaded him to alienate all the lands as the best way of preventing any Englishman from taking the see and "restraining their Popish insolency".<sup>23</sup> Certainly a considerable proportion of the land had been improperly conveyed and the buildings were dilapidated. The rich, former Augustinian Abbey of St Mary de Portu Puro which stood a short distance from the cathedral in Clonfert had, in 1542/3, been united by Henry VIII to the bishopric and after the death of the last abbot in 1571 all the possessions, including c.220 acres of land and a water mill valued at £6, went to the then bishop. Lynch had assigned the abbey and appurtenances<sup>24</sup> to the Catholic member of Parliament for Galway County, Sir Henry Lynch, who was also Recorder for Galway town and more significantly, chief agent of the business interests of Clanricarde. In 1629 the value of Clonfert was given as £54 and Kilmacduagh as £25 14s.od., with tithes impossible to collect.<sup>25</sup>

It is difficult to understand why Dawson should be interested in such an impoverished and unstable see, but on 24 July 1626, Falkland wrote from Dublin Castle to the King. He pointed out that the bishopric had been vacant for some time, but because of the small temporalities no-one had applied for it:

I recommend Robert Dawson, Dean of the Cathedral of Down, a man of learning, integrity and

discretion and request that his position may be made tenable for him by the granting of a competent commendam. I doubt not but many fountains of humble thankfulness will issue from that see whereunto the Royal hand shall advance him.<sup>26</sup>

The King responded on 31 August, ordering that Dawson be appointed and that any revenues fraudulently abstracted from the see be made good,<sup>27</sup> but it was apparent that Falkland had earlier canvassed assistance for his cause. He wrote to Lord Conway (Lord President of the Council) on 5 October:

I write to thank you for many things . . . , for the appointment of my chaplain the Dean of Down to the Bishopric of Clonfert and Kilmackoo, which Sir Marmaduke Dorrell says is your whole work . . .<sup>28</sup>

The succession was not achieved without further representation, for on 17 January 1627, Falkland had again to write to the King asking for a renewal of the letters of appointment and for a commendam.<sup>29</sup> Lord Conway was again called upon to assist. There was obviously some difficulty in the drafting of the letters but within a month Conway was able to confirm, with the Attorney General for England, that the King had inserted the clause of union necessary to render valid the document.<sup>30</sup> On 2 March, the King ordered Falkland to make good the deficiencies in the grant by “causing a union *pro hac vice* of the two dioceses to be inserted in it in due form”.<sup>31</sup> The patent was issued on 29 April and on 4 May 1627 Dawson was consecrated in the chapel of Dublin Castle by Lancelot Bulkeley, Archbishop of Dublin, assisted by Jonas Wheeler, Bishop of Ossary and Thomas Ram, Bishop of Ferns and Leighlin.<sup>32</sup>

The new bishop was permitted to retain the rectory of Kilkeel and the commendam requested, on his behalf by Falkland, was granted by patent dated 23 October 1627 in the form of the prebend of Tipper in St Patrick’s Cathedral, Dublin.<sup>33</sup>

Whatever his thoughts with regard to his advancement his lot was illuminated further that year by the birth of his eldest daughter Margery.<sup>34</sup>

The task facing Dawson was formidable. As a man with probable Calvinist leanings he was taking over a see far from the security of Dublin, in a predominantly Catholic region, under the political control of a powerful Catholic landowner and at a time when it was considered prudent not to further alienate the various Irish factions in view of the threat from Spain. His lands were all but lost, his buildings in ruin and his flock in a minority, undisciplined and generally antagonistic. The effects of the Counter-Reformation were constantly in the background.

His cause cannot have been helped by the antics of his former mentor. Falkland had shown himself to be bigoted and inadequate. He had distanced himself from the Irish Privy Council, now mainly Planters, and serious political blunders were beginning to take their toll. On 10 August 1629 he was recalled to London and ordered to hand over his authority to the lords justices. Obviously strenuous efforts were being made in Clonfert, but they appeared to be of little avail in such a climate for in 1630 it was recorded that:

The present Bishop is an Englishman and very unpopular. He is boycotted (cannot obtain any correspondence with the inhabitants) and will remain so unless he permits the inhabitants to hold his lands as their own. He must allow the Pope’s Vicar General to exercise jurisdiction to the prejudice of his own and permit the population to swallow up all the glebes which lie

“convenient” to their own lands. Lastly he must permit freedom of the Roman Catholic worship even in the town where he lives. If the Bishop is not strengthened to oppose these people, he craves leave to quit the see.<sup>35</sup>

Further damage was done as a result of the testimony of a Royal Visitation concerning the state of the sees:

We cannot be certain about its value. We have no faith in the word of the Bishop who behaved “perverse et fraudulent” towards us. When he got the see it was believed worth 160l. a year. The Bishopric of Kilmacduagh was worth 100l. We now get a note from the Bishop estimating the Bishopric of Clonfert at 40l. and that of Kilmacduagh at 24l. He does not say how he arrives at these totals. He says the Bishopric of Clonfert has been deprived of a certain abbey through the action of the President of Connaught; but we cannot follow him. The Archbishop of Tuam alleges tumults and rebellion as the cause of the fall in value of the see of Kilmacduagh.<sup>36</sup>

Despite the difficulties Dawson was able, in April 1630, to secure the prebend of Fenore (Clonfert)<sup>37</sup> and to travel to Dublin to assist in the consecration of James Highgate, Bishop of Kilfenora in May the same year,<sup>38</sup> but by 18 June 1632 he was writing, again in Dublin, to an emerging power in the land, William Laud, then Bishop of London:

There has really been a plot to root the English out of these parts by destroying the Church, and this has been worked for by systematic robbery of the Church. I find the clergy (who are natives) and the laity combined to oppress me. Those who have got the diocesan land will pay no rent or at most only a “bare cheefe” which would not amount to 30l. in my two diocese. The Archbishop of Tuam’s lands in the same district are similarly withheld from him so that one rule from the King would please us both. I must be helped to recover the Abbey of Clonfert which constitutes a large part of the property of the see of that name, and which is unjustly withheld.<sup>39</sup>

The year 1633 heralded a short period of relief for Dawson as a result of a marked change in the administration of Irish affairs. The uneasy vacuum which had been left by Falkland was filled by the dynamic Thomas Wentworth.<sup>40</sup> Scion of a Yorkshire family, a scholar of St John’s, Cambridge, having entered in 1607, he may well have known Dawson. Wentworth’s declared objective in Ireland was to govern, to restore and secure the rule of law (of England) by force if necessary and to retrieve Church and Crown lands. By an extension of the Plantation, particularly into Connaught, he could gather much needed resources for the Crown. In that respect he created instant opposition from Clanricarde and other major land owners who had maintained loyalty to the Crown in the past despite religious differences.

In the same year William Laud was consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>41</sup> Although he never visited Ireland and in spite of the influence of the Archbishop of Armagh, Laud’s rigid rule soon began to take effect. His aim was a balance between the extremes of Calvinism and Papism. He was a dogged conservative, determined upon an orthodox church and determined to secure the financial position of his church. He had a strong confederate in Wentworth and was able to exercise vicarious control through Wentworth’s chaplain, Thomas Bramhall, soon to become Bishop of Derry. The report<sup>42</sup> of the first visitation by Bramhall, embodied in a letter to Laud, spelled out the evils he found, “. . . it is hard to say, whether the churches be more ruinous and sordid, or the people more irreverent . . .”. He continued, “. . . even in Dublin . . . our parochial church converted to the Lord Deputy’s stable, a second to a nobleman’s dwelling house and

the choir of a third to a tennis court, and the vicar acts as the keeper.”. The ministers themselves were attacked, “. . . The inferior sort of ministers are below all degrees of contempt, in respect of their poverty and ignorance . . .”. Bishops did not escape, “. . . one Bishop in the remoter parts of the kingdom doth hold three and twenty benefices with cure . . .” and in respect of the property, “. . . the alienation of church possessions, by long leases and deeds, are infinite.”.

Initially the remedy was simple; the Irish Parliament was summoned and Wentworth’s dictum dominated it, bishops were “trounced” and lands restored. Loyalty to the new regime was to be rewarded, “. . . the Deputy shall report on those officers who do best in Ireland in order that they may be rewarded by promotion to England . . . It will encourage all men to spend their best years in Ireland when they see their declining age recompensed with ease at home . . .”.<sup>43</sup>

The Bishop of Clonfert was able to benefit from the reforms. He was able to rebuild the see house in Clonfert and had the Abbey of Portu Puro, with its “site, ambit, circuit and all its lands . . .” returned from the hands of Sir Henry Lynch.<sup>44</sup> Despite the official view on pluralities he gained the prebend of Kilconnell in June 1634.<sup>45</sup> He also had time to attend Parliament in Dublin in July 1634.<sup>46</sup> Bramhall appreciated Dawson’s loyalty; he was accepted as an adviser<sup>47</sup> and a further prebend, Island Eddy, followed on 1 June 1638.<sup>48</sup> But the cracks in the rigid administration were beginning to appear.

In the 1634 Parliament, Wentworth had pressed strongly for a continuation of the Plantation policy into Connaught. Clanricarde and the Old English lobby united and a power struggle developed. Clanricarde died in 1635 and his successor, the young earl, continued the fight, but financial difficulties forced him eventually to give way to the idea of Plantation. By 1637 Wentworth was able to report that a Commission set up in Galway had agreed to his plans but rumours of war and the start of the Scottish crisis in 1638 prevented implementation. Charles clearly felt that it was important to secure the loyalty of the young Clanricarde *vis à vis* Spain and to ensure that Ireland remained subdued during the rumbling confrontation with Scotland. In February 1639, the King began to hand back the lands confiscated from the young earl’s father. Wentworth was outraged and from thence the authority and all hopes for Plantation began to break down.

The consequent effect upon Dawson was a marked downward turn in his fortunes. On the 4 April 1639 he wrote from Dublin to Laud imploring him to use his influence with the King to bring about the recovery and restitution of his lands. He enclosed a copy of the petition he had sent to the Commissioners of the Plantations and explained that many of the documents giving proof of ownership had been destroyed:

. . . my poor Diocese of Clonfert and Kilmacduagh groaned under her hardest fate. for the fury of the wars robbed those sees both of their possessions and their evidence to prove their right. There is noe hope left for me but in your Grace’s favour as the tender parent of our orphan Church and in this confidence I presume to inclose the sum of all I can say for myself, and which by way of petition I humbly presented to the Commissioners for the Plantations but I must expect the success from your Grace’s influence . . .<sup>49</sup>

Bishop Bramhall, who was in Dublin with Dawson added his views on 20 April:

. . . The Bishopp of Clonfert hath presented to your Grace the state of his see. I confess in most cases there are no demonstrative proofes on either syde. In many the Bishoppis is more

probable. And though the rule be *melior est conditio possidentis*, yet where the doubt is whether a free farm or a farme rent, it can hold no place. There are two questions, the one concerning the rents which the Bishopp receives as farm rents, the Tenants pay as free rents. To prove them to be free rents they neither shew wardshipp nor marriage nor reliefe, some of which are necessary and infallible badges of all estates in fee, yea very seldome they produce so much as a deed or an office. On the other syde the Bishopp shews his cosherings and refectiōns – an old Irish imposition upon Tenents. And many times his rentroll or the composition booke in general.

The other question is concerning the composition booke which is now held an authenticke recorde, which in many cases finds that the Bishopp hath so many quarters of land in such a proportion, not naminge them, but indefinitely and in gross. Now it falles out that the Bishopp hath rent out of so many quarters but the land is denied to be his. The Bishopp is able to prove that since the composition was taken he never had rent out of any other quarters of land (as they call them) in that proportion nor ever pretended title to any; and therefore conceives that of necessity this must be his land found by the composition booke. It is true the Commissioners do promise that in conclusion they will consider it the Bishoppicke of Clonfert, as great reason there is: for he is for the benefit of plantation to resigne to the Incumbents his 4a episcopalis, that is the 4th part of all tythes within his Diocese, without which the Incumbents cannot subsist, and indowe it with lands at such rents as other planters pay. But this I conceive to be worse for the Crowne, than to give him his right out of his owne lands. For the Bishopp shall recover the whole lands where the King shall have but a fowerth parte, except in cases of fractions where the King shall have all, and then the Bishoppes are persuaded to wave all claime and depend upon his Majesties goodness and my Lord Deputies to come in as other planters doe. I am very fearfull to be seene to have any hand in this business. And if some of these things be pressed it will be remembered who it was that urged them at the board. My humble advise with submission to your Grace is

1. That you desire Sir Geo. Radcliffe<sup>50</sup> to thanke the Commissioners in your name for their respects to the Bishoppes and Church of Connaught in this plantation.
2. That you move him effectually to deale with the two Judges, the Lord cheefe Baron and the Lord Chiefe Justice.<sup>51</sup> 1. That where the Bishoppes title is equally probable he may be preferred.
2. That where the composition booke findeth for the Church in generall, it may be interpreted to have found in particular, unless it shall appeare that the Bishopp hath or hath had since the composition any other land in that proportion.
3. That where the lands questioned are fractions, the Bishopp may be admitted to hold either them or other lands equivalent to them (as the conveniency of plantation shall require) at such rents as other undertakers, and to pay to the Crowne.
4. That where there shall want convenient meanes some lands may be assigned to an ArchBishoppicke or Bishoppicke in lieu of their 4a episcopalis, yet still at such rents as other planters shall pay. I beseech your Grace pardon my prolixity, it is the Bishopp of Clonfert that writes all this not I . . .<sup>52</sup>

Laud replied on 22 May from Lambeth:

A great part of your letter concerns the cause of the Bishop of Clonfert. But when I had received your letter I had received nothing from him about his own business. But since, I did. For he sent me a copy of the petition presented to the Commissioners of Plantations and a letter besides. And they were delivered very seasonably to me whilst Sir George Radcliffe was with me. So not understanding the business fully, nor able to carry all the circumstances of it in memory, I put the petition itself into Sir George's hands. Who took it with him to his lodgings. And when he brought it to me again, gave me advice, to write a letter to my Lord's Commissioners on behalf of the Bishop of Clonfert, which advice I have followed, and sent the letter by himself . . . In my letter to the Commission concerning the Bishop of Clonfert I have forborne

to mention any particular, save only *quarta* Episcopalis, because of your direction, that it might not be known to come from you . . .<sup>53</sup>

The Commissioners obviously found in favour of Dawson for on 7 August 1639, Bramhall was able to “. . . thanke your Grace for the Bishopp of Clonfert. Not he only but all the rest of the Bishoppes in that Province and their successors will have cause to pray for your Grace and bless your memory”.<sup>54</sup> On the 2 September, Laud replied, “I am very glad the Bishop of Clonfert hath had so good success; and I hope he and his successors will now look to it”.<sup>55</sup>

The success was short lived. The rift between Wentworth and the King, the Anglo-Scottish conflict, the abolition in Scotland of the episcopacy, all served to increase the disaffection and dispute in Ireland. In 1640, Wentworth returned to England, politically ruined and physically ill. Laud fared little better, for on 18 December 1640 he was impeached of treason and imprisoned in the Tower. On 12 May 1641, from his prison window he raised his hand in a blessing upon Wentworth on his way to the scaffold.<sup>56</sup> Wentworth’s legacy for Ireland was total discontent.

On 23 October 1641, the Irish Rebellion began. Led predominantly by the Old Irish Catholic dispossessed landowners, still under the threat of further plantation, the rebels made an unsuccessful attack on Dublin. Very soon the whole country was in the throes of a bitter battle which rapidly laid wide open the gulf between Catholic and Protestant. By December Galway was affected.

Irrespective of where the faults lay and whatever the accusations and counter accusations, the Rebellion was a bloody affair and the reports of the atrocities are not for the faint hearted.<sup>57</sup> Many of the clergy were tortured and killed, together with their families and congregations. The Archdeacon of Clonfert, Michael Smyth, lost all his cattle and goods and only escaped with his life by taking refuge in the fort in Galway City, together with the Archbishop of Tuam and Bishop Maxwell of Killala.<sup>58</sup> The Dean, Samuel Pullein, lost most of his fortune but was able to escape to England.<sup>59</sup>

I can find no record of Dawson’s fate during this period. I feel certain that he was in Dublin before Galway fell. It is reported that he was “much ill-used during the rebellion of 1641 and retired with some difficulty to England”.<sup>60</sup> He died on 13 April 1643, at “his father’s house” in Kendal,<sup>61</sup> having made his will nine days earlier.<sup>62</sup> He can have saved little property from Ireland and the events there can have brought little comfort to him during his final hours. His efforts appear to have been inspired by virtue and ideal and there is no reason to regard him other than as a worthy son of Kendal.

### Acknowledgements

I am obliged to Martin McAlindon for initially drawing my attention to Robert Dawson’s epitaph and for persuading me to obtain more information. I am also grateful to Joseph (Fred) Hughes and my father in law Geoffrey Aynsough for reading the initial draft and for their helpful suggestions. It would have been impossible for me to have produced the paper without the constant support and patience of my wife, Jane for whom my gratitude cannot be measured in mere words.

### Notes and References

<sup>1</sup> Burke’s *Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Landed Gentry*. Various editions. Thomas moved to Ireland

in 1601 and in 1633 bought lands in Londonderry by the Moyola River, where a village carries the name Castle Dawson to this day.

<sup>2</sup> R. S. Bumphrey, C. Roy Hudleston and J. Hughes, *An Armorial for Westmorland and Lonsdale*, CW Extra Series XXI (1975) 94f.

<sup>3</sup> CW2, lviii, 140-77.

<sup>4</sup> CW2, ix, 164.

<sup>5</sup> G. Atkinson, *The Worthies of Westmorland* (1849-50), Vol. III, 109-112.

<sup>6</sup> R. S. Ferguson, *A Boke off Recorde of Kirkbie Kendal* (Kendal, 1892) 17.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>8</sup> Lancashire Record Office, WRW/K/1619 Will of Jeanne Dawson; WRW/K/1620 Will of Ann Dawson.

<sup>9</sup> G. Atkinson, *op. cit.*, 111 and B. Wilson, *The Sedbergh School Register 1546 to 1909* (Leeds, 1909) 1-13, 90.

<sup>10</sup> B. Wilson, *op. cit.*, 90; J. and J. A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses* (Cambridge, 1922) Part 1, Vol. II, 21.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Northamptonshire Record Office, Peterborough Diocesan Records Vol. 2, *Ordination Book 2*, 1598/9 to 1616.

<sup>13</sup> J. and J. A. Venn, *op. cit.*

<sup>14</sup> Dawson is listed amongst the Northamptonshire and Rutland Clergy in H. I. Longden, *Northamptonshire and Rutland Clergy*, Vol. 4, 37 but this may only be because of his ordination at Peterborough.

<sup>15</sup> Robert junior also attended Sedbergh School, entered St John's in 1635 and graduated B.A. in 1639/40. I have not been able to trace any further detail of him. There is an entry in B. Wilson *op. cit.*, 100 and J. and J. A. Venn, *op. cit.*, 21. I have been unable to trace details of Dawson's wife.

<sup>16</sup> *Cal. State Papers relating to Ireland 1615-1625*, 343, 345; *D.N.B.*

<sup>17</sup> For an excellent background to Irish history for this period see Aidan Clarke, *The Old English in Ireland 1625-42* (London, 1966) and T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin and F. J. Byrne (eds.) *A New History of Ireland*, Vol. III, *Early Modern Ireland 1534-1691* (Oxford, 1976).

<sup>18</sup> G. D. Burtchaell and T. U. Sadleir, *Alumni Dublinenses* (London) 216.

<sup>19</sup> H. B. Swanzy, *Succession Lists of the Diocese of Dromore* (Belfast, 1933) 28; H. Cotton, *Fasti Ecclesiae Hibernicae* (Dublin), Vol. III, 261, 291.

<sup>20</sup> J. B. Leslie, *Biographical Succession Lists of the Clergy of the Diocese of Down* (Enniskillen, 1936) 19; H. Cotton, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, 193; Vol. III, 225.

<sup>21</sup> H. B. Swanzy, *op. cit.*, 179.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Cal. State Papers relating to Ireland 1625-1632*, 547.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 482-3.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 153.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 210.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 212.

<sup>32</sup> H. Cotton, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, 166-7.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I, 159.

<sup>34</sup> Margery was born in 1627, probably in Dublin and married John Morris, a Yorkshireman brought up in the house of Thomas Wentworth. He went to Ireland with Wentworth when he became Lord Deputy in 1633 and probably met Margery there. They had two sons, Robert born 1645 and Castilian 1648-1702 and a daughter Mary. Morris was executed in 1649 and his widow later married Jonas Bulkeley of Lancashire. She died in 1665. *D.N.B.* entry for John Morris. Castilian married and had two sons, John (christened 17 December 1675) and Castilian (christened 7 July 1687) Registers of Leeds St Peter.

<sup>35</sup> *Cal. State Papers relating to Ireland 1625-1632*, 548.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> H. Cotton, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, 189.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I, 503.

<sup>39</sup> *Cal. State Papers relating to Ireland 1625-1632*, 668.

- <sup>40</sup> For a detailed biography of Wentworth see C. V. Wedgwood, *Thomas Wentworth First Earl of Strafford 1593-1641* (London, 1961); H. Kearney, *Strafford in Ireland 1633-41* (Manchester, 1961); *D.N.B.*
- <sup>41</sup> See Richard Mant, *History of the Church of Ireland* (London, 1840); H. R. Trevor-Roper, *Archbishop Laud 1573-1645* (London, 1963); *D.N.B.*
- <sup>42</sup> Richard Mant, *op. cit.*, 448-51.
- <sup>43</sup> *Cal. State Papers relating to Ireland 1633-1647*, 59-60.
- <sup>44</sup> H. Cotton, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, 167; *Cal. State Papers relating to Ireland 1633-1647*, 79.
- <sup>45</sup> H. Cotton, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, 185.
- <sup>46</sup> *Cal. State Papers relating to Ireland 1633-1647*, 59-60.
- <sup>47</sup> Historic Manuscripts Commission, *Hastings MSS.* (1947) Vol. IV, 69. Letter from John Bramhall to William Laud.
- <sup>48</sup> H. Cotton, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, 211.
- <sup>49</sup> Letter from Dawson to Archbishop Laud 4 April 1639. Details of this letter are published by kind permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California in whose care the original rests. Reference HA 14629.
- <sup>50</sup> Sir George Radcliffe (1593-1657), barrister and politician who was Wentworth's chief legal adviser. *D.N.B.*
- <sup>51</sup> Sir Gerard Lowther (1589-1659), see CW2, ii, 1-28 and *D.N.B.*
- <sup>52</sup> Letter from Bramhall to Archbishop Laud 20 April 1639 in E. S. Shuckburgh, *Two Biographies of William Bedell* (Cambridge, 1902) 352-4.
- <sup>53</sup> Letter from Laud to Bramhall 22 May 1639. Details of this letter are published by kind permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California in whose care the original rests. Reference HA 15171.
- <sup>54</sup> Letter from Bramhall to Laud 7 August 1639 in E. S. Shuckburgh, *op. cit.*, 361.
- <sup>55</sup> Letter from Laud to Bramhall 2 September 1639. Details of this letter are published by kind permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California in whose care the original rests. Reference HA 15172.
- <sup>56</sup> *D.N.B.* entry for William Laud.
- <sup>57</sup> For details see M. Hickson, *Ireland in the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1884) Vols. I and II; J. Logan (ed.), *Letters and Papers relating to the Irish Rebellion between 1642-46* (Dublin, 1936) and T. Fitzpatrick, *The Bloody Bridge* (Dublin, 1903).
- <sup>58</sup> H. Cotton, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, 181.
- <sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 178-9.
- <sup>60</sup> G. Atkinson, *op. cit.*, III; H. Cotton, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, 167.
- <sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>62</sup> The will, dated 4 April 1643 was proved in the Prerogative Court of Armagh in 1644 but it was sadly destroyed in the fires at the Record Office, Dublin in 1922. A Betham genealogical extract remains and gives certain details relating to his family. As his wife is not mentioned it may be assumed that she had pre-deceased him. The extract records a brother, Josias, but provides no further information regarding him. Six children are recorded, Robert the eldest (see note 15), Rowland, Mathew (a Mathew Dawson is recorded marrying Anne Eglin on 18 February 1640 in the registers for Dublin St John the Evangelist), Randall (a Randall Dawson, son of Randall Dawson is recorded in the baptisms for 11 August 1695 in the registers of Dublin St Patrick), Margery (see note 34) and Bridget. The pre-disestablishment diocesan records of Clonfert were destroyed in the fire of 1922 but at that time there was no title book (bishop's register) for Dawson's time in the collection (Pers. corr. from Raymond Refausse, Representative Church Body Library of Ireland). There is no record of a portrait of Dawson in either the National Portrait Gallery or the National Gallery of Ireland.

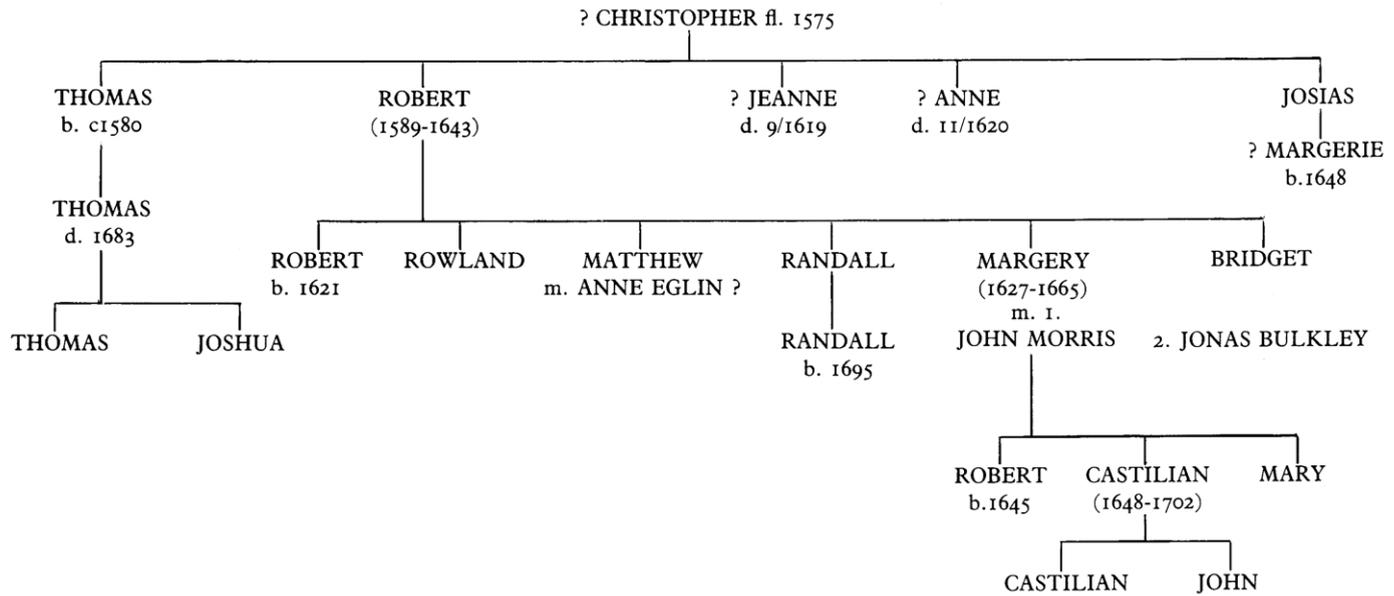


FIG. 1. - Pedigree of Robert Dawson.

