

## VI.

## POST-REFORMATION CHURCH AT WHITHORN.

- I. BUILDINGS. By C. A. RALEGH RADFORD, M.A., F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.  
II. HISTORICAL NOTES. By GORDON DONALDSON, M.A., Ph.D., F.S.A.Scot.

## I.

In 1949 on the suggestion of Mr R. C. Reid, acting for the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society, the investigation of the ecclesiastical site at Whithorn was begun. The work was carried out by the Ministry of Works, the Guardians of the site, under my direction and was continued in 1950 and 1951. The main objects were the discovery of Early Christian remains and the exploration of the Præmonstratensian Priory. In the course of this work, facts illustrating the development of the buildings in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were brought to light. The matter stands apart from the general subject of the excavations and raises historical questions with which I am not competent to deal. It has therefore seemed best to present a separate report consisting of two parts, my

own record of the discoveries, and an historical commentary by Dr Gordon Donaldson.

In presenting this report I wish to thank the Ministry of Works, the Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments, and Mr S. H. Cruden, Inspector for Scotland, for the permission to excavate and for the provision of the necessary labour; the arrangements on the site were made by Mr H. G. White on behalf of the Chief Architect. I would also express my gratitude to Mr R. C. Reid, the originator of the project and throughout its most enthusiastic and helpful supporter, and Dr J. S. Richardson, formerly Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Scotland, with whom I first visited the site and who has at all times been ready with helpful advice and criticism. At Whithorn itself I would place on record my gratitude to the Provost, Mr Arnott, the Town Clerk, Mr R. G. Alexander, and the Reverend H. Law, formerly Minister of the Parish; from these and from many other friends in the district I have received assistance in ways too numerous to mention. Finally, I would express my appreciation of the contribution made by Mr Gordon Donaldson in the preparation of this report, to which he has also added so scholarly a contribution; without his assistance I should have found it hard to present an adequate record and interpretation of discoveries which lie so far outside my own field of research.

#### *Whithorn Cathedral after the Reformation.*

The last mention of work on the medieval Priory Church occurs on 28th February 1559-60, when Bishop Alexander Gordon acknowledged the receipt of 500 merks for the "reparation and bigging of his kirk."<sup>1</sup> Four years later, on 10th August 1563, Queen Mary visited Whithorn, the last of the royal pilgrims.<sup>2</sup> The Cathedral was still in use for Protestant worship in 1573, for in that year the General Assembly ordered the Minister of Whithorn to admonish Alexander Gordon, Bishop of Galloway, to make public repentance for his adherence to the Queen's party; this was to be made "in the Cathedral kirk of Quhitterne upon a Sunday in time of public preaching."<sup>3</sup> The Reformed Kirk had from the first set its face against pilgrimages and in 1581 they were formally prohibited by Act of Parliament.<sup>4</sup> With the suppression of pilgrimage the main source of the medieval revenue of Whithorn was gone and with it the need for the great Priory Church. We have no record of a violent destruction, and the decay of the Cathedral was probably due more to neglect than to any other cause. By the end of the century this decay must have been far advanced, for there is clear evidence that the nave stood roofless and derelict when it was reused early in the seventeenth century.

The later alterations belong to two main periods. In the seventeenth

<sup>1</sup> *Calendar of Charters*, 1773.

<sup>2</sup> *Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly*, I, 282.

<sup>3</sup> *Trans. Dumf. and Gall. Soc.*, III, x, 85.

<sup>4</sup> *Acts Parl. Scot.*, III, 212.

century the nave was adapted for Protestant worship. Early in the following century the same building was repaired after the fall of the western tower; it remained in use until 1823 when the present kirk was built. Since that date only minor repairs to the fabric have been carried out, mainly towards the end of the nineteenth century by the Marquess of Bute.

*The Early Seventeenth-century Restoration* (Pl. X, 2 and 3).

The conversion of the medieval nave was effected by the erection of a new east wall, standing on the base of the rood screen under the western arch of the crossing. This cut off the whole eastern part of the church, which was allowed to fall down and cannot now be traced on the site. When this wall was built debris already stood to a depth of some 2 ft. 6 in. against the outer face of the walls. This debris was left uncleared and the new wall built on the raised ground-level—a point well illustrated by the SE. quoin, which is based on a flat slab 2 ft. above the old floor-level. The edge of this slab rested on the angle of the medieval pier, but the greater part was set on the filling of loose stones and earth, which slid out when the trench alongside the older wall face was excavated.<sup>1</sup> The accumulation of earth and stones outside the building must be explained as material fallen from the upper part of the walls, doubtless owing to the stripping of the lead from the roof.

The new roof line can be seen on the east gable. On the north side the eaves were on the level of the sills of the old clerestory windows, which had been set high in the wall in order to clear the pent roof of the cloister. On the south side the two-light windows of 1428 were cut down. The small stones of the existing arched heads and the rough rere-arches contrast with the careful ashlar and dressings of the fifteenth-century masonry. At the west end of the same wall the rere-arch of the thirteenth-century lancet rises above the new wall top to a maximum height of some 2 ft., the rise being formerly covered by the slope of the rafters, so that the roof line was not broken. These alterations afford clear evidence that the medieval roof was no longer in existence, for no builder would have made all these changes simply in order to lower the roof line by a few feet; they can only be explained on the assumption that the upper part of the walls was already unsafe.

A patch 7 ft. long near the centre of the south wall is also of this date. It includes a single-light window with a pointed head and elaborately moulded jambs of sixteenth-century type. On purely architectural grounds the detail might be referred to a pre-Reformation date, but the height of the opening, which conforms to the new roof-level, shows that it was part of the new work. The great east window, an original feature in the new wall,

<sup>1</sup> *Trans. Dumf. and Gall. Soc.*, 3rd ser. xxvii, 124, pl. v; the flat slab is supported by a wooden block inserted to secure stability.

is less elaborate, with jambs of two chamfered members which continue into the pointed head.

The external facing of the east wall was returned at both ends to cover the scars caused by the demolition of the transepts. On the south side the corner was badly placed and the new facing runs at a slight angle to the older wall line.

The new church incorporated the whole of the mediæval nave. Beyond this a small bell tower with thick walls has been built against the west front. Excavation failed to produce close evidence of date. The tower was entered by a door in the older thirteenth-century west wall. The width of the opening, 6 ft. 6 in., shows that it originally served as the west door of the church, but the presence of inserted checks on the east side of the wall shows that it was later converted to give entry to the tower. In the Museum at Whithorn there is a Dutch bell with the founder's name, Evert Burgerhuis, and the date, 1610.<sup>1</sup> This is said to have come from the tower, and its date, corresponding to the year in which Gavin Hamilton was consecrated at Westminster, suggests that it may have been a commemorative gift by the Bishop. In any case it is good evidence that the tower, and therefore the rebuilding of the nave, was completed by that year. This small slender tower is more likely to date from the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century than the Middle Ages, when a belfry in this position, blocking the great west door, would be hard to parallel. It may be compared with the original tower of the Greyfriars Kirk at Edinburgh, built between 1612 and 1620,<sup>2</sup> or the restored upper part of the NW. tower at Dunfermline, rebuilt at the end of the sixteenth century.<sup>3</sup>

The main entrance to the new building was in the south wall. The round-headed opening has four shafted and enriched orders, all of reused Romanesque work. The material is a hard red sandstone similar to that used for the facing of the twelfth-century wall of the nave. But the masonry into which the doorway is inserted dates from the thirteenth century, and the opening was cut through the wall at some date after its construction. Furthermore, the work does not fit its present position, the doorway being several inches too thick and projecting from the face of the wall. The stones were brought from two different sources. The three innermost orders were originally a doorway; the shafts have their own bases and capitals with a continuous plinth and abacus, and the voussoirs belong to the arches of the doorway. But these arches have been carelessly re-assembled; one or two of the voussoirs are displaced and, in particular, a rough boulder has been substituted for one of the stones of the middle ring. This part of the composite structure probably formed the west door of the Romanesque Cathedral or one of the doors into the cloister. The outermost order is not bonded into the inner rings; it came from a larger, higher

<sup>1</sup> *Trans. Dumf. and Gal. Soc.*, III, xxviii, 77.

<sup>2</sup> *R.C.A.M.*, Edinburgh, No. 7.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Fife, No. 197.

opening and, though the height of the capitals and abaci as reset corresponds with that of the inner rings, there are no bases, the shafts being carried down to ground-level, where they were roughly bedded on slabs of slate.<sup>1</sup> These outer voussoirs are badly reset, and other stones of the same type, and probably from the same arch, are to be seen in the wall above the hood. This order came from some internal feature in the Romanesque church, either from one of the arches of the crossing<sup>2</sup> or from one of the transeptal chapels. While it is possible that this doorway was placed in its present position during the Middle Ages, the rough setting and the use of material from two different sources suggest that it is part of the seventeenth-century reconstruction. The doorway has later been marred by a deep slot cut to take the gabled roof of a porch; this probably dates from the eighteenth century.

The additions and alterations described were all carried out, or at least all completed, when the nave was adapted as a Protestant kirk. They represent the work necessary to convert the western part of the Priory Church into a building structurally sound and decently fitted for Protestant worship. The reuse of medieval material for the main doorway, if that is really of this date, and the imitation of late medieval detail, probably represent a desire to preserve something of the style and standard traditionally connected with the public worship of the church. The detail of the new work indicates a date in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, and it cannot be doubted that it was carried out in the time of Bishop Gavin Hamilton, in whose day the bell was erected in the western tower.

#### *Later Seventeenth-century Alterations.*

The floor-level of the seventeenth-century church was the same as that of the late medieval nave. Little or nothing of the pavement of this date now remains, but the level was clearly marked on the base of the walls and a few slabs were found in position, including one in front of the rood screen. At the east end of the seventeenth-century church traces of paving at a higher level were found. This rested on a layer of hard filling with the surface of the pavement 1 ft. above the medieval floor (Pl. X, 2 and 3). The medieval paving had normally been removed before this fill was deposited, but one or two slabs were found in position, covered by the fill. In the centre the whole area had been disturbed, the levels being destroyed beyond a line about 3 ft. from the east end. A trench against the south wall disclosed the fill continuing for about 10 feet. There was no trace of steps at this point, but there can be no doubt that there was one, or more probably two, between 10 and 11 ft. from the east end. Near the centre of the east wall there had been a small platform 6 in. high. One stone forming part of the

<sup>1</sup> Now more securely fixed on a modern bedding.

<sup>2</sup> As at Penmon (R.C.H.M., *Anglesey*, pl. 117).

north edge was found in position, 8 ft. 6 in. from the north wall. The east edge was 1 ft. from the front of the medieval rood, with a paving slab on the level of the step still in position between the platform and the wall. The south end had been destroyed by modern graves, but assuming a central position, the platform would have been 6 ft. 6 in. long. No stone marking the western edge was in position, but the width must have been over 2 ft. This platform can only imply an altar, presumably a wooden table permanently fixed by the east wall, not one carried down into the body of the church when required for the celebration of the Communion. The insertion of this step was associated with the opening of a door in the east end of the south wall (Pl. X, 1). The doorway is of reused medieval material. The inner member, forming the door casing, is of the thirteenth century. Outside is a frame having moulded jambs with moulded bases and abaci; the moulded arch is surmounted by a hood terminating in angels bearing shields with the arms of Vaux on one side and a large initial V on the other. The whole of the outer frame is of one date, more probably of the time of Bishop Alexander (1422-50) than of the later George Vaux (1482-1508). The door frame is set in the wall in the same plane as the medieval ashlar and cuts awkwardly across the line of the earlier seventeenth-century refacing, showing that it is a later insertion. From the threshold, which lies 3 ft. 6 in. above the medieval (and early seventeenth-century) floor-level, three steps lead down to the raised space at the east end of the church. This door was designed to provide a separate entry for the celebrant, a normal feature in medieval churches. These alterations brought the Cathedral at Whithorn into line with the usage advocated by the Laudian party in England. On architectural grounds they must be placed after 1610, but they cannot be carried far into the seventeenth century, for subsequently the whole floor-level was raised by some 2 ft., obliterating the step and the altar platform.<sup>1</sup> This took place before the fall of the tower, for on the occasion of the subsequent rebuilding the higher floor-level was retained and the west wall set into this surface with shallow foundations reaching only about 1 ft. down. On historical grounds Dr Donaldson would ascribe the insertion of the altar to Bishop Thomas Sydserff (1635-38) and its subsequent removal to the years immediately following.

One other addition must be mentioned in connection with the seventeenth-century Cathedral. Midway along the present north wall is a low arched tomb recess inserted into the thirteenth-century masonry. The plain round head and the simple roll on the angle might belong to the end of the Middle Ages, but it is unlikely that anyone save a dignitary of the church or a great noble would have been buried in such a position at that time. In such a case it is improbable that the tomb would have been of so simple a character; the two arched recesses at the east end of the same wall

<sup>1</sup> Cf. alterations at Dairsie (p. 128 *infra*).

and the richly ornamented fragments preserved in the Museum show the type of monument found in the medieval Cathedral.

Simple arched recesses of the type under consideration are known to have been used about 1600, and it seems more likely that the tomb at Whithorn was prepared at this period for one of the bishops.<sup>1</sup> The recess has been patched in more recent times with a rough block of stone replacing one of the dressings forming the arch.

#### *Parallels and Interpretation.*

Even if the arrangement of the church completed in 1610 were influenced by English parallels—and there is no decisive evidence of this—it is unlikely to have caused difficulties in Scotland. In accordance with the Elizabethan injunctions and the Canon of 1604 (no. 82) the altar was to be placed in the most convenient position, and normally it stood tablewise at the lower end of the chancel.<sup>2</sup> This was changed by the rise of the Laudian school, which stood out for the eastern position, with the Communion-table placed altarwise and railed off. This practice was not generally enforced in England before 1634 when Archbishop Laud's metropolitan visitation began. The insertion of the steps at the east end of the church at Whithorn reflects this change, the first step, 10 or 11 ft. from the east end, marking the position of the altar rails.<sup>3</sup> With this alteration Whithorn would approximate to such Anglican churches as St Ninian's, Brougham, Westmoreland (1660),<sup>4</sup> or Brompton, Herefordshire (1656).<sup>5</sup> Buildings of this date are rare in England, as the Anglican Church already possessed sufficient places of worship to serve its needs. When new churches were required they were normally in towns, and there the late medieval aisled plan was followed, as at St Catherine Cree, London (1631),<sup>6</sup> which closely resembles the Greyfriars Kirk at Edinburgh. There is, however, an interesting parallel to Whithorn at Killala, Mayo, where the Cathedral was rebuilt in 1670 as a simple rectangle, with the altar in a space raised by one step at the east end and a small western tower.<sup>7</sup>

#### *The Eighteenth-century Restoration.*

The final transformation of the nave of the Priory Church took place after the fall of the western tower. This was still standing when Symson wrote his *Description of Galloway* in 1684.<sup>8</sup> There is no mention of the fall,

<sup>1</sup> This could only be Bishop Gavin Hamilton. Cowper was buried at Greyfriars, Edinburgh; Lamb died in his native place of Leith and would almost certainly be buried there; and Sydserf died as Bishop of Orkney (*vide pp. 132-3 infra*).

<sup>2</sup> See Addleshaw and Etchells, *Architectural Setting of Anglican Worship*, ch. iv.

<sup>3</sup> The step facilitated kneeling at the altar rails, which Laud and his school desired to enforce.

<sup>4</sup> R.C.H.M., *Westmoreland*, p. 54.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, *Herefordshire*, III, 19.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, *London*, IV, 8.

<sup>7</sup> Addleshaw and Etchells, *op. cit.*, 199.

<sup>8</sup> Symson, *Description of Galloway*, 46.

but the earliest Kirk Session Minutes, dating from 1708,<sup>1</sup> complain of the lack of records from earlier years, and reflect a period of confusion following the re-establishment of Presbyterianism at the time of the Revolution. This period would clearly have been one of neglect, and the fall of the tower may confidently be ascribed to these years. The rebuilding, with its characteristic eighteenth-century detail, probably followed shortly after the reorganization of the parish, reflected in the earliest surviving records.

The fall of the tower had carried with it the whole of the west end and a long stretch of the north wall of the nave. The masonry still lies where it fell, alongside the NW. corner of the existing building. A new west wall was erected, together with a return linking up with the broken end of the north wall. It is well constructed of rubble masonry with very shallow foundations. The new building was shorter than the medieval nave, with the west wall set off the true and the north side 1 ft. shorter than the south. The west wall is butted against the south wall immediately west of the main door. The ragged end of the wall has been roughly faced off.

The new building was designed with extensive galleries. At the west end the gallery stretched about 20 ft. along the church with a floor sloping gradually downwards. In the new north and west walls the floor-level is marked by an offset, but in the medieval south wall the beams supporting the floor were carried on corbels set into the earlier masonry. Ranges of similar corbels can be traced along the north and east walls, but the width of these galleries cannot be recovered. They were reached through doors, to which external stairs of wood led up. These stairs have left no trace, but one of the doors, now blocked, can be traced in the north wall 11 ft. from the east end. The west gable has a high narrow window with a double chamfer extending into the pointed head. The detail is like that of the seventeenth-century east window and the stones are probably reused. The sill is on a level with the gallery floor, and the lower part of the jambs have been cut back to take a wooden door frame. The deep western gallery, which would otherwise have been dark, had small windows rising as dormers above the line of the roof. No similar provision was needed for the north and east galleries, as this part of the kirk was adequately lighted by the large windows in the south and east walls. Both the east window and the added seventeenth-century south window have had the jambs, but not the pointed heads, cut back for wooden frames, suggesting that the openings were converted to the rectangular form normal in the eighteenth century. On the floor of the kirk small rectangular windows were provided in the new north and west walls to give light to the space under the gallery. The new windows have dressings of grit with a very slight chamfer on the angle; they are now blocked. A door, with a frame of the same character, was cut through the east wall under the window and now affords the most convenient

<sup>1</sup> The minister, Rev. H. Law, kindly showed me the records in his custody in 1950.

entrance to the building. A further doorway, now blocked, was cut through the south wall, a few feet in front of the west gallery. This was intended to provide direct access to the pulpit standing against this wall; the arrangement is reproduced in the new kirk erected in 1823.

*Parallels and Interpretation.*

The arrangement of the kirk in the eighteenth century follows the ancient Puritan lay-out with the pulpit near the centre of one of the longer walls. The Communion-tables would have stood in front in the centre of the church, clear of the galleries. The purpose of this arrangement was to abolish the distinction between minister and congregation and to associate the latter as closely as possible with the administration of the Sacrament. The galleries, grouped on three sides, with the pulpit in the centre, would enable the greatest possible number of persons to hear the preacher; the arrangement was also adopted for this purpose in many Anglican churches after the Restoration of 1660, though there the altar and the traditional orientation of the building were retained. A characteristic architectural feature of buildings planned like Whithorn is the double tier of windows, corresponding to the galleries, on three sides and the range of high windows on the fourth, marking the position of the pulpit. At Whithorn the latter arrangement was already provided on the south side. On the other sides the labour of cutting windows through the mediæval walls was evidently not felt to be justified, but the characteristic arrangement was adopted in the new west and north walls. The arrangement in all essentials already appears in the old Congregational Chapel at Walpole, Suffolk (1647),<sup>1</sup> and the Old Meeting at Norwich (1693).<sup>2</sup> It became a common form in English Nonconformist chapels in the eighteenth century and was normal in Welsh chapels down to the middle of the nineteenth, when the arrangement with the pulpit at one end and the doors at the other gradually came into fashion. At Whithorn this arrangement was already adopted for the new kirk in 1823.

## II.

*Liturgical and other Developments and their Effects on Church Design.*

The Reformation did not at once produce all those features which later became characteristic of reformed, and more particularly presbyterian, worship in Scotland. Services were broadly of a liturgical nature and, while there was very strong emphasis on preaching, there was a clear conception that public worship should include also the reading of prayers and a regular lectionary. Again, while it was stressed that the sermon must be

<sup>1</sup> M. S. Briggs, *Puritan Architecture*, 16; figs. 2 and 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 25; figs. 5 and 6; pl. ii.

associated with the sacraments, it was not the intention to consign the sacraments themselves to neglect and obscurity. There are good reasons to believe not only that frequent celebration of Holy Communion was considered the ideal, but even that the Sunday morning service prescribed in the Book of Common Order—Knox's Liturgy—was itself the Ante-Communion service.

Thus the planning of churches for reformed worship was concerned not only with the pulpit but also with the arrangements for Communion, involving the provision of tables around which the communicants could sit. These tables might be merely temporary erections, on trestles, set lengthwise in the church, but there seems often to have been a smaller cross-table for the use of the celebrant, and this at least would be a piece of permanent furnishing; while in many churches, especially the larger ones, a part of the building—usually the chancel or the east end—was set aside as a "Communion Aisle" and formed a railed-off enclosure, furnished with a table, or tables, and seats for the communicants. The latter arrangement was identical with that in contemporary—pre-Laudian—England, where chancels were so equipped that the communicants could sit and kneel around a table set lengthwise.<sup>1</sup> Clearly, no structural alterations were needed to fit pre-Reformation churches for reformed worship. It seems unlikely that as yet the laird's loft would commonly be intruded into the chancel, or that a church would be deliberately altered from a rectangle to a T-plan in order to demonstrate the re-orientation of worship towards a pulpit on the south wall. These developments came later.

That is the general picture, on the whole true of the fifty years and more after the Reformation of 1560. But practice—and, still more, opinion—on these matters were becoming less uniform, after the initial unity of the reforming movement was disrupted in the 1570's. The division was primarily over Church government—the issue of bishops against presbyteries—but there was a tendency, even in the 1580's, for this division to coincide with a difference of views on worship. The party of the left, who wanted presbyterian government, tended to follow the English puritans in their ideas on worship and so to deviate from the standards of the Book of Common Order; this party was in power in the 1590's. On the right, the party who favoured episcopal government had also certain inclinations—though with far less unanimity or enthusiasm—towards the recasting of Scottish worship along Anglican lines. This party won the battle over Church government between 1600 and 1612, and was subsequently associated with a movement for liturgical reform which in 1618 produced a draft liturgy which was, briefly, a not unhappy compromise between the Book of Common Order

<sup>1</sup> The position in Scotland is described in McMillan, *The Worship of the Scottish Reformed Church*, 233-6, 242-3. For England, see Addleshaw and Etchells, *The Architectural Setting of Anglican Worship*, 108-17.

and the Book of Common Prayer. But the same year was marked by the Five Articles of Perth which, *inter alia*, imposed the kneeling posture on communicants—a measure on which even the most enthusiastic episcopalian had grave misgivings. The Five Articles reached the statute book in 1621, but the storm which they had aroused led the king to abandon the other, purely liturgical, project, and the draft liturgy was shelved for a decade.<sup>1</sup>

Meantime, the building of churches designed for reformed worship had commenced. Few new churches were built in the generation after the Reformation; and indeed the difficulty was to maintain or restore those already in existence, at a time when the resources at the disposal of the reformers were extremely scanty and when there were many other claimants to any materials of value—notably lead—which the buildings contained. At the end of the sixteenth century we do meet with a new church—that curious structure the parish church of Burntisland (1592),<sup>2</sup> of which Archbishop Laud remarked that he took it at first sight for a large square pigeon-house, so free was it from any resemblance to an ancient church.<sup>3</sup> Laud's instinctive condemnation was justified, because the building reflects the temporary triumph of the left-wing movement in the 1590's—the low-water mark of liturgy for the time being.

By the end of the second decade of the seventeenth century we are in a period of considerable activity in church building and restoration—activity clearly to be associated with the improvement in the financial position of the reformed church which was initiated by James VI about 1618, although not completed until the reign of his son. There are instances of the restoration of buildings which had for some time been half ruinous, like Melrose (1618) and Dunfermline (where the buttresses bear the dates 1620 and 1625); and of the substitution of a new church for an old one quite beyond repair, at Coupar-Angus.<sup>4</sup> Among new churches, the most notable were Greyfriars (1612–20),<sup>5</sup> Dirleton (1612 onwards),<sup>6</sup> Dairsie (1621),<sup>7</sup> Auchterhouse (1630),<sup>8</sup> South Queensferry (1633),<sup>9</sup> and Anstruther Easter (1634).<sup>10</sup> This period of activity in building or rebuilding coincided with the liturgical revival, and the atmosphere had quite changed since Burntisland was erected. The T-plan was exceptional in this period,<sup>11</sup> and each of the structures just mentioned—a rectangle, with tower or belfry at the west end—was in the

<sup>1</sup> This subject is dealt with at length in a book on *The Making of the Scottish Prayer Book of 1637*, to be published by Edinburgh University Press.

<sup>2</sup> R.C.A.M., *Fife*, No. 68.

<sup>3</sup> Laud, *Works*, III, 315.

<sup>4</sup> D. E. Easson, *Coupar-Angus Charters*, I, lxxviii. The same thing may have happened about this time at Scone (*Trans. Eccles. Soc.*, 1897, p. 78).

<sup>5</sup> R.C.A.M., *Edinburgh*, No. 7.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, *East Lothian*, No. 25.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, *Fife*, No. 176.

<sup>8</sup> Muir, *Characteristics of Old Church Architecture* (1861).

<sup>9</sup> R.C.A.M., *Mid- and West Lothian*, No. 373.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, *Fife*, No. 27. References to the erection of churches in the diocese of Aberdeen between 1618 and 1635 are collected in W. G. Sinclair Snow, *Patrick Forbes* (1952), 112–3.

<sup>11</sup> Careston (1633) may be an isolated instance (*Trans. Eccles. Soc.*, 1906–7, pp. 133–42).

late medieval tradition or, as Laud might have said, bore considerable resemblance to an ancient church. An English visitor in 1629 did, as a matter of fact, make flattering remarks about Scottish churches.<sup>1</sup> In Galloway itself, the church at Portpatrick, built 1629, with its large "chancel," seems to reflect the contemporary ideas, which allowed a separation between nave and chancel, the latter being used for the administration of the Sacrament.<sup>2</sup> The small church at Anwoth (1627) is another example, with its prominent west door.<sup>3</sup>

Work on a Scottish Prayer Book had been resumed in 1629, and from 1633 revision proceeded more actively, finally issuing in the Prayer Book of 1637. Meantime kneeling at Communion had not been generally practised, and when it was, the communicants knelt around a table—a table still set lengthwise in the church or chancel—just as they had done in England. From about 1633, however, when kneeling was much more stringently enforced, the practice of kneeling round a table was found to be inconvenient, and the long tables became superfluous. The advanced clergy in Scotland, following the example of the Laudians in England, were beginning to insist that their people should kneel at a Communion rail, within which the celebrant himself stood at the Holy Table; <sup>4</sup> and that table itself might now be a fixture against the east wall of the church—the position ultimately prescribed for it in the Prayer Book of 1637. It seems unlikely that any isolated incumbent, even of the most advanced views, adopted this plan earlier than 1633, when the appearance in the chapel royal of a "four-nuikit table," with cross and candlesticks, proved a most unpopular novelty.<sup>5</sup>

As is so well known, the introduction of the Prayer Book of 1637 occasioned the famous riot in the kirk of St Giles and led on to an intense reaction against liturgical services, the temporary overthrow of episcopal government, the adoption by the victorious presbyterians of English puritan standards of worship, and the abandonment of many of the practices of the Scottish reformers. The much more radical views now prevailing were, of course, reflected in the destructive activities of the Covenanters at Elgin and Aberdeen, where medieval work which had hitherto remained intact was now demolished. Churches which had undergone alteration in the interests of the High Church movement were again altered, and no church would retain throughout the 1640's a plan based on a Holy Table against the east wall. Nor was it a matter merely of abolishing altars and Communion rails, but of more radical change. Externally, the rectangular plan was ousted by the T-plan or the Greek cross. Internally, the Communion aisle disappeared. At Dairsie, in 1641, the screen was hewn down and the

<sup>1</sup> A. M. Mackenzie, *Scottish Pageant*, 1625-1707, p. 100.

<sup>2</sup> R.C.A.M., *Wigtown*, No. 411; *Reg. Mag. Sig.*, 1620-33, No. 1264.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, *Kirkcudbright*, No. 1. The east door is a later insertion, probably eighteenth century.

<sup>4</sup> McMillan, 234.

<sup>5</sup> Spalding, *History of the Troubles* (Bannatyne Club), I, 17.

floor-level of the chancel reduced to that of the nave;<sup>1</sup> and the presbytery of Dunfermline, in 1650, ordered that Communion should no longer be celebrated in choirs, but in the body of the church.<sup>2</sup> There was a tendency to abandon not only the structure of liturgical worship but even the reading of lessons, and to concentrate more and more on the sermon, to which all else was subordinated.

The Restoration brought back the bishops, but did not bring back the Prayer Book. Worship at its best was conducted along the lines of the old Book of Common Order, with the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Doxology; at its worst it excluded such "set forms," and did not differ from the services held during the presbyterian regime. Kneeling at Communion was certainly not enforced, and it is doubtful if it was ever practised; indeed, the difficulty was to have that sacrament celebrated at all, and in many parishes years passed without a celebration. There could be no question of reverting to an altar and Communion rail, or even to a Communion aisle, and the pulpit remained dominant. At the Revolution, in 1689, there was once more a change in Church government, for the bishops finally disappeared from the establishment, but again there was little change in worship. Neither the Restoration nor the Revolution saw any marked change in church plans; the T-plan and the Greek cross prevailed, and there was no resumption of more traditional types.<sup>3</sup>

#### *The Cathedrals.*

We hear very little about cathedrals—*qua* cathedrals—between the Reformation and the 1630's. And it is easy enough to see why—they had no functions to speak of in the reformed church as it was then organized. It is true that there were bishops throughout most of the period: indeed the office of bishop, name and thing, was never wholly out of existence at any time before 1638. But at the best the bishops were administrators of their dioceses; sometimes they were not even that. Likewise, chapters were never out of existence (though it was thought necessary in 1617 to pass a statute for their formal restitution). Their functions, however, did not extend beyond the formal election of a bishop and the giving of assent to episcopal charters and tacks. The canons were either active ministers of parishes or mere titulars; there was no question of resident canons maintaining cathedral services. Indeed, there were no cathedral services, other than those common to all parish churches.

The precise fate of a cathedral in those years depended to some extent on whether or not it was necessary as a parish church. Where there was

<sup>1</sup> Addleshaw and Etchells, *op. cit.*, 39.

<sup>2</sup> McMillan, 243.

<sup>3</sup> George Hay, "An Introduction to Scottish post-Reformation Churches," in *Eccles. Soc. Trans.*, 1951.

no centre of population around the cathedral, and neither the need nor the resources for its maintenance—as happened at Iona and Lismore and to a lesser degree at Dunkeld and Dunblane—or where the population was served by an adequate parish church, as at St Andrews and Elgin, the cathedral was neglected. But where the cathedral was necessary for worship and there was a population with resources to maintain it, it was preserved: conspicuous examples are Glasgow and Kirkwall. The observance of the distinction is implied in the first Book of Discipline,<sup>1</sup> and can be traced in official records: on the one hand, the general assembly, in 1573, took into consideration the “sustaining and upholding of cathedral kirks which are parish kirks” and ordained that “the same must be done as it was wont to be before;”<sup>2</sup> on the other, the lead roof of the cathedral of Fortrose was given to Lord Ruthven in 1572, on the ground that this cathedral was “na paroch kirk bot ane monasterie to sustene ydill belleis.”<sup>3</sup> In some cases where there had been neglect, the early seventeenth century did see some measures of restoration of the structures—not, however, as cathedrals, but as parish churches. Work is said to have been done at Dunkeld in 1600, and the choir there was roofed at some date before 1636;<sup>4</sup> the choir of Dunblane may have undergone some repair at this period; Aberdeen appears to have been put in repair before 1614;<sup>5</sup> and at Dornoch, restoration work seems to have gone on intermittently from 1614 until 1622.<sup>6</sup>

With the liturgical revival, however, the cathedrals became slightly more conspicuous. At the lowest, bishops were expected to set an example to their clergy, and naturally did so in their cathedrals. There are traces of this even before 1620. In 1618, when the question of kneeling at Communion was being agitated, we are told that “upon Easter Day the Communion was ministered by sundrie bishops in their cathedral kirks, to many of the people kneeling.”<sup>7</sup> This trend became much more marked when the liturgical movement was renewed in the 1630’s. In 1631, the king sent an order regarding the setting up of organs in cathedral churches.<sup>8</sup> At the end of 1634 he ordered that, pending the publication of a Scottish liturgy, the English Prayer Book should be used in the cathedrals<sup>9</sup>—so extending to them a provision already applied to the university chapels and to the bishops’ private chapels, and introducing a distinction between cathedral and parish churches which had perhaps been unknown since the Reformation. We know that John Maxwell, Bishop of Ross, observed this

<sup>1</sup> Knox, *History* (ed. Dickinson), II, 283.

<sup>2</sup> *Acts and Proceedings of the General Assemblies*, I, 280.

<sup>3</sup> Reg. Sec. Sig., XL, 106.

<sup>4</sup> *Trans. Eccles. Soc.*, 1912-13, p. 34.

<sup>5</sup> *Records of Old Aberdeen* (New Spalding Club), I, 54.

<sup>6</sup> C. D. Bentinck, *Dornoch Cathedral and Parish*, 188, 198.

<sup>7</sup> Calderwood, VII, 297.

<sup>8</sup> McMillan, 98.

<sup>9</sup> Charles Rogers (ed.), *The Earl of Stirling's Register of Royal Letters*, II, 797.

requirement at Fortrose,<sup>1</sup> and it can hardly be doubted that some of the other High Church bishops did likewise. The king's intention—as part of what may be called broadly the Laudian or Canterburian policy—was evidently that cathedrals should take a place in church life similar to that of the cathedrals of England.

There was also in the 1630's a solicitude for cathedral buildings which was quite novel in reformed Scotland. King Charles's best-known action in this direction is of course his instructions, after he had erected the bishopric of Edinburgh in 1633, that the kirk of St Giles should cease to be divided for congregational worship but should be thrown into one church to be a fitting cathedral for the new see.<sup>2</sup> But this was only one of many instances of the king's care for cathedrals. In 1630, understanding that the cathedral of Dunkeld was ruinous, he permitted a collection to be taken for its repair.<sup>3</sup> In 1633 Parliament gave sympathetic consideration to a petition from Kirkwall desiring that the nave of the cathedral should be maintained by the Crown, as it had formerly been by the earls, while the bishop would continue to maintain the choir;<sup>4</sup> and in the same year a charter to Glasgow referred to the "great care, pains and charges" sustained by the magistrates in the "upholding of the great kirk of Glasgow and edifice thereof after the ancient manner and first foundation of the same."<sup>5</sup> More significant royal action came in 1634. Charles sent a direction that the parish church of St Andrews, "being the metropolitan of that our kingdom," should be ordered "in the same decent manner as that already ordered at Edinburgh."<sup>6</sup> He also wrote to the Earl of Sutherland, explaining that he understood how a beginning had been made in the repair of the cathedral of Dornoch but that "the body of the church is as yet to be set up," and recommending the earl to collaborate with the bishop and to support a general contribution throughout the diocese.<sup>7</sup> Charles is credited also with the intention to restore the cathedral of Iona.

#### *The Position at Whithorn.*

Whithorn was clearly a case where there was neither the need nor the resources for the maintenance of a large building for parochial purposes, and there is no difficulty about accepting that the nave was roofless in the early seventeenth century. It may be that before the restoration of the nave the protestant services had been held in some other part of the priory buildings.

<sup>1</sup> Baillie, *Letters and Journals*, I, 16-7.

<sup>2</sup> R.C.A.M., *Edinburgh*, 29-30.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Rogers, *op. cit.*, II, 471.

<sup>4</sup> *Acts Parl. Scot.*, v, 52-3. This petition may well have followed on the internal improvements made in the choir by Bishop Graham (Craven, *History of the Church in Orkney*, II, 159-60).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, v, 87.

<sup>6</sup> Rogers, *op. cit.*, II, 751. This direction may explain the report that Charles proposed to restore St Andrews Cathedral; but cf. Laud, *Works*, III, 313.

<sup>7</sup> Bentinck, *op. cit.*, 211-3 (22nd June 1634).

How far may we assign the seventeenth-century reconstruction to the episcopate of any particular bishop? Gavin Hamilton had been provided to the see in 1605, and his authority in his diocese was steadily increased in succeeding years as jurisdiction was restored to the bishops by legislation of the general assembly and the parliament. How far he may have felt that his consecration in 1610 gave his position a sanction which it had previously lacked we have no means of knowing; we must remember that nearly all the Scottish bishops were consecrated in 1610 or 1611, and, while this made the year an important one for the episcopalian party, the date is not reflected in the history of the cathedrals generally. A reconstruction of the nave at Whithorn, completed in 1610, would be only slightly anterior to the period of general activity in church building and restoration which began in the second decade of the century. Yet, in view of the position of the Scottish cathedrals at this time, it is perhaps preferable to regard the work done at Whithorn as related, at least primarily, to parochial needs.

William Cowper, Hamilton's successor, is a much more significant figure. He had come early under English influence, for after graduating at St Andrews in 1583 he had taught for two or three years in a school at Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire, kept by a Scotsman named Guthrie, and he was for some time in the service of the English Biblical scholar Hugh Broughton. Returning to Scotland in 1586, Cowper became minister first at Bothkennar and then at Perth. In 1604, when he was on the point of leaving for a visit to England, one of his parishioners remarked that he was "passing to England to London, and ere he came home would wear a surplice and a four-nooked bonnet." Yet Cowper was no extremist, for it was he who penned the protest against the introduction of portraits of the apostles to the chapel at Holyrood in 1617, he was at first more reluctant than most bishops to accept the kneeling posture for Communion, and Archbishop Spottiswoode remarked that he "affected too much the applause of the popular."<sup>1</sup> Now, it was Cowper who was mainly responsible for the draft liturgy of 1618 which sought to combine some of the features of Knoxian worship with borrowings from the Prayer Book and a more rigid liturgical framework. The book, compiled while the king was pressing the Five Articles of Perth, necessarily provided for kneeling at Communion, but it stated that the table should "stand in that part of the church which the minister findeth most convenient" and that the celebrant's position should be "at the side thereof."<sup>2</sup> This is consistent with a table set lengthwise in a Communion aisle, possibly raised above the nave and perhaps screened off; but it is quite incredible that Cowper would have countenanced an altar fixed against the east wall. It was appropriate that Cowper was buried in

<sup>1</sup> Cowper's "Life," prefixed to his *Works*; Spottiswoode Soc., *Miscellany*, II, 283; Spottiswoode, *History*, III, 239, 258; Calderwood, VII, 247, 297.

<sup>2</sup> *Scottish Liturgies of James VI* (Church Service Society), 87-8.

the new church of Greyfriars,<sup>1</sup> a structure which reflected his views and of which he must have wholly approved.

Andrew Lamb, who followed Cowper, had been minister of Leith, a town with a continuous episcopalian tradition and something of a nursery of bishops, and in his previous episcopal charge, at Brechin, he had presented a chandelier to the cathedral as early as 1615.<sup>2</sup> Yet it is difficult to picture Lamb as much of an innovator at Whithorn. If his presumed date of birth (c. 1565) is correct, he was a man already past his prime when he came to Galloway in 1619; in his later days he became blind, and resided quietly in his ancestral home at Leith; he was tolerant of clergy who would not accept the Five Articles, and under his mild regime even a man like Samuel Rutherford could retain his charge.<sup>3</sup> Lamb clearly belonged to the group of older Jacobean bishops of moderate views.

Thomas Sydserf, the next bishop, was a High Churchman of the Caroline, or Laudian, type. From as early as 1620, when he was a minister in Edinburgh, he had been an enthusiast for kneeling at Communion, and he seems to have continued to advocate that posture even when it was not being officially pressed. Sydserf's episcopate in Galloway (1635-38) coincided with the height of the liturgical movement, he was an eager supporter of the Prayer Book of 1637, he wore—or was alleged to wear—a crucifix, and on the fall of episcopal government in 1638 he went into exile in France, where he officiated in the English ambassador's chapel.<sup>4</sup> There can be little doubt that Bishop Sydserf would make innovations at Whithorn, and it is to him that the altar against the east wall must be attributed. It may be, too, that the cathedral of Galloway shared in the general revival of interest in the cathedrals in the 1630's, though the absence of any specific reference to it may be taken to indicate that it was already at least structurally sound.

We may be certain that Sydserf's work would be undone after the Covenanting triumph in 1638, and that the low standards of churchmanship prevailing during the restored episcopacy of 1661-89<sup>5</sup> did not necessitate any alterations in the cathedral. Equally, the work done at the end of the seventeenth century or the beginning of the eighteenth is to be attributed to the damage caused by the fall of the tower, and not to the requirements of changes in the conduct of public worship.

<sup>1</sup> Calderwood, VII, 350.

<sup>2</sup> *Eccles. Soc. Trans.*, 1950, p. 43.

<sup>3</sup> *D.N.B.*

<sup>4</sup> Craven, *History of the Church in Orkney*, 1662-88, pp. 6-7; Baillie, *Letters and Journals*, I, 16; McMillan, 183 n.

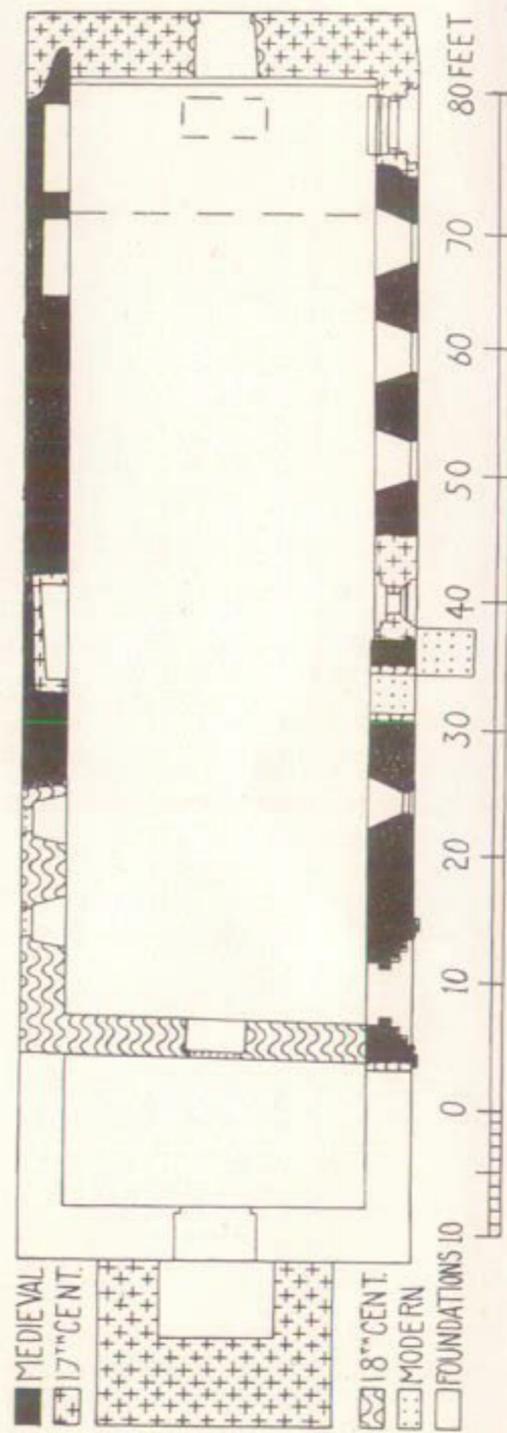
<sup>5</sup> The standards of Restoration worship in Galloway (identical with those in other parts of Scotland, already described) are indicated in *Register of the Synod of Galloway*, 1664-71 (1866), p. 9.



1. Whithorn: South door of nave, east end.



2. Whithorn: East end of south wall of nave, showing post-Reformation ground-level above medieval wall.



3. Plan of Post-Reformation Church.