Protestantism and Public Life: The Church of Ireland, Disestablishment, and Home Rule, 1864-1874

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This thesis explores the hitherto undocumented disestablishment and reconstruction of the Anglican Church of Ireland, c.1868-1870, and argues that this experience was formative in the emergence of Home Rule. Structurally, the Church's General Synod served as a model for an autonomous Irish parliament. Moreover, disestablishment and reconstruction conditioned the political trajectories of the Protestants initially involved in the first group to campaign for a federal Irish parliament, the Home Government Association (HGA). More broadly, both the HGA and the governance of the independent Church—the General Synod—grew from the bedrock of the same associational culture.

Chapter One considers how the Church of Ireland was under increasing Parliamentary scrutiny from the mid-1860s, linked directly to changing ideas of the franchise and a post-Palmerston Liberal revision. The status of the Church of Ireland was a party shibboleth in a time of nebulous, uncertain politics. Accordingly, the Church reacted through the performance of their own liturgy—it was a lived political experience, a demonstration of distinctly Irish culture and concerns in the face of British intervention. A vibrant lay associational culture of meetings, charities, and theological societies extended and expounded this principle.

Chapter Two documents the battle against disestablishment, a viable reality from 1868 and W.E. Gladstone's determination to level the Church. In response, the episcopate mobilised a grass roots campaign, based on local lay elections, and quickly dominated by two rival public associations. Legally dubious and constitutionally pregnant, this Church Conference and its ad-hoc consultative system became an important representative structure, moderating between Parliament and the Irish Anglican laity. It diffused Parliamentary language and ideals through the Church, endowing the process with deep symbolism.

Chapter Three examines the Church's reconstruction as a lay-governed institution, one which inherited the structure, language, and ideology of the contest against the Government. They retained the ostensibly temporary—and controversial—system created to confront Gladstone as the template for the General Synod of the independent Church. More widely, the questions of self-government and self-finance forced the Church to develop sophisticated political methods, and confront wider governmental issues, such the franchise and 'taxes.' In culture, perception, and structure, the eventual governing system looked exactly like a model of an autonomous Irish Parliament.

Chapter Four will show the debt the Home Government Association (HGA) owed to the General Synod. Launched in 1870, the HGA campaigned for Irish self-governance within the Empire. Normally considered a weak nucleus of a political party, by paying close attention to the culture of the HGA, this thesis shows how far it was from a standard party. The society was more aligned with the public associations of Protestant-dominated Dublin intellectual life and the lay associational culture of the Church. Although the political vision advocated was different from the normal conservatism of many of its Protestant members, culturally it was entirely grounded in the recent Anglican experience.

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This thesis studies the hitherto undocumented disestablishment and reconstruction of the Anglican Church of Ireland, c.1868-1870, and argues that this experience was formative in the emergence of Home Rule. The Church's General Synod served as a model for an autonomous Irish parliament. Moreover, disestablishment and reconstruction conditioned the political trajectory of Protestants initially involved in the first group to campaign for a federal Irish parliament, the Home Government Association (HGA). More broadly, both the HGA and the governance of the independent Church—the General Synod—grew from the bedrock of the same associational culture.

From the mid-1860s, the Church of Ireland was under increasing Parliamentary scrutiny. Liberals attacked its status and endowments, trying to obviate the internal weakness of their party after Palmerston's death. A wealthy, minority communion, the Church of Ireland was an obvious target for liberal and radical opprobrium. Politicians from these camps further linked the levelling of the Church to changing ideas of the franchise, capturing the debate as one of the elites vs. the masses. The status of the Church of Ireland became a party shibboleth in a time of nebulous, uncertain politics: equally, it was, for conservatives, a bastion of the Protestant Constitution. They depicted the contest as one between permanent truth and fleeting, temporary, capricious majoritarianism. However, within this, British conservatives rarely defended the Irish Church itself, instead supporting the general principle of Church Establishments.

The Church reacted in ways which demonstrated a distinctive Irish nationality, both ideologically and structurally. James Whiteside, MP for Dublin University, served as the Church's chief Parliamentary advocate. Acting as a semi-official Irish Anglican spokesman in key debates on the Church, he advanced their claims in the totemic discussions of the mid 1860s. Furthermore, Church of Ireland apologists and partisans, notably the Rev. Alfred Lee, answered Parliamentary debates with pamphlets, extending the language and politics of Westminster into theological and internal discussions. This distanced Irish Conservative discourse from wider British conservatism.

By extension, their own liturgy was a lived political experience, a demonstration of distinctly Irish culture and concerns in the face of British intervention. The evangelical nature of the Church marked it in contrast to the English High Church. Accordingly, Irish evangelicals attacked ritualism as an English import. Major conflict over ritualistic services in one church, St. Bride's in Dublin, culminated in an Orange invasion, an example of the Church's laity policing the liturgy. This was part of a wider re-assertion of Irish Protestant distinctiveness and grievances, notably Orange resistance to the Party Processions Act. The British Government's failure to effectively govern Ireland, particularly the growth of Fenianism and the bitter riots in Belfast in 1864, fed both the Orange resentment of the misapplication of law, and more general Protestant resentment of an ineffective Union. The Church's long-standing campaign to either meet in a new pan-British Convocation, or revive their own Irish Convocation, perfectly melded with the frustrations of being denied the benefits of the Union by a British Government. The Church's vibrant lay associational culture of meetings, charities, and theological societies extended and shaped their responses to these political challenges, providing an established venue for these debates.

From 1868, W.E. Gladstone's determination to disestablish the Church was clear. Although he undercut Disraeli's fledgling Conservative Government specifically on this issue, Disraeli proffered only weak resistance. In response, the Irish episcopate mobilised a grass roots campaign. The Church's laity were already dominated by two rival public associations, the Lay and Clerical Association (LCA) and the Protestant Defence Association (PDA): a clash of pragmatic moderation against No Surrender politics. Archbishops Trench and Beresford convened a small coterie of influential Anglicans, both lay and clerical, to advise them on the mood of the Church at large. However, its members were drawn mostly from the Lay and Clerical Association, and were thus dedicated to using the fight against disestablishment to democratise the Church.

This kitchen cabinet accidentally became the nucleus of an independent Church government, as it recommended a Church Conference based on local elections. Legally dubious and constitutionally pregnant, this Church Conference and its ad-hoc consultative system became an important representative structure, providing an alternative to the remote high political process of negotiations between prelates and peers. The Conference empowered a Standing Committee to remain in place after their show of arms. Its remit was to monitor Parliamentary developments, reacting and supplying a distinctly Irish perspective on the Westminster process. As such, it moderated between Parliament and the Irish Anglican laity. It diffused Parliamentary language and ideals through the Church, endowing the process with deep symbolism. By the end of the Irish Church Act's legislative course the Standing Committee organised a deputation to the House of Lords, revealing how estranged the Irish Anglican community had become from the Westminster power-base.

Following disestablishment, the Church's reconstruction as a lay-governed institution inherited the structure, language, and ideology of the contest against the Government. They retained the ostensibly temporary—and controversial—system created to confront Gladstone as the template for the General Synod of the independent Church. This immediately faced the problem of a furious mood within the lay ranks. Anger at disestablishment mixed with the long-standing evangelical discomfort towards episcopacy in a conflict that was simultaneously an anti-elite reaction to the imposition of Episcopal authority, and a theological campaign to revise the Book of Common Prayer. Diffusing this conflict required Tory and Whig magnates to work together, an elitist collusion against demotic Protestantism. The laity formed themselves into a self-organised Conference which could have taken the radical trajectory for which many of its members campaigned. Equally, reactionary clergymen pushed for a solely-clerical reconstruction of the Church, through Synods that excluded the laity. However, a cabal of magnates stitched up the lay politics and ensured clerical authority, whilst maintaining lay influence. Crucially, this clique transcended the two political parties.

The questions of self-government and self-finance forced the Church to develop sophisticated political methods, and confront wider governmental issues, such the franchise and 'taxes'. Fundamentally, the extraordinarily divergent demographics of a Protestant Ulster and Leinster, standing in contrast to their wispy presence in Munster and Connacht, presented unusual challenges. They were tested to construct a representative system which simultaneously embraced all Irish Anglicans in the decision-making process, yet reflected the demographic differences. This combined with the old ecclesiological warhorse of Episcopal authority, as the role of the Bishops' voting in the eventual governing system

became increasingly contested. Local parish meetings and diocesan synods debated these issues, with their blend of theology and politics, through the build-up to the General Convention. The final system for the General Convention was a process of 'voting by orders'—lay, clerical, and Episcopal. However, the discussions of both the process and conception of this body became increasingly Parliamentary. It was constantly described through Westminster analogies, and with an increasingly Westminster embrace. This culminated in debates on the Church franchise, which, touching on votes for women and the poor, mirrored the reform questions c.1865-7 which ironically impelled disestablishment. In culture, perception, and structure, the eventual governing system looked exactly like a model of an autonomous Irish Parliament.

The first session of the General Synod ended in April, 1870. The bulk of its work concerned its own rules of procedure and structure, the totemic flashpoints of episcopal-clerical-lay authority. Towards the end of its sitting, numerous old Repealers discussed incorporating the body of newly angered and alienated members of the Church of Ireland into the national ranks. All agreed this influx would transform the embers of the movement, shifting its focus as well as complexion and makeup. However, previously conservative sources now made strongly national statements. In this, the General Convention was a great inspiration. But this also overlapped a major theological controversy. One Dublin parishioner objected to perceived ritualist support from R.C. Trench, and soon a grass roots campaign blazed against the prelate, as vestry after vestry took up the chance to condemn the already suspect Archbishop. The Church's democracy again furthered its anti-elite theology.

In this backdrop, a private circular from Isaac Butt and others organised the iconic public meeting in Bilton's Hotel that May, launching the Home Government Association, announcing its intention to campaign for Irish self-governance within the Empire. Structurally and culturally, the society was more aligned with the public associations of Protestant-dominated Dublin intellectual life, and the lay associational culture of the Church, than normal political parties. Although the political vision advocated was different from the normal conservatism of many of its Protestant members, culturally it was entirely grounded in the recent Anglican experience. It made a strong case for distancing Irish politics from Westminster; removing Irish governance from London. It manifestly claimed to be of no party, yet it was tarred as both Liberal and Conservative, Nationalist and Orange by its detractors, who failed to understand the Association's subtle attempts to remove itself from the cul-de-sacs and binaries of Irish political life. It functioned as a discussion society, part of a world that included the RIA and Statistical Society. However, the bulk of disaffected Protestants held aloof from the HGA as it would not disavow ultramontanism. Classic Irish Protestant discourse held a binary between their native Church and supra-national Rome. The HGA's remarkably inclusive mandate, its remit to be a discussion forum shared by all denominations necessarily limited its ability. Its members began individually seeking election, and as this became an increasingly viable strategy the Association's original values became concomitantly distant. Ultimately, it became electorally reliant on existing, highly-Catholic political machines. Its nationally-minded Protestant members were pushed out, staying loyal to the concept of being of no party. Its failure was not that of Protestant nationality, but of civil society: mass politics was ultimately stronger than scholarly associations.

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Abbreviations

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List of Abbreviations

BNL	*Belfast News-Letter*
Bodl.	Bodleian Library, Oxford
BL	British Library
CPDA/PDA	Central Protestant Defence Association/Protestant Defence Association
CUL	Cambridge University Library
DCLA	Dublin City Library and Archive
DE	*Daily Express*
DEM	*Dublin Evening Mail*
FJ	*Freeman's Journal*
GCP	General Convention Papers
HGA	Home Government Association
IEG	*Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette*
IT	*Irish Times*
LCA	Lay and Clerical Association
LPL	Lambeth Palace Library
MACC	Minutes of the Archbishop's Consulting Committee
MCHSLC	Minutes and Correspondence of the Honourary Secretaries of the Lay Conference
MCL	Minutes of the Committee of Laymen
MGC	Minutes of the General Convention
MGOC	Minutes and Rough Minutes of the General Organising Committee
MSC	Minutes of the Standing Committee of the Lay Conference
NA	National Archives, Kew
PA	Parliamentary Archive
PMG	*Pall Mall Gazette*
PRONI	Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
RCBL	Representative Church Body Library, Dublin
TCD	Trinity College, Dublin

A Note on Terminology

The nomenclature of religious profession in Victorian Ireland was not straightforward. This thesis is strictly concerned with the Irish Anglican Church, at the time variously referred to as the Irish Church, the Established Church, the Church of Ireland, and the Church in Ireland. The difference between the last two names was subtle, but important. The former characterised the Church as a purely Irish institution, the latter as the Irish branch of a wider British Church. This thesis follows the Irish Victorian habit of reserving the word 'Protestant' strictly for members of the Anglican Church. It uses the un-capitalised 'protestant' for members of all Reformed denominations. This has important implications, as sections of the thesis specifically confront the differences between an Anglican exclusivity and a wider, inclusive Reformed mentality. In this thesis, 'the Church' is the Anglican Church, normally the Church of Ireland. An uncapitalised 'church' indicates a building.

Within 'the Church', 'Low Church' indicates a strain normally described as evangelical, with an emphasis on individual piety and an ecclesiology read through the lens of soteriology, a salvific sense of churchmanship where the body of true believers have individually responded to a specific call. 'High Church' means a grouping whose ecclesiology is based on apostolic succession and sacramental inclusion, highly committed to a traditional constitutionalist position of maintaining Church-and-State. This thesis differentiates Irish and English High Church camps. 'Ritualist' indicates a strain branching off from the High Church party whose liturgy emphasised ceremonial and ornamentalism. 'Broad Church' indicates a tendency, not a self-defining party, which focused on inclusion and intellectual legitimacy and credibility, and thus drew heavily on the work of 'Liberal' theologians.

Similarly, 'Federalist' specifically refers to members of the Home Government Association, whilst 'federalist' refers to the idea and its general advocates. Given how loose party-political affinity could be in the mid-Victorian period, it is important to differentiate political terms. 'Conservative' and 'Tory' refer to members of the Conservative party, whilst 'conservative' indicates a traditional or reactionary social outlook. 'Whig' and 'Liberal' are not used interchangeably—although they indicate membership of the same party grouping, opposed to the Conservatives in a political binary, 'Whig' indicates a socially conservative, noblesse oblige, paternalistic, aristocratic approach to political life, whilst 'Liberal' indicates a moderately progressive, sometimes quasi-Peelite, and functionalist approach to politics.

In this thesis, the meaning of 'secularisation' follows the Victorian usage, indicating the reversion or appropriation of ecclesiastical property to the State, and a concomitant legal implication for the division of Church and State, not a wider statement on the role of religion in society in general.

A Note on Citation

The titles of pamphlets, circulars, and reports cited in the footnotes are often short versions. Full versions are listed in the bibliography.

Introduction

The disestablishment of the Church of Ireland was a watershed for Britain and Ireland, transforming the existing constitutional and political templates. It was a measure of centralised, state-sponsored secularisation, an attack on the Irish elite, and, through the concomitant disendowment, a revision of hitherto-sacrosanct property rights. It was an unprecedented state intervention which changed the range of government. In Britain it inaugurated Gladstonian Liberalism and, in Ireland, launched the movement which became Home Rule. It thus precipitated the dominant political cultures of late Victorian and Edwardian Britain and Ireland. Accordingly, the experience of Irish Anglicanism over this period ought to be central to the historiography of Victorian politics. Yet scholarly work often treats Protestantism as little more than a leitmotif within Unionism. Sean Connolly's suggestion that the Irish Church's totemic role in early-modern politics obscures historical investigations into its life as a Church[1] holds true for the nineteenth century. Churchmanship, and especially Victorian churchmanship, cannot be extricated from wider social concerns.

This thesis examines the relationship between politics and the Church of Ireland between 1864 and 1874. It is manifestly not a comprehensive history of the Church in this period. It is a study of how political ideology and political cultures influenced lay governance after disestablishment in 1869. This thesis tries to answer a long-standing question of Irish history: why did Protestants become influentially involved in early Home Rule? It also queries and explores the political ramifications and experiences of the lay-reconstruction of the Irish Church. These two concerns could exist independently, but it is the fundamental principle of this thesis that they share the same answer. It argues that the particular culture of the newly-disestablished Church of Ireland had a formative impact on the emergence of

[1] S.J. Connolly, *Religion, Law, and Power: The Making of Protestant Ireland, 1660-1760* (Oxford, 1992).

Home Rule, providing a model of autonomous Irish governance through the representative systems that culminated in the Church's General Synod. Anglican efforts to retain their Church's status and endowments channeled managerial experience, directing it against the Government. Furthermore, the language used to describe the nascent Church administration was increasingly constitutional, and the eventual Church government resembled an Irish Parliament.

Disestablishment has not been studied for a generation. The standard accounts miss how broader cultural concerns shaped Irish antidisestablishmentarianism. The chief general histories naturally focus on the Parliamentary process, eliding the broader question into the Gladstone-Disraeli tussle.[2] Yet the best history of the Victorian Church of Ireland, still D.H. Akenson's, directly dismissed the intellectual aspects of the issue.[3] The other principal church histories echo Akenson's administrative and high-political concerns.[4] Although a more recent article acknowledges the centrality of disestablishment to the development of constitutional debates, it still sees this as a matter of high politics.[5] Furthermore, studies of Home Rule and nationalism often downplay its earliest

[2]Richard Shannon, *The Crisis of Imperialism* (St. Albans, 1976), pp.20-22; J.P. Parry, *Democracy and Religion: Gladstone and the Liberal Party 1867-1875* (Cambridge, 1986), pp.261-9; G.I.T. Machin, *Politics and the Churches in Great Britain 1869-1921* (Oxford, 1987), pp.22-7; R.F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* (London, 1989), pp.395-6; K. Theodore Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation 1846-1886*, (Oxford, 1998), pp.219-20, 591-4; Martin Pugh, *The Making of Modern British Politics 1867-1939*, (Oxford, 1993), p.31; Alvin Jackson, *Ireland 1798-1998: Politics and War* (Oxford, 1999), p.105; Paul Bew, *Ireland: The Politics of Enmity* (Oxford, 2009), pp.268-70.

[3] D.H. Akenson, *The Church of Ireland: Ecclesiastical Reform and Revolution 1800-1885* (New Haven/London, 1971), p.226.

[4] Peter T. Marsh, *The Victorian Church in Decline: Archbishop Tait and the Church of England 1868-1882* (London, 1969); P.M.H. Bell, *Disestablishment in Ireland and Wales*, (London, 1969), Kevin B. Nowlam, 'Disestablishment: 1800-1869', in Michael Hurley (ed.), *Irish Anglicanism 1869-1969* (Dublin, 1970); Hugh Shearman, *How the Church of Ireland was Disestablished* (Dublin, 1970); Owen Chadwick *The Victorian Church*, second edition. (London, 1972); J.C. Beckett, 'The Church of Ireland: Disestablishment and its Aftermath', in *Confrontations: Studies in Irish History* (London, 1973); R.B. McDowell, *The Church of Ireland 1869-1969* (London, 1975), Desmond Bowen, *History and the Shaping of Irish Protestantism* (New York, 1995); Gerald Parsons, 'Irish Disestablishment', in Gerald Parsons (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Britain, Vol. II: Controversies* (Manchester, 1988); Alan Acheson, *A History of the Church of Ireland 1691-1996* (Dublin, 1997).

[5] Alan O'Day, 'Defending the Union: Parliamentary Opinions, 1869 and 1886', in D. George Boyce and Alan O'Day (eds.), *Defenders of the Union: A Survey of British and Irish Unionism since 1801* (London, 2001).

incarnation; its clubby, technical phase in the Home Government Association is often overlooked.[6] The works which do engage with the movement's earliest phase tend to examine its constitutional and political ideologies, somewhat eliding the structure and ethos of the association.[7] Other attempts at explaining the culture of early Home Rule through more abstract definitions are ultimately insubstantial.[8]

This thesis takes a cultural-history approach to the study of politics, showing the dependence the initial version of Home Rule had on the Church of Ireland. It is as concerned with questions of 'how' as it is with questions of 'what': the structure, circumstances, and setting of declarations and decisions are considered to be an important element in what was actually declared or decided. Fundamentally, the most substantive aspect of the relationship between disestablishment and early Home Rule was structural—a shared associational culture, from which the General Synod developed. The same format for public meetings underwrote both the Church's normal public life and its particular handling of the antidisestablishmentarian campaign, as well as the early stages of organised Home Rule. Even if the content and subject of various meetings was different, the experience of them would have been similar. Men accustomed to handling public business, to use the Victorian phrase, would have understood the systems in both meetings. They would have grasped, and indeed expected, the

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[6] Alan O'Day, *Irish Home Rule 1867-1921* (Manchester, 1998); Richard English, *Irish Freedom: The History of Nationalism in Ireland* (London, 2008).

[7] Lawrence J. McCaffrey, 'Isaac Butt and the Home Rule Movement: A Study in Conservative Nationalism', *The Review of Politics*, vol.22, no.1 (January, 1956), pp.72-95; David Thornley, *Isaac Butt and Home Rule* (London, 1964); Alan J. Ward, *The Irish Constitutional Tradition: Responsible Government and Modern Ireland, 1782-1992* (Blackrock, 1994), pp.50-70; Alvin Jackson, *Home Rule: An Irish History 1800-2000* (London, 2003).

[8] W.J. McCormack, 'Isaac Butt and the Inner Failure of Protestant Home Rule', in Ciaran Brady (ed.), *Worsted in the Game: Losers in Irish History* (Dublin, 1989); Alan O'Day, 'Max Weber and Leadership, Butt, Parnell, and Dillon: Nationalism in Transition', in D. George Boyce and Alan O'Day (eds.), *Ireland in Transition, 1867-1921* (London, 2004); Phillip Bull, 'Isaac Butt, British Liberalism and an Alternative Nationalist Tradition', in D. George Boyce and Roger Swift (eds.), *ProbleMs and Perspectives in Irish History Since 1800* (Dublin, 2004).

same routines, rituals, and other facets of shared experience which forges commonality.

Importantly, this thesis does not advance any claims through the classic definition of a public sphere, as described by Jurgen Habermas.[9] His vision of collective fusion through conversations shaped by neutral spaces is not applicable to nineteenth-century Britain and Ireland, in that it was based on an unconscious creation. However, the Irish opposition to disestablishment fits perfectly into Charles Tilly's description of a political social movement: an organised public campaign which used a repertoire of symbolic actions governed by associations to demonstrate their worthiness, numbers, unity, and commitment. Furthermore, Tilly and others have identified the interplay between these sorts of campaigns and the status quo as the key to nineteenth-century democratisation.[10] The format of Victorian public meetings was steeped in custom. They were entirely self-conscious, part of wider civic rituals.[11] Societies, charities, and associations were the bridge between Parliament and the locales, filling a vacuum of governance and creating a public political morality.[12] Furthermore, Anglicanism across the whole of the United Kingdom experienced an institutional restructuring and revitalisation,[13] confronting social and cultural change.[14] This recognised the need to construct a

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[9] Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Formation of the Public Sphere: An Investigation into a Category of Bourgeois Society* trans. Thomas Burger, Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, 1989).
[10] Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention* (Cambridge, 2001); Charles Tilly, *Democracy and Contention in Europe, 1650-2000* (Cambridge, 2004).
[11] Simon Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual and Authority and the English Industrial City, 1840-1914* (Manchester, 2000).
[12] R.J. Morris, 'Voluntary Societies and British Urban Elites, 1780-1850: An Analysis', *The Historical Journal*, vol.26, no.1 (March, 1983), pp.95-118; Richard Rodger and Robert Colls, 'Civil Society and British Cities', in Robert Colls and Richard Rodger (eds.), *Cities of Ideas: Civil Society and Urban Governance in Britain 1800-2000* (Aldershot, 2004); M.J.D. Roberts, *Making English Morals: Voluntary Association and Moral Reform in England, 1787-1886* (Cambridge, 2004).
[13] Arthur Burns, *The Diocesan Revival in the Church of England, c.1800-1870* (Oxford, 1999).
[14] Hugh McCleod, *Secularisation in Western Europe* (Basingstoke, 2000); Herbert Schlossberg, *Conflict and Crisis in the Religious Life of Late Victorian England* (New Jersey/London, 2009).

new basis of authority for the Church, without its being subsumed into the status quo.[15] Church groups drew their energy and culture from this dominant feature of Victorian public life, and the importance of associational culture is being increasingly recognised in Victorian Irish history.[16] In many ways this was a legacy of an important eighteenth-century culture,[17] of a style of Enlightenment salon discussion. But, in Ireland, this period was central to the evolution of the Irish Protestant mentalities of autonomy to which Victorian federalists appealed. Ian McBride characterises this culture as a Protestant political nation awkwardly working within a framework of dependence and consent,[18] and James Livesey has recently argued that the very idea of civil society emerged within eighteenth-century Scottish and Irish elite communities as a way of negotiating their status within the empire, specifically within Ireland, eliding a public Protestant discursive space for true political agency.[19] This thesis shows how, in many ways, that description was no less relevant for the nineteenth-century.

Significant manuscript collections made available after the publication of these works show how much larger issues were contained within this process. Amongst others, the Courtown Papers in Trinity College, Dublin, the de Vesci Papers in the National Library of Ireland, the Beresford papers in the Cambridge University Library, and, most of all, the General Convention Papers in the Representative Church Body Library, Dublin, document the previously-ignored internal politics of the Church of Ireland during disestablishment. Only one study

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[15] Jane Garnett, 'Protestant Histories: James Anthony Froude, Partisanship, and National Identity', in Peter Ghosh and Lawrence Goldman (eds.), *Politics and Culture in Victorian Britain: Essays in Memory of Colin Matthew* (Oxford, 2006).
[16] Eve Patten, *Samuel Ferguson and the Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin, 2004); John Bew, *The Glory of Being Britons: Civic Unionism in Nineteenth-Century Belfast* (Dublin, 2009).
[17] James Kelly and Martyn Powell (eds.), *Clubs and Societies in Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, (Dublin, 2010).
[18] Ian McBride, *Eighteenth-Century Ireland: The Isle of Slaves* (Dublin, 2009), pp.273-311.
[19] James Livesey, *Civil Society and Empire: Ireland and Scotland in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (New Haven, 2009).

has made real use of the General Convention Papers so far, and only a small portion within an article of an impressively long range.[20] This new material shows how the shape of the voluntary Church's governance was the product of the fight against disestablishment, both intellectually and organisationally.

Rather than emerge from the public meetings which followed disestablishment, the ideas debated at those meetings and the plans formulated had already been proposed, revised, criticised, and shaped by the groups called by the Church to guide its antidisestablishmentarian efforts, and the public associations formed in spite of the official leadership. These papers are not popular records—they reveal elite perceptions and concerns. Where possible, parochial records and populist newspapers balance this lens. More broadly, this process shows how the controversies around lay influence within the Church were not merely a battle for control, but part of a much larger issue, namely, the emergence of mass-democratic politics in Britain. Lay governance involved debates over lay representation: in deciding how to best give the laity a voice, men who would have been deeply opposed to mass elections had to make decisions similar to the Reform questions, and spawned a highly-political representative system.

In many ways the politics of the 1860s and 70s were a rerun of the 1830s and 40s: British governments foundering on franchise reform (1832, 1867) and Irish rebellions (1848, 1867), found defining purpose in Irish ecclesiastical reform (1833, 1869). The Irish Anglican leadership in the 1860s were predominantly born in the first decade of the century: they had come of age through the early crises. The Church of Ireland's disestablishment loomed for a generation, its status and property precarious since the loss of 10 bishoprics in 1833 and the removal of an automatic connection to the whole country by the scrapping of individual tithes in 1838.

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[20] Kenneth Milne, 'Disestablishment and the Lay Response', in Ray Gillespie and W.G. Neely (eds.), *The Laity of the Church of Ireland 1000-2000: All Sorts and Conditions* (Dublin, 2004).

The Repeal movement followed the initial wave of British interventions: yet, as this thesis will show, early Home Rule was different. It incorporated a language of Anglican independence and Tory patriotism initially developed in the 1830s and 40s, by Isaac Butt and the circle around the *Dublin University Magazine*.[21] It is not strange that, confronted with a similar situation, the again-dispossessed Irish Anglicans had recourse to a politics which justified their existence and position through independence, under the stewardship of the same man. Butt's economic ideas stayed relatively consistent through his life.[22] Furthermore, some Protestant polemicists returned to eighteenth-century Ascendancy visions when confronted with the prospect of interventionist British governments. Rather than see the Anglican federalists as having crossed an aisle, as having moved to the other side of an unchanging political binary, their political attitudes stayed constant, and the binary changed around them.

The possibilities of Protestant coalescence increased in the 1860s. The Tories won 55 Irish seats in 1859, the year of the Ulster Revival, 47 seats in 1865 and 39 in 1868. The trend of decline is superficially deceiving; at mid-century the Tories were the more organised Irish party, specifically responding to their minority status. Yet the organisation hinged on their being very good at the dirty business of electoral registration—where denominational analysis was crucial. Thus the heart of the Tory structure in Ireland was beyond ideology; it was practically an extension of Protestant politics, not necessarily the ideals of Conservatism. Disestablishment liberated the Irish Whigs and infuriated the Tories. Their shared Church 'reinforced a tribal loyalty transcending class, status or geographical origin.'[23] The 1857

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[21] Joseph Spence, 'The Philosophy of Irish Toryism, 1833-1852' (University of London Ph.D. thesis, 1991).
[22] Alan O'Day, 'Nationalism and Political Economy in Ireland: Isaac Butt's Analysis', in Roger Swift and Christine Kinealy (eds.), *Politics and Power in Victorian Ireland* (Dublin, 2006).
[23] K. Theodore Hoppen, *Elections, Politics and Society in Ireland 1832-1885* (Oxford, 1984), pp.258-64.

election was the last where the Independent Opposition Party stood, and thus the last where a purely Catholic nationalism was represented. They gained 13 seats against a combined Whig-Tory representation of 92. In 1865 there were only 9 seats between the Liberals and Tories. The mid-Victorian parties in Ireland were nearly at a point of equipoise, as far as elections went. Denominationally, in 1857 24 of the Liberal MPs were Protestant, in 1859 the number was 20, in 1865 it was 27, and in 1868, it was 30. If the 30 Protestant Liberals joined the Tories after disestablishment, the strength of this 'Protestant Party' would have been 69 Irish MPs against 36. In a remarkable contrast to the aggressive and effective domestic Tory organisation, Irish Liberals were neglected by their English leaders in the 1850s and 60s.

The truly dynamic potential political amalgam between 1867 and 1874 was not between Protestants and Catholics, but between Protestant Tories and Protestant Whigs. The cause which would transcend localist concerns and cement fundamentally new political unities in this period was not Fenian Amnesty, but the common experience of practical management in the Church of Ireland's reconstruction. The motor and energy for this movement would not come from calls for tenant-right. But it could come from the common sense of neglect: from Northern Anglican Tories over the unfair treatment before the law, Southern Anglican Whigs over the prioritisation of Catholic office-seekers by whiggish Prime Ministers Lords Aberdeen, Palmerston, and Russell. In 1870, the material for a substantial union of Irish Protestants was available, but nobody took the chance. Butt refused to play to Orange galleries, the Church reconstruction remained mostly dominated by Tories, and Catholic demands usurped Protestant politics in the Home Rule movement. But this was in no way inevitable; in fact, it is almost surprising.

If a Protestant-Unionist vs. Catholic-Nationalist binary is accepted as early as the 1860s, then the political and denominational mixture initially involved in the Home Government Association was extraordinary, with the Protestant presence considered especially unusual. But they did not defect to any established bloc. They tried to create their own bloc, which eschewed that very binary. Terence Brown wrote that investigating one Reformed denomination undermines the vision of a coherent, unified protestantism in Ireland.[24] By studying the particularity and individual culture of the Irish Anglican Church, this thesis tries to unlock wider layers. The great cultural inheritance of Irish Protestantism was, in many ways, a strong sense of autonomy and, indeed, independence. The Irish Parliament was an exclusively Anglican institution. The legacy of autonomy lay in Protestantism, and in looking backwards, in revisiting an historical legacy, mid-Victorian Irish Anglicans could see that, in a way, the future could belong to them as well.

[24] Terence Brown, *The Whole Protestant Community: The Making of a Historical Myth* [Field Day Pamphlet No.7] (Derry, 1985).

Chapter One
The Development of the Irish Church Debate
1863-1866

This chapter traces the course of the Irish Church debate from 1863 through to the spring of 1867, when the Fenian Rising and Reform Act consolidated focus on the Irish Church and inaugurated what its members saw as an unprecedented, new crisis. The Irish Church Question itself did not change during these years. Neither the axioms nor the actual arguments of the two sides shifted significantly. The disputes were more rehearsed sparring than constructive, substantive exchange. Often, the broadsides and declarations of both the Church's critics and defenders were designed to rally their respective communities rather than shift opinion. Andrew Shields has documented the importance of the Church debate to Irish Tories, showing it as a shibboleth of party principle.[25] Yet this debate resonated well beyond the evangelical centre of Irish Conservative cliques—as this chapter will show, this contest influenced both Irish Liberals, and the corporate, spiritual life of the Church itself.

The essence was the power of politics beyond the impact of legislation: even if the various anti-Church motions and resolutions launched in Parliament over these years failed, their presence galvanised the Church's opponents. The specific exchanges studied in this chapter focused on several Parliamentary motions. Each Parliamentary debate prompted pamphlets and newspaper articles in response, a series of ripostes and replies which spiralled into increasingly national territory. Ultimately, this debate on the status of the Irish Church produced a political and constitutional context for the Church's religious life. This was a slowly evolving process, but an important one.

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[25] Andrew Shields, 'An Irish Conservative Perspective on the Defence of the Church of Ireland, 1865-1868', *Journal of Religious History* vol.31, no.1 (March, 2007), pp.103-114; Andrew Shields, *The Irish Conservative Party, 1852-1868: Land, Politics, and Religion* (Dublin, 2007).

The method of the debate was crucial. The way the Church's partisans and critics conducted this contest was central to the Church's own political process, and was part of the structure and culture that eventually helped to create the Home Government Association. These arguments grew in the Church's voluntary charities, public societies, and lay associations. They developed in a nexus of Parliament, the press, public meetings, and the pulpit, where lay associational culture linked both the liturgy, the formal public life of the Church, to Parliament, the formal public life of the nation. The key was an idea of 'public spirit', prevalent in, and linking, ideas of both the Church's social role and the nation's political life. It was an important cultural grounding for nationally-minded Irish Tories, and undercuts David Thornley's implicit assumption that Tory Home Rule had no pre-history.

Robert Saunders has shown how the Reform debates were not isolated contests but a long-evolving political context.[26] As Jose Harris suggested, in the 1860s the political nation was still grounded in visions of history and Protestantism; the Reform debates worked through that lens and inadvertently tilted away from the Victorian ideal of communitarian collectivism. Public spirit was the sense of this overarching community, the idealised glue of an increasingly fractious society, a descriptor making sense of a growing mass culture.[27] Furthermore, the bicentenary of the dissenting expulsion gave a political impetus to theological calls for disestablishment.[28] This explicates the strong political dimension of the internal theological conflict between the Irish High and Low Church schools. A moral collectivism was not far off the ideal of a National Church's social value and utility. Christianity and public spirit were remarkably

[26] Robert Saunders, *Democracy and the Vote in British Politics, 1848-1867: The Making of the Second Reform Act* (Farnham, 2011).
[27] Jose Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit: Britain 1870-1914* (Oxford, 1993).
[28] Timothy Larsen, *Contested Christianity: The Political and Social Context of Victorian Theology* (Waco, 2004), pp.157-68.

congruent. In both culture and method, the Home Government Association grew out of Protestant-tinged Irish public life, out of the most convivial and gentlemanly aspects of Dublin civil society. Their goal of a revived public spirit was clearly rooted in a growing political trend.

However, in the years between the Liberal realignment of the early 1860s and the intense conflict from 1867, the Church's public life was increasingly arrayed against British Governments. The great cry was 'Church Defence', a nebulous concept of both internal purity and cohesion, and refusing to accept outside interference. More and more, in defending their Church, Irish Anglicans found themselves returning to the positions of the 1830s, taking anti-Government or even anti-British lines. This would eventually produce the circumstances of an Anglican Church resenting the intrusions of the State. A debate which could have been confined to property and finance, to the wealthy and extensive endowments of a wealthy, small Church, eventually encompassed great sweeps of historical legacy, national spirit, and an increasing frustration with the way the Union worked, or failed to work, for Ireland. They were forced to these conclusions by the hammer of Parliament and the press; the national-historical arguments came forward in response to outside criticism. By 1867 the Church of Ireland had spent years reiterating its Irish nationality, independence from England, and bemoaning the nature of the Union. It did this through the associational culture that fed early Federalism, in both form and content. The logic employed over these years of brewing conflict ironically aided their distance from England.

I

The Irish Church and Public Politics

January 1863—December 1864

In Dublin, 1863 opened with two political meetings—hardly unusual for a former capital city with a long legacy of tempestuous politics. Almost as the year began, the 50-year-old Presbyterian Nationalist John Martin spoke under the banner of the Dublin Brotherhood of St. Patrick at the city's Mechanics' Institute, a bastion of artisans' self-improvement. Previously a member of the Repeal Association and a Young Irelander, he spoke on O'Connell and stressed two chief themes of the Liberator's political life—the restoration of Irish constitutional autonomy, and the preservation of a monarchical link between England and Ireland. Martin chided the audience that, since Emancipation, upper-class Catholics had become 'servile' place-holders: much like Irish Protestants, apparently. He continued to complain of 'the Anglican Church Establishment, which is maintained by English bayonets to perpetuate our divisions and prevent Irish Catholics and Protestants from uniting for the sake of their common country.'[29] Two weeks later, another meeting suggested similar nationally-minded sentiments. Although this meeting was overwhelmingly Anglican, it also damned the English bayonets.

The evangelical Tory James Whiteside, holder of a flagship Anglican position as MP for Dublin University, gave the first of two lectures to the Dublin YMCA on 'The Life and Death of the Irish Parliament.' Decades earlier, he had represented Daniel O'Connell and William Smith O'Brien in their trials. Now, most of Dublin's senior clergy attended the lectures with Trinity College's academics and the city's

[29] *Nation*, 3rd January 1863.

conservative legal and political minds.[30] This was a deeply Protestant conclave: it opened with a hymn, and clerics read portions of both scripture and the Anglican liturgy. Whiteside's long history of the Irish Parliament, and its role of morally lifting the Irish Nation, concluded with the charge to

> [k]eep alive within your breasts that public spirit from which all great countries spring.…Without public spirit I tell you[,] you are a nation of walking dead men (cheers)….No country was ever permanently great without public spirit in her sons….Public spirit is the breath of parliamentary life.…Therefore I say to the youth of this country, act on the maxims of their Church…and the other noble patriots who have conferred lustre on Ireland.…cherish that public spirit which alone can elevate your nation.

They closed by singing the doxology. At the next lecture, Whiteside defended the Parliament's record, particularly on the Catholic question, and blamed English policy for undermining Irish commerce and prosperity. For him, the Union was an inevitable result of the war with France, and he criticised the Irish Parliament for not exacting better terms to make the Union more workable for their day.[31]

The *Nation* responded to Whiteside's talks: given his past legal defences, it hoped he would re-spark patriotism in the Protestant ranks. However, he did nothing of the sort. Whiteside naturally obscured the corruption and venality of the Irish Parliament, and ignored the idea that a 'middle course' between separation and Union was still possible. His praising Gandon's architecture and the senatorial atmosphere of their grandparents' capital city was fitting for a Protestant: those were his monuments.[32] These lectures had a further publication history, showing the enduring interest in their topic through the tempestuous, fractious 1860s.[33] Whiteside's talks culminated in lauding the prosperity gained through the British

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[30] Those present included Joseph Napier, Samuel Butcher, Professor of Divinity at TCD, William H Ferrar, George Salmon, Samuel Carson, Joseph Galbraith and Morgan Jellett, all of TCD, several other clergymen, and local political figures such as Dr. William Wilde, and R. Denny Urlin, and important, committed laymen in barristers Richard Gamble, Edward Norman, and Edward Pennefather.
[31] *Dublin Evening Mail* (*DEM*), 20th, 23rd January 1863.
[32] *Nation*, 31st January 1863.
[33] James Whiteside, *The Life and Death of the Irish Parliament* (Dublin, 1863); James Whiteside, *Essays and Lectures: Historical and Literary* (Dublin, 1868).

connection. However, recognising the immediate advantages of the Empire was hardly incompatible with lamenting a loss of autonomy and self-government, especially autonomy contained within the same Empire. Defending the monarchical link between England and Ireland did not invalidate the principle of more localised governance, and Whiteside's eloquent and sustained defence of the Irish Parliament over two lectures was more substantial than his closing imperial filigree.

Even if the historical legacy and inheritance were contested, both Martin and Whiteside agreed on the need for common action between Catholics and Protestants, and on the moral value of a national public spirit. This chimed with the romanticism of Young Ireland in the 1840s, and their ideals of an inclusive cultural unity, an idea carried on by Samuel Ferguson and other nationally-minded Protestants.[34] In 1863 Isaac Butt, the former Tory luminary who had also exemplified that mentality in the 1830s and 40s, republished a volume of stories culled from the *Dublin University Magazine*, his old organ of patriotic Irish Toryism. The chapters read as fiction, although they were presented as factual memoir. All concerned the culture and life of Trinity College thirty years earlier, underscoring the totemic importance and relevance of that world, even when Butt was a down-and-out Liberal-Conservative MP.[35] Although a reprinted article from the *Athenaeum* took the book as an example of Butt's failure to live up to his early promise,[36] the work ultimately stressed the importance of Trinity, and thus Irish Protestantism and the official Establishment. However, for Catholics the Church Establishment was the great barrier to political unity with Irish Anglicans; for Protestants, it was the manifestation of that Irish Spirit. For the latter, Church government and Church life were central to the creation and continuation of Irish public spirit.

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[34] Eve Patten, *Samuel Ferguson and the Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin, 2004).
[35] Isaac Butt, *Chapters of College Romance* (London, 1863).
[36] *Freeman's Journal* (*FJ*), 19th January 1864; *Irish Times* (*IT*), 21st January 1864.

Within this, seemingly-innocuous questions of Church governance created awkward challenges to the legal harmony and smooth mechanics of the Union. In 1861 the Palmerston Government allowed a permanent revival of Convocation, the Church of England's historic form of self-government. Dormant since the 1740s, Convocation was, in theory, the ecclesiastical complement to secular Parliament, the religious arm of the governmental body. More practically, it was the Church of England's only means of representation and management. The Irish Convocation had always fulfilled the same role for the old Irish Parliament, and, similarly, that Convocation last met under Queen Anne. However, since the Union, the two Churches were joined into one, and the legal status of the vestigial Irish Convocation was unclear. In 1861 the revived English Convocation agreed a new form of prayer and asked the Irish Primate, Lord John George Beresford, to accept this. He applied to the Government to either allow them to sit with the English in one United Convocation, or revive the Irish Convocation that could ratify the changes. He was denied on both counts. Beresford pointed out that the denial undermined both the unity of the two Churches and the Irish Church's own effective self-government.[37]

With a separate Irish Convocation mooted, Thomas Woodward, dean of Down (portentously) argued that, since it would revive a legal aspect of the independent Kingdom of Ireland, '[w]e should view the assembling of an *Irish* Convocation as a step towards a disuniting of Churches, whose close adhesion is itself one main Article in the Legislative Union. If we were *Repealers*, we should go for Irish Convocation.'[38] Not only was the Union the context of Church debates, it was a malleable context, a seemingly negotiated space, where the meaning and

[37] Lord J.G. Beresford to Sir George Grey, 20th, 22nd July 1861, Lord J.G. Beresford to Lord Palmerston, 17th March 1862, Sir George Grey to Beresford, 24th June 1862, Memorial of Irish Clergy to Home Office, 1861, National Archives (NA), Ms.HO45/7252, Nos.1-2; Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) Ms.DIO4/10/4/2,3,5/A-I,6,7.
[38] Thomas Woodward, *The Irish Convocation; Should it be Revived?* (Dublin/London, 1861), emphasis original.

purpose of the Union could be changed. Different ways of governing the Church changed the way the Union worked for Ireland. Furthermore, the Irish High Church recognised how reviving Convocation related to the increased role of the laity—High Church Bishop William Fitzgerald even referred to the idea as 'the last phase of the Belfast revival' of 1859.[39] Lay activism was inextricable from ideas of Church governance. After Marcus Gervais Beresford was translated to Armagh, he reminded the Government that the Irish Church was being denied 'privileges' easily granted to its English sister, and his secretary, the Rev. Alexander Irwin, provided a lengthy history of the Irish Convocation since Edward VI. Beresford enumerated the politicking behind the making of the Act of Union, and presented the idea that Pitt had originally wanted to address the permanence of Convocation.[40] Furthermore, Beresford secured support from Charles Longley, archbishop of Canterbury, for a petition to the House of Lords.[41]

The basic terms and structure of so many mid-Victorian Anglo-Irish debates formed the essence of this one: imbalance between the countries and confusion over the exact terms and workings of the Union. Thus when the Liberal MP for Swansea, Lewis Dillwyn, began to escalate an attack on the Church, they again revived the Convocation debate, moving a matter of abstract legality directly into the immediate contest over the Church's status and property. Beresford again pressed for a separate Irish Convocation, and published a long memorial which summarised all the correspondence and discussion on the issue to date.[42] He explained to A.C. Tait, bishop of London, that their interest in a separate Convocation was not an attempt to separate themselves from the Church of

[39] William Fitzgerald to A.J. Stephens, 18th March 1861, PRONI Ms.DIO4/10/5/4.
[40] Beresford to Grey, ND, November 1862, Memorial of Irish Clergy to Home Office, 1862; National Archives (NA), Ms.HO45/7252, Nos.1-4.
[41] Charles Longley to Beresford, 28th November 1862, Cambridge University Library (CUL) Ms.Add.9407/2/1.
[42] Beresford to Grey, 9th March 1863, Printed Memorial, 11th May 1863, NA Ms.HO45/7252, Nos.5, 17.

England, but, rather, to remain connected by maintaining the ability to regulate themselves in line with English changes. The danger was that if the English Church could change canons which the Irish branch could not similarly adopt, it would force a gulf between the two ostensibly united bodies.[43] A.J. Stephens (an ecclesiastical lawyer), Alexander Irwin, and William Fitzgerald (a former Professor of Ecclesiastical History at TCD), spent considerable effort organising the historical-legal precedents to Convocation. This research forced them to engage more and more closely with the history of English governance in Ireland, with its contested and controversial legacy, and with the legal structures and practical existence of their former independent Irish state. It forced an awkward and (at this time uncomfortable) acknowledgement of the historic failures of British rule, and weakness in the Union.[44]

In Parliament, Dillwyn moved for a select committee to examine Irish religious endowments. Rhetorically, he specifically confronted the Church's centrality to the Union, although this main attack, at this time, was its property, not status. He enumerated the expected issues of population and demographics, raising total disestablishmentarian arguments, yet declared his real purpose was to goad the Liberal Party into action on Ireland. The Government should adopt the issue of securing better conditions in Ireland, more effectively governing the country. The Irish question 'had been allowed to sleep, like Reform and many other questions, which once formed the watchwords of the Liberal party.' Henry Seymour tried to amend the motion, recasting it as a measure to improve the efficiency of the Church, bringing forward the usual charges of priests occupying empty parishes. His vision was to restructure the Church through a comprehensive reform, and in

[43] Beresford to A.C. Tait, 12th March 1863, Lambeth Palace Library (LPL) Ms.Tait/81, fols.135-137a.
[44] PRONI Ms.DIO4/10/5/4,6-7,10-11,16-19,22-25.

so doing secure the Irish Establishment. Furthermore, he credited many of his arguments to Edward Stopford, archdeacon of Meath.

However, James Whiteside opposed both proposals. There was clearly no outcry on the Irish Church, as the only petition to the House on the Church for some time had been their own memorial on Convocation. Dillwyn fumed that Ireland was a disturbed, rebellious land, trying to wind up an attack on the Church: yet to remedy that he proposed to 'abolish' the Christian Church and weaken the power of law and the monarchy. A typically long discourse on Irish history followed, and Whiteside concluded by defending the Reformation in Ireland, and its continuing legacy in the Church of Ireland.[45] Whiteside's defence exactly fulfilled his role as MP for Dublin University, and thus the Church's unofficial Parliamentary advocate. It attempted to secure the Church on its own terms. However, Edward Stopford responded in print, arguing that many clergymen in Ireland actually wanted an investigation into the state of the Church. Their position would be strengthened by removing its 'anomalies'. Some clergymen laboured with almost no money, yet many had almost nothing to do and desperately wanted real parochial work. Stopford charged the authorities to reform the Church and make it stronger.[46] This effort contributed to his reputation as 'an indefatigably mischievous little "Puck."'[47] However, his points chimed with outside criticism of the Church. One pamphleteer railed that

> Englishmen have been now for more than thirty years familiar with the various topics by which the one glaring anomaly of their constitution can be defended or assailed. Weak, paralysed, and apparently moribund, the Irish Church has, at any rate, not succumbed under a storm of argument, ridicule, and invective, which for a whole generation has been putting her crumbling battlements and rotten foundations to the test....Still she stands on, the butt of wits, the pet theme of political skirmishers, and the despair and shame of all who look at a political grievance...as it affects the character of the nation who allows it to exist[.]

[45] *Hansard*, HC Deb., 19th May 1863, vol. 170, cc1988-2021.
[46] Edward Stopford, *A Letter to the Right Hon. James Whiteside...Respecting the Church in Ireland* (London/Dublin, 1863). This copy was in the personal possession of M.G. Beresford.
[47] William Fitzgerald to Alexander Irwin, 6th May 1863, PRONI Ms.DIO4/10/5/26.

The author, Henry Stewart Cunningham, considered the Church Establishment a barrier to a more complete Union, and advocated reform accordingly.[48] Stopford's belief that reform could save the Church had a notable legacy. Yet his variance with Whiteside underscored a central awkwardness—Stopford's attempts to improve the Church's efficacy jarred with its political symbolism as the Establishment. Improving the institution's ability to function as a Church ran into the wall of its importance as a political icon, a shibboleth of uncompromising, resolute consistency.

When Richard Whately, the 76-year-old archbishop of Dublin, passed away in October 1863, the appointment of a new prelate further focused scrutiny. The intellectual, English Whately had himself been parachuted in by reforming Whigs in 1831, and his theological liberalism and refusal comprehensively and unflinchingly to endorse the Establishment prompted significant controversy in evangelical Ireland. This pattern seemed to be repeated with the rumour that the Broad Church A.P. Stanley, a possible defender of *Essays and Reviews* and 'a rank neologist' would get the See. The body of Irish evangelicals resented not only his theology, but his being English.[49] Instead, Stanley became dean of Westminster, succeeding the man who actually received Dublin—Richard Chenevix Trench, Irish by family and birth, but English in education, career, outlook, and churchmanship.

Months before Whately passed away, Trench confessed to his old friend Samuel Wilberforce that he would accept Dublin if offered it, but 'I should do so not with pleasure, but as a matter of duty. England is my world, the land of all my friends. The English Church seems a field full of life & hope & vigour—of which I see little in the Irish.'[50] Trench knew the city so little he actually commissioned his

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[48] H.S. Cunningham, *Is 'Good News from Ireland' True? Remarks on the Position and Prospects of the Irish Church Establishment* (London, 1864).
[49] *Times*, 26th October 1863.
[50] R.C. Trench to Samuel Wilberforce, 14th July 1863, Bodleian Library, Oxford (Bodl.) Ms.Wilberforce.c.6/2, fols.155-6.

cousin and Irish land agent, Thomas Cooke Trench, to scout the Diocese and gather information on the prominent laity, in addition to normal preparations such as having a new carriage made.[51] William Connor Magee, the astute Dean of Cork, warned that if Trench alienated the Irish evangelicals, the discord in the Church would fuel its opponents. Theological conflict would make disestablishment more likely.[52] Trench was consecrated in Christ Church Cathedral, on New Year's Day, 1864. The sermon preached by his new chaplain, the High Church William Lee, emphasized the uncertainty of their position, the scrutiny under which they were placed, and, most importantly, their role in Ireland.

For Lee, the history of Christianity suggested a constant struggle, first against persecution, then against heresy. The Church of Ireland still fought the struggle of the Reformation, as it still contested the Church of Rome. This made their branch of the United Church unique. More so, 'he had no fear that political combinations or Parliamentary majorities could destroy the vitality of her faith or impair the energy of her efforts.'[53] Lee upheld not only the distinctiveness of the Irish Church, but made clear that their political struggles were only growing. Similarly, the Primate, M.G. Beresford, used that year's Charge to refute the unsavoury details of population and land leasing statistics,[54] specifically confronting the criticisms that radicals like Lewis Dillwyn hoped would, in fact, give cause to a Liberal Parliamentary majority.

To the same end, in 1864 W.E. Gladstone began courting Nonconformists through meetings with the political Congregational minister Newman Hall,[55] and in

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[51] Trench to Thomas Cooke Trench, 18th January 1864, Representative Church Body Library (RCBL) Ms.327/1/25.
[52] W.C. Magee to J.C. MacDonnell, ND, January 1864, John Cotter MacDonnell, *Life and Correspondence of William Connor Magee, Archbishop of York, Bishop of Peterborough* (London, 1896).
[53] *Belfast News-Letter* (*BNL*), 4th January 1864.
[54] M.G. Beresford, *A Charge Addressed to the Clergy of the Dioceses of Armagh and Clogher, at the Annual Visitation, 1864* (Dublin, 1865).
[55] H.C.G. Matthew (ed.), *Gladstone Diaries*, vol. six (Oxford, 1978).

May of that year famously recast the franchise as the 'moral entitlement to come within the pale of the constitution'. Other Liberals considered it the means to secure the Parliamentary backing to wider social reform.[56] Franchise reform and Irish ecclesiastical reform were, according to the Liberal MP Lord Enfield, the two issues Gladstone thought would prove 'that they were really the Liberal party'.[57] Nonconformist radicals called for both Reform and disestablishment, as both symbolised the triumph of the masses over entrenched minority privilege. Eugenio Biagini described disestablishment as 'the panacea of popular radicalism', galvanising 'plebeian liberals'.[58] Unsurprisingly, a renewed Irish antidisestablishmentarianism also dated from 1864.

That year the Trinity College historian and High Church theologian James Henthorn Todd published his biography of St. Patrick, reiterating long-standing claims of ecclesiastical independence. In common with most Irish Anglican apologetics, he argued that the modern Church of Ireland was the direct inheritor of St. Patrick and the ancient Irish Church. But he also took significant swipes at English misgovernance, along with the expected anti-Catholic diatribes. The Victorian Church of Ireland lacked a majority of adherents because of the conquest and 'the impolitic measures enforced…for compelling the Irish people to adopt manners and laws for which they were wholly unprepared; not to speak of the arbitrary confiscation of landed property, for the benefit of the English colonists, and the sudden overthrow of the authority of the native chieftains.' Even if the English found an Irishman 'barbarous' in manner and dress, 'it did not follow that he was to be deprived of the rights of citizenship and equal law; that he should be denied security for his life and property, and subjected to a treatment which was in

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[56] Jonathan Parry, *The Rise and Fall of Liberal Government in Victorian Britain* (New Haven/London, 1993), pp.207-12.
[57] John Vincent (ed.), *Disraeli, Derby, and the Conservative Party: Journals and Memoirs of Edward Henry, Lord Stanley 1849-1869* (Hassocks, 1978), p.224.
[58] Eugenio Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment, and Reform: Popular Liberalism in the Age of Gladstone, 1860-1880* (Cambridge, 1992), p.241.

its tendency nothing short of extermination. This was indeed to make him a barbarian, and at the same time to punish him for being a barbarian.' Todd expanded to complain that from the confusion of surrender and regrant, conducted in a foreign language and through a legal system dimly understood by the Irish, 'The foundation was laid for that tendency to insurrection and to agrarian outrage which has exhibited itself so prominently in Irish history, even to our own times.' Remarkably, Todd concluded that

> the deadly hatred of England and everything English…was not at first created by any differences in religion. It originated, and had reached its height, at a time when the only difference in religion was that the Established Church of the English Pale was more thoroughly devoted to Rome, and more completely under Papal, or, as we would now say, ultramontane influence, than the antient [sic] clergy and bishops of the aboriginal Irish ever were, or could have been. It is indeed highly probable that if the Reformation had been presented to the Irish people in a Gaelic dress and in the Gaelic language, it would have been accepted without difficulty.

Todd blamed consistent and protracted English ineptitude for both Ireland's historic strife and his own time's turbulence. The wider narrative was a continual struggle between aggrandising, self-serving English policy and an unfairly maligned Irish culture, where he located the bedrock of his Anglican Church.[59] But more deeply, a (partisan) history of the Irish Church seemed inevitably to prompt a discussion of the nature of English governance in Ireland, and suggest that Irish national spirit resided in the Church despite English machinations.

In the same year, his brother, the lawyer Charles H. Todd, published a legal history of Irish synods whose main theme was their relationship to Parliament.[60] Similarly, through the auspices of a charity, Dublin churchwarden Lancelot Studdert republished the canons established at the Dublin Synod of 1634, which created a theological equipoise yet re-anchored the Church in the State.[61] M.G. Beresford had not abandoned the claims for an Irish Convocation, and reminded

[59] J.H. Todd, *St. Patrick, Apostle of Ireland: A Memoir of his Life and Work* (Dublin, 1864).
[60] C.H. Todd, *Convocation and Provincial Synods* (Dublin, 1864).
[61] Lancelot Studdert (ed.), *Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical, Treatred Upon by the Archbishops and Bishops, and the Rest of the Clergy of Ireland* (Dublin, 1864).

Sir George Grey that '[i]t is not a new and unprecedented thing that is sought for. It is the restoration of a privilege which the Church in Ireland has been in the enjoyment of under former Sovereigns.'[62] Re-evaluations of the Church-Parliament relationship unsurprisingly followed from Parliamentary sabre-rattling, and the potential of Liberal fusion on the Church question. This reconsideration in turn prompted unflinchingly national rhetoric around the nature of the Irish Church and its historical legacy. Yet this was an essentially Anglican programme—a Catholic riposte from Maynooth made the logical point that Irish ecclesiastical history was valuable only as history: whether a small body of legislators hundreds of years ago approved of a Protestant Reformation did not mean the current institution was somehow anything other than an injustice. Furthermore, the weight of historical research, even if the conclusions bolstered the Catholic side, would not induce the Anglican archbishops to abandon their Sees. This volume of essays was a collection of works initially composed for the turmoil of the 1840s.[63] It seemed that the cultural politics of that tempestuous period were not only revived, but relevant again.

Irrespective of the history, the constraints on the Irish laity's role in their Church stemmed from the Church's relationship with the Church of England. This was, ultimately, a constitutional question, and one which naturally spilled into wider debates around Anglo-Irish governance and imbalance. These were perennial Irish themes with sure historical grounding. However, the Church's normal associational life grappled with these concerns regularly. Constitutional language dominated the Church's descriptions of the laity's incorporation into its public life, a complex semiotics of intertwined ideologies. Although this discussion did have the expected theological weight—the intellectual cleric C.P. Reichel argued the

[62] Beresford to Grey, 7th February 1864, NA Ms.HO45/7252, No.7.
[63] Matthew Kelly, *Dissertations Chiefly on Irish Church History* (Dublin/London, 1864).

scriptural basis of lay involvement by debating *Acts of the Apostles* with a layman, for instance[64]—the real meat of this wider theme was ultimately political.

The lawyer and Tory MP Joseph Napier opened a YMCA in Drogheda by explaining that public associations which educated and morally uplifted their members complemented and supported the Church. He concluded that '[t]he Church is not simply the Clergy—the state is not merely the governing body', education and wisdom were needed for freedom: 'Let your Association be as Protestant as you please—but as Christian as you can; as Irish as your Patriotism can desire—as Imperial as your loyalty can demand', intertwining evangelical ecclesiology with politics.[65] These themes became more pertinent as the Reform questions sharpened, since the Church's position was analogous to that conflict. The Rev. T.R. Birks lamented that '[w]hen you have lowered the principle of national religion to the sordid level of merely counting up votes on either side, we must feel that the true principle of an Established Church is practically abandoned.' Sir Hugh Cairns, a Belfast lawyer and prominent Tory MP for his native city, echoed these claims through attacks on the Liberation Society's English supporters.[66] At this public meting for a charity, both speakers proffered coded attacks on Reform, and from this defended the Irish Church.

The Irish Church Missions, the platform for their attacks, was itself a deeply controversial body, prompting accusations of bribed conversions and other malignant, corrosive practices.[67] One critic attacked the ICM for, beyond this chicanery, spreading the idea that the Church only worked as an Establishment if it had a steady number of conversions. Instead, he charged that social good came from a Church Establishment's existing regardless of the population's total

[64] *Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette* (*IEG*), 'Admission of the Laity to Synods', 21st January, 21st February 1865.
[65] Joseph Napier, *A Free Church in a Free State* (Dublin, 1862).
[66] *Addresses Delivered…at the Irish Church Missions' Anniversary Breakfast* (London, 1864).
[67] Desmond Bowen, *Souperism: Myth or Reality?* (Cork, 1970).

adherence. The idea that the Church establishment was only useful as a missionary tool was impossible to defend. If the House of Commons disendowed the Church, much wider social good would be lost as well—continually measuring the Establishment's vitality by conversions and population doomed them to disendowment.[68] An English vicar followed this line, using tables and coloured maps to illustrate Irish Protestantism's moral, intellectual, and material superiority, concluding that the Irish population's total attendance was irrelevant in the face of an institution of such clear social worth.[69]

Joseph Napier took the spur of rumblings in 1864 to urge greater lay involvement in the Church, mitigating the lack of self-government in Convocation, whilst resenting this liberty's being granted to England and not Ireland.[70] He spoke at a diocesan conference where the Bishop, Robert Bent Knox, opened the proceedings with the statement that their gathering had wider influence beyond their dioceses, and served as a model for a future, national Synod. Isaac Murphy of Belfast prominently argued that the revival of Convocation would improve the Church-State relationship: the Church would 'receive the power of returning to political action', which would dispel a 'collision' with the laity on the scale of the 1843 Disruption in Scotland.[71]

The greatest lay-clerical association was the mighty Church Institution, which organised itself through a controversial system of elections. In Ireland, elections to non-state entities were illegal under the Convention Act of 1797, a measure designed to stifle the United Irishmen. Edward Stopford defended the Institution's legality on the grounds that it propped up the State through the State

[68] [George Webster], *The Irish Church Missions' Society* (Dublin, 1864).
[69] Abraham Hume, *Results of the Irish Census of 1861, with a Special Reference to the Condition of the Church in Ireland* (London/Dublin, 1864).
[70] Joseph Napier, *Revival of Synodical Action in Ireland* (Dublin/Belfast, 1865).
[71] *BNL*, 25th October 1864.

Church,[72] but this failed to confront the trouble of an elected Church organisation's being turned against the state (as would happen just a few years later in the battle against disestablishment). In the eyes William Fitzgerald, the intertwining of the Church and Church Institution amounted to making the Church itself 'responsible' for the potentially rash or political actions of the association.[73] He was sceptical of unnecessarily deepening the contentious politics of denominational strife, which so clearly threatened the stability of British governance. The Church's awkward role as an extension of an unpopular state would not be helped by further immersing it in unnecessary conflicts.

Serious sectarian confrontations in Dublin and Belfast in 1864 further underscored this, and how the subsequent problems were bound into the overlapping Church-Lay and Church-State relationships. The massive conflagration raised a twin problem of religious strife and British misgovernance: two areas where the Church of Ireland's social role was already under scrutiny. Dublin's erecting a monument to Daniel O'Connell sparked a major outbreak. The *Irish Times* charged that the day and the monument not be converted into a party or factional demonstration, but simply commemorate a unique and influential man. The government was severe and harsh on Northern celebrations of ancient history, and the paper preemptively damned any unfair or imbalanced application of the hated Party Processions Act,[74] which banned any sectarian demonstrations, although protestants usually complained it was only ever used against them. On 8th August tens of thousands of people processed through Dublin to celebrate Sir John Gray's unveiling the monument, with the whole city apparently covered in green. The festivities included a banquet in the Rotunda, where the *Times* noted

[72] *The Church Institution. Election of Representatives from Ireland* (Dublin, 1864).
[73] Fitzgerald to John O'Regan, 9th October 1864, Trinity College Dublin (TCD) Ms.7243-6/628a.
[74] *Irish Times* (*IT*), 5th August 1864.

that the Queen was toasted, and the Pope not.[75] Trinity College—a grey Protestant bastion in the heart of the city—prepared to defend itself from an angry mob, anticipating an attack from the procession. J.H. Todd was pleasantly surprised, however, reporting to the fellow historian and cleric William Reeves he was 'acting as "bulldog", to keep watch on the O Connell procession mob—I must say however that never did I see a mob, so civilized & well behaved—not a single attempt at a riot—nor a single impropriety occurred, so far as I could see, during the whole day.'[76] Later, under the penname of 'Suum Cuique',[77] one subscriber to the monument argued green was not a sectarian emblem, but Ireland's national colour.[78] Some Dublin opinion, at least, had it that nationality was not an aggressive attack on any one section of Irish society, or the exclusive preserve of one denomination.

Yet in Belfast a large crowd gathered on the railway bridge which ran between the Catholic neighborhood of the Pound and protestant Sandy Row, burning O'Connell in effigy as the Dublin train returned from the celebrations. They then tried to carry the effigy into the Pound. This sparked epic confrontations between the Pound and Sandy Row, as the city saw twelve days of rioting and pitched battles, complete with extensive gunfire. On 9th August 1864, 4,000 people tried to bury the effigy's ashes in Friar's Bush cemetery, forcing the police to intervene. By the 12th, thousand-strong mobs assembled through an organised system of door-knocking, and innocent women going to work in mills were attacked by the crowds. The violence spread beyond the tempestuous Pound and Sandy Row areas to the rest of the city—both the violence against innocent women, and the conflict's spilling past the flashpoint areas were new dimensions to Belfast riots. The conflict spiraled: on the morning of 15th August 500 Catholic navvies attacked

[75] *Times*, 10th August 1864.
[76] J.H. Todd to William Reeves, 8th August 1864, TCD Ms.2903/6.
[77] 'To Each His Own'.
[78] *IT*, 10th August 1864.

a National School filled with Protestant children, before marching through Protestant districts to smash the houses. Protestants rallied round a hoisted Orange handkerchief, and by two p.m. the military were called out, culminating in a full cavalry charge against British civilians. By the 17th the police and military, steadily brought into Belfast from increasingly further afield during the weeks by the desperate authorities, finally 'encircled' the Pound and Sandy Row, preventing funerals from becoming flashpoints and stifling the violence.[79] The key funeral was that of a Protestant rioter killed by the police; by the end of the riots even the Protestants were completely arrayed against the State authorities.

Two key Protestant papers warned their readers that such action strengthened Catholic hands, and complained of imbalance in the law. They also dissociated the whole of the Orange and Protestant community from the rioting.[80] Other influential Protestant papers continued these arguments, and further claimed the initial confrontation came from the lowest class of Protestants, and the entire Northern Protestant body could not be blamed for their actions.[81] Predictably, the *Belfast News-Letter* charged the Fenians and the Pound as the ultimate origin of the conflict. Yet this spilled into anti-government sentiment—resentment at the perceived inequality in the policing of demonstrations. One 'Protestant Youth' even complained of 'the virulent persecution under a truculent, Papist-serving Government'. Another correspondent, W.H. McGregor, equated Protestant governments with liberty and Catholic ones with tyranny, hardly unusual sentiments. But he too coupled it with the germ of anti-government action, lamenting, 'why do the authorities daily give power to the Romish system?' He urged the paper's readers to take action against a gathering storm, and also complained of how their capital city was hijacked by the O'Connell procession. In

[79] NA Ms.HO45/72649.
[80] *BNL*, 11th August 1864; *DEM*, 11th August 1864.
[81] *DE*, 13th August 1864; *IT*, 13th August 1864.

this militant Orange position Dublin was still his capital.[82] The conflict was over which side was able to truly represent Irish opinion. The Orange riposte to O'Connell—Cullen's political touchstone—was to reiterate their Irishness.

This was a key transition, 'the moment when older, rural forms of violence began to fade away, and when new, distinctly urban patterns emerged'.[83] Even if Dublin street balladeer opinion blamed Satan, not any one denomination,[84] the Belfast magnate Lord Donegall blamed the riots on the poor efforts of the police and mayor, as 'the feelings of animosity existing between the Catholics & Orange party is so strong that a spark is quite sufficient to cause a Disturbance at any moment.'[85] The consensus was that Belfast's policing failed, a conclusion supported by the Home Office's official inquiry.[86] The 67-year-old Lord de Ros drew on his witnessing most of London's riots to inform the Government that the Belfast disturbances were different: 'contempt' for the law, a party response deliberately intended to flout British governance.[87] This particularly undermined the Party Processions Act. This strong sense of imbalance in the law, and imbalance against Protestantism, now fed a sense of ineffective governance. As Virginia Crossman lucidly explains, 'Public confidence in the law became a measure of public confidence in British rule.' Popular violence was a political threat to the British state.[88] The rule of that law depended on the amateur efforts of mostly Protestant leaders, now becoming increasingly alienated over the misapplication of their own laws. The campaign to repeal the Party Processions Act was a response to a revived

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[82] *BNL*, 13th August 1864.
[83] Mark Doyle, *Fighting Like the Devil for the Sake of God: Protestants, Catholics and the Origins of Violence in Victorian Belfast* (Manchester, 2009), p.161.
[84] Dublin City Library and Archive (DCLA), Ballad Collection, Joyce Book 1, 'A Lamentation on the Loss of Lives by the Belfast Riots'.
[85] Lord Donegall to Lord Wodehouse, 15th December 1864, Bodl.Ms.Eng.c.4016, fols.120-2.
[86] NA Ms.HO45/7649.
[87] Lord de Ros to Wodehouse, 20th March 1865, Bodl.Ms.Eng.c.4061, fols.66-75.
[88] Virginia Crossman, *Politics, Law, and Order in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin, 1996).

nationalist bloc which united protestants across class lines into a coherent, Orange political force, informing politics for the whole of the decade.[89]

However, recognising imbalance in the application of the law, or English misgovernance or historic injustice, did not serve elite or Anglican interests, at least on the surface. Underscoring the Union's disfunction often raised the awkward image of separation, and thus potential Catholic majority rule. The former Conservative politician and Anglican landlord Francis Plunkett Dunne complained to nationalist luminary W.J. O'Neill Daunt that Anglicans were hesitant to criticise the Government, lest they bolster separatism. However, in Dunne's mind the nominal separatists were really only pursuing a religious, not national, agenda. He argued that 'it is the fear of what an Irish Parliament would do as to changes in Religion and property, that deters many from even thinking of such a measure [and] many more of questioning acts of the present Parliament however injurious they may be to the land of Ireland.'[90] The Roman Catholic bishops' next move seemed to exemplify the way Catholic interests—in essence only religious—seemed to gain weight of Irish nationality. For nationally-minded Tories such as Dunne, not only was the national tone to the ultramontane programme a mere patina, it turned a common culture into an exclusive agenda.

[89] Sean Farrell, *Rituals and Riots: Sectarian Violence and Political Culture in Ulster, 1784-1886* (Lexington, 2000), pp.154-73.
[90] F.P. Dunne to W.J. O'Neill Daunt, 30th November 1864, NLI Ms.8045/4.

II

Realignment and the General Election of 1865

December 1864—November 1865

The Catholic hierarchy launched its National Association, a campaigning body dedicated to the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, along with gaining denominational education and a reworking of land law: a Cullenite response to the Fenians.[91] The Catholic press emphasised its respectability and social importance, its noble purpose.[92] The government disagreed, with the newly-appointed Lord Lieutenant, Baron Wodehouse, advising Sir Robert Peel, '[f]rom what I hear respectable Catholics are likely to turn the cold shoulder to this last move of Cullen's.'[93] Yet John Bright pledged his support—a direct link between Radicalism and Irish Catholicism, when Irish Conservatives feared both a Fenian attack and the supposed ultramontane machinations towards supremacy.[94]

The Lord Mayor of Dublin, Peter Paul McSwiney, convened the opening public meeting under his auspices, and soon deliberately embarrassed the government. He invited the Lord Lieutenant, the Chancellor, and the Attorney-General to his residence for 'private theatricals' on the evening of the meeting. The Liberals were formally committed to the Church Establishment and National Education, and opposed to tenant-right. The meeting was legal and orderly, as Wodehouse was pleased to report. They could not refuse the invitation on the grounds of opposing what turned out to be a respectable meeting, but also could not be seen to endorse the meeting's politics by socialising with the Lord Mayor on the same day. Wodehouse acknowledged, after explaining their dilemma in detail, 'I may seem perhaps to have dwelt too long on so trivial a matter, but in this land of

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91 Brian Jenkins, *Irish Nationalism and the British State: From Repeal to Revolutionary Nationalism* (Montreal/London, 2006), p.283.
92 *Freeman's Journal* (*FJ*), 5th, 22nd, 28th December 1864.
93 Copy, Wodehouse to Sir Robert Peel, Bodl.Ms.Eng.c.4016, fols.162-3.
94 R.V. Comerford, *The Fenians in Context: Irish Politics and Society 1848-82* (Dublin, 1985), pp.142-3.

fierce religious animosities such incidents are unhappily not without importance.' They attended the performance, mostly because the meeting 'passed without any violent exhibition of feeling'.[95] Although the government thought the Association 'promises to be a failure' for not commanding a Parliamentary following,[96] it was still an organised and articulate challenge to the Church of Ireland.

Dunne immediately lamented the way Ireland's confessional divide undermined truly national efforts, claiming that

> we have never had a really national party either for separating from England nor forcing on her the necessity of doing justice to this part of the Empire & governing her for her truest advantages.....I do not see why allowing all to preserve either their Religious or political ideas on other subjects, we should not find a sufficient number of men of common interests & capable of at least sufficient powers of calculation to...combine to correct such injustice.[97]

This vision of a broad-based, practically-focussed clique was certainly prescient, and avoided the cul-de-sacs and ritualised binaries of Irish political life. Dunne's comments were undoubtedly a response to the powerful denominationalism of the Cullenite Catholic Church—the desire for a sensible, moderate clique arrayed against a triumphant sectarianism. However, for the moment, the Church of Ireland's chief response was to try to match the Roman Catholic Church.

Soon the English-born Alfred T. Lee, rector of Ahogill, Co. Antrim, published his *Facts Respecting the Present State of the Church in Ireland*, which eventually went through six editions and became something of a template for the Irish establishmentarian press. During the Parliamentary battle over the Church, William Alexander, later Primate, considered Lee's work 'the basis of the best speeches in defence of the Irish Establishment'.[98] Like Todd, Lee also began his pamphlet with medieval history, detailing the independence of the ancient Irish

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[95] Wodehouse to Grey, Wodehouse to Peel, 29th December 1864, Peel to Wodehouse, 30th December 1864, Bodl.Ms.Eng.c.4016, fols.164-70, 173-6; Grey to Wodehouse, 2nd January 1865, Bodl.Ms.Eng.c.4017, fols.1-4.
[96] Wodehouse to Grey, 5th January 1865, Bodl.Ms.Eng.c.4017, fols.5-6.
[97] Dunne to O'Neill Daunt, 20th December 1864, NLI Ms.8045/4.
[98] William Alexander to the Duke of Abercorn, 15th October 1868, PRONI Ms.T2541/VR/260.

Church. He continued to argue that the Irish Church was legally the same as other, less controversial aspects of the state: 'The endowments of Ireland cannot be dealt with alone; if you wish to deal with the revenues of the Irish Church you must enter into a wider field and deal with all endowments given by the State.' Centrally, the Act of Union would not have passed without the union of the Churches, 'and the continuance and preservation of the Established Church was declared "to be *an essential and fundamental part of the Union*." And if we do away with essential and fundamental part of the Act of Union, what will that which remains be worth?' After a long defence of the Church's positive social influence and pastoral care for the whole of the island, Lee argued that disestablishment

> could not be accomplished without a revolution. The foundations of the Established Church are coeval with those of the Constitution itself, and the destruction of the one would soon lead…to the subversion of the other; and is it not especially significant that the most earnest supporters of the right of universal suffrage are also the most active and noisy opponents of the Irish Church?[99]

The broader constitutional positions were really the only bulwark for the Church, as its wealth and small population were undeniably awkward.

But even its liturgical life was dragged through print, the lived experience of the Church a source of political jostling. William Mandeville Ellis engaged a battle over the nature of Christ Church Cathedral's choral services, through the *Irish Times*.[100] Soon John West, dean of St Patrick's Cathedral, accused him of 'the attempt to prejudice public opinion through a newspaper', and Ellis tried to enlist the prominent High Church historian John Ribton Garstin. The culmination of this squabble was the comical figure of a man scribbling notes in a quire stall during

[99]Alfred T. Lee, *Facts Respecting the Present State of the Church in Ireland* (London, 1864), emphasis original.
[100] *IT*, 9th, 21st January 1865.

the service.[101] However, the real moment of liturgical importance was the reopening of St. Patrick's Cathedral that February.

Closed since 1861, its restoration encapsulated the whole Church's sense purpose and public life.[102] The long published account of the ceremony gave a lengthy history of the Cathedral, closely identifying a critical role in national history and public life. The building itself was a canvas to project the Church's presence in Irish culture and history—one window depicted the life of St. Patrick, another illustrated 'ancient Irish history'.[103] Apparently, crowds gathered for two hours before the opening service began, and when the doors opened the rush damaged women's dresses. But, with numerous senior clergymen, this crowd composed the political essence of Irish Anglicanism. Tory MPs and luminaries[104] joined leading Irish Anglican liberals, such as Isaac Butt, Sir John Gray, Lord Otho Fitzgerald, and Lord Charlemont. This was also a civic occasion, with members of the Dublin Corporation, in their chains, attending at the front of the congregation with the Lord Lieutenant.[105] The reopening of the Cathedral was a major event, bringing political opponents together through their Church's religious life. Clearly the Church's public life engaged its laity, and they furthered this through the press. Both the triumphalism of the St. Patrick's reopening and the spat over Christ Church spoke of the central importance of the liturgy, and the incorporation of the laity into even this realm of the Church's life.

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[101] John West to W.H.M. Ellis, W.H.M. Ellis to J.R. Garstin, 16th, 19th January 1865, RCBL Ms.14/17.

[102] John Crawford, 'Retrenchment, Renewal, and Disestablishment, 1840-1877', in John Crawford and Raymond Gillespie (eds.), *St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin: A History* (Dublin, 2009).

[103] Another window for which the brewer paid depicted the story of Rebecca at the well, in which generosity, warmth, and being suited for God's purposes is demonstrated by providing drink. (Gen. 24, 13-20).

[104] Sir Edward Grogan, John Vance, Ion Trant Hamilton, Edward Wingfield Verner, Sir William Verner, Arthur Lee Guinness, James Whiteside and Joseph Napier, with Lords Mayo, Enniskillen, and Powerscourt.

[105] *BNL*, 25th February 1865.

Yet in February Vincent Scully, MP for Cork, dragged the Church's wealth through the Commons, ostensibly criticising Cork diocesan appointments. The Church of Ireland's retort came from Sir Robert Peel and Anthony Lefroy, MP for Dublin University, who defended the principles of the men attacked by Scully, but could barely defend the Church's finances. The firebrand Protestant John Vance, MP for Dublin, argued that the demonstrations in that city showed that only the Roman Catholic hierarchy, and not even the Catholic laity, wanted disestablishment.[106] Yet the *Irish Times* reported a rumour that Gladstone himself was considering a major reform of the Church of Ireland.[107]

Only days later the Commons discussed the Belfast riots, and in the course of a long debate Patrick McMahon, MP for Wexford, blamed the Established Church as the root cause of the disturbances. Sir Hugh Cairns and James Whiteside cogently argued that the Party Processions Act was over-enforced against Orange marches whilst enormously sectarian demonstrations in Dublin were permitted. This indicated wider misgovernance,[108] a response they had previously planned with Sir Joseph Napier.[109] The *Gazette* noted the combination of John Bright, the Liberation Society, and the Catholic hierarchy in an 'attack' on their Church, an unusually political statement from the ecclesiastical paper. 'A Layman' reiterated the importance of the Church Institution as barrier to these Parliamentary attacks: not only did it strengthen the Church by fostering lay-clerical cooperation, but it provided the Church with a defensive, vocal, and constitutional riposte to Parliament.[110]

Their Parliamentary battering continued when Lewis Dillwyn renewed his attack that March. Announcing his intentions early, the *Belfast News-Letter* warned

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[106] *Hansard,* HC Deb., 14th February 1865, vol. 177 cc239-51.
[107] *IT*, 16th February 1865.
[108] *Hansard,* HC Deb., 17th February 1865, vol. 177 cc328-409.
[109] Whiteside to Cairns, 29th January 1865, NA Ms.PRO/30/51/13/86.
[110] *IEG*, 21st February 1865.

that Dillwyn would try to 'raze the Established Church in Ireland to its foundation in the course of the present Session.' It promised that 'a regular stand-up fight may be expected' in Parliament.[111] A letter to the *Gazette* reminded the Church's laity that Dillwyn's attack could leave them as 'literally scattered sheep', unable to sustain the Church.[112] The wider dimension of this agitation became clearer when Lord Amberley, Earl Russell's son and heir, proposed disendowing the Church of Ireland to fund education in England, receiving cheers from a raucous meeting. Remarkably, the *Irish Times* reported itself astonished that the English working classes should care.[113]

Soon Dillwyn tabled a motion that 'the present position of the Irish Church Establishment is unsatisfactory', and required the government's 'early attention'. He stressed his own adherence to the Church of England, and his assurance that he did not attack the Irish Church as the first move against the whole British Establishment. Dillwyn explained that 'the English and Irish Churches rested on different foundations. The English Church rested on the consent and goodwill of the people….The Irish Church depended on…the bayonets, which were employed by this country'. Dillwyn then engaged seriously with the Church's own cherished historical narrative, with being established as a National Church at the medieval Synod of Cashel. However, for him this national identification collapsed with the failure of the Reformation in Ireland, and its only other justification—as a missionary church—was an abject embarrassment. He presented the well-known claims of missionary bribes and politicised, disingenuous charity. However, although Gladstone upheld the character of the Church's clergy, he agreed in the abstract that the Church's position was, as Dillwyn said, unsatisfactory. However, the Government would not back the motion, on the

[111] *BNL*, 3rd March 1865.
[112] *IEG*, 17th March 1865.
[113] *IT*, 24th March 1865.

grounds of being impractical at that moment (a thoroughly worrying position for Irish Anglicans).

It took their champion, James Whiteside, to defend the Church itself. He disparaged Dillwyn's harping on ecclesiastical wealth by comparing it to the normal wealth of the great aristocracy who, unlike prelates, did not always contribute their money to charitable causes. But Whiteside defended the Church's ancientness and Irishness, praising the early-medieval Irish-language copies of the Gospels and hymns of St. Patrick, and reviewing the politics of Reformation-era consecrations. The Church was vibrant, it did have full parishes and busy congregations. It still fought the battle of the Reformation, a continuity exemplified by the same families representing the same counties since Cromwell's time. Ultimately, '[t]he property of the Church belongs to it as an ancient corporation, linked with the Crown and linked with the peerage in the common bond of our free Constitution. And I trust sincerely that this Church, the United Church—one and the same, indivisible—in England and Ireland may long continue'. Yet historical legacy could not contend with the embarrassment of being a wealthy, small Church in an impoverished, populous island. Grant Duff recognised how Dillwyn moved the Church debate into a new key, commenting on Dillwyn: 'if he does not gain the present, he has, at least, gained the future. This debate will become historical, for in the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer [Gladstone] I see the beginning of the end of the great Irish difficulty.'[114] Indeed, at this time, Gladstone began to quietly moot serious change to the Church as a way of unlocking a new phase of political life.[115]

The *Times* commented that the Church's assailants were strangely hampered. Everyone knew the statistics of the Church and its case as an establishment was ultimately indefensible; reminding audiences of empty parishes was useless. Equally, the Church's defenders could indulge in overblown self-

[114] *Hansard,* HC Deb., 28th March 1865, vol. 178 cc384-455.
[115] John Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, vol. three (London, 1903).

important oratory, as they were not under direct attack. The *Times*'s response was, of course, attuned to English politics, but would have infuriated Irish Protestants. The paper wrote that the Church's only response to criticism was 'a kind of joyous outrage', as it was impossible to defend the Irish Establishment on the grounds of 'reason, morality, policy, economy, historical experience, the public will, or anything on which mankind generally base their attempts to persuade.' Disestablishment would be too violent and sudden a change for the government to fathom, and if the Catholic laity did not want the endowment of their own priests, there was no real impetus for ending the Establishment. Ultimately, 'the Established Church in Ireland is not a real Irishman's grievance; it is rather the Englishman's idea of what the Irishman's grievance must be.'[116]

The *Irish Times* responded with a leader charging Dillwyn with merely running out of causes to attack in England, having exhausted his criticism of the English Establishment. Everyone in the Irish Church wanted the 'anomalies' reformed, its ministers rewarded for long service and hard work. Ultimately, Irish rectors did not ask the religion of the poor and sick when dispensing charity. Ignoring that tithes were now paid by the Protestant landlords, and the money received directly from the Government was (apparently) less than the Maynooth Grant, Dillwyn still called the Church a badge of conquest. However, the Viceroy, the Imperial Parliament, and the English language were as much badges of the same conquest, and abolishing the Church surely implied their abolition as well.[117] The *Belfast News-Letter*'s response made the strain this debate placed on the Union all the more clear:

> Irish churchmen have very grave reasons to be dissatisfied with the way the question is treated in the House of Commons. Ireland is regarded, not as an integral part of the Empire, but as an isolated entity....Dublin is practically as near London as Newcastle-on-Tyne. Why should a Church of England Protestant in Ireland be deprived of hereditary rights which would be assured to

[116] *Times*, 29th March 1865.
[117] *IT*, 29th March 1865.

> him if he were a Church of England Protestant in Yorkshire? If the Act of Union was not a sham and a hypocrisy, we are entitled…to every privilege we would posses if we resided in England.…Any assault upon the Established Church in Ireland, then, is an assault on an essential and fundamental part of the Union. We cannot, without a gross breach of faith, treat the Church in Ireland apart from the Church in England[.]

The same issue carried a story which underscored the centrality of the Church debate to the wider issues of law and order, of British governance in Ireland. The Earl of Westmeath used the House of Lords to complain about imbalance in the law: in Sligo, Catherine Gaughran, a Protestant servant who converted from Catholicism, was apparently dragged by her hair out of her house to facilitate a forcible re-conversion whilst the police did nothing. Westmeath claimed that '[u]nless the constabulary of Ireland were to do their duty irrespective of the wishes of the Roman Catholic clergy, the idea of the British dominion resting there was nothing but a myth.' He went on to complain of how casually people discussed disestablishment.[118] When Parliament debated relaxing the oaths required of Roman Catholic MPs, the veteran controversialist minister Tresham Gregg held a raucous meeting in Dublin's Metropolitan Hall proposing petitions to Parliament and Oxford University. The issue could have been a case of typical and simple anti-Catholicism. But Gregg's meeting lamented that the constitution which bound Irish Protestants to the State was weakening.[119] The fragility and uncertainty of the Union hovered through these debates.

The circuit of the various Church associations' annual meetings, always held in April, provided further venues to confront the Church's critics, and stressed the Irish, national tone of their work. They chimed with the same themes of a self-improvement lecture given by Isaac Butt, where he presented the Anglican totems of TCD and Bishop Berkeley as a model of the Established Church's pastoral

[118] *BNL*, 30th March 1865.
[119] *Times*, 12th April 1865.

commitment to Protestant-Catholic harmony, through common Irish nationality.[120] Joseph Napier used the Additional Curates' Society Annual Meeting to claim that the vast parishes with almost no Protestants were all the more reason to support the Church, and secure a real Establishment. Their Church had the same interests as the Church of England, and warned against a 'breach of faith' in violating the Act of Union.[121] William Connor Magee, dean of Cork, speaking for the West Connaught Church Endowment Society, contrasted the association's work with the desires of Liberal politicians—the former staffed deprived parts of Ireland with resident gentry in the shape of Protestant rectors, whilst the later wanted to remove two thousand such men. Their erecting and endowing new Churches was a sop to the Church's critics, and proved how the Irish Church and Irish Establishment were not the same. Parliament could abolish the Establishment, but an active laity would always maintain the Church.[122]

At the annual meeting of the Scripture Readers' Society (a body which organised laymen 'of approved piety' to visit sick individuals in their homes and read aloud sections of the Bible), the Conservative lawyer Robert Richard Warren argued that, given the brewing combination of Gladstone, Cullen, and Bright, it was crucial the Society should 'strengthen the hands of the parochial clergy of Ireland, and to extend the influence of their Church as an Irish Church.'[123] Similar themes naturally came from the annual meeting of the Irish Society, the Irish-language domestic missionary body, whose supporters stressed the interconnectedness of an Irish-speaking community and their being embraced by the Irish Church.[124] One magnate, a leading Tory organiser in the West, even used

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[120] Isaac Butt, 'Berkeley', *The Afternoon Lectures on Literature and Art. Delivered in the Theatre of the Museum of Industry, S. Stephen's Green, Dublin, in April and May, 1865* (London/Dublin, 1866).
[121] *BNL*, 3rd April 1865.
[122] *IT*, 18th April 1865.
[123] *BNL*, 20th April 1865.
[124] *BNL*, 21st April 1865.

it to proselytise on his own estate.[125] Similarly, the Church's foreign missionary body, the Church Missionary Society, heard the claims of T.R. Birks and John Gregg, bishop of Cork, that foreign efforts proved the vitality of their domestic Church, 'confounding' the Church's political opponents.[126] The public meetings brought together prominent clergy and laymen and claimed that lay-clerical cooperation increased the national work of their Church. Yet when the Church Institution, the flagship of that activism, sent a petition to Parliament asking it to respect the endowments of the Church, Thomas Woodward rebuked them—he took standard ideas of Anglican autonomy to a convenient end, arguing that the Church held its lands independent of the State, and that they were further secured by the Union. Touching them could only be accomplished by undermining the Constitution, and petitions of this nature implied the State had a right to interfere with the Church.[127]

Fundamentally, in Irish eyes, the state-connection did not equate the Church with the State—it had an independent life, and the vibrant lay associational culture bolstered and extended that. This reinforced the liturgical-political overlap, such as when Ogle Moore, dean of Clogher, complained of one local spat: 'The trouble is parochial & political….I was publicly held up to scorn & indignation, and reviled as a papist, and spy, and informer against orangemen.'[128] Beyond political symbolism, the laity were also involved financially. All of the societies discussed above were voluntarily-supported charities, dedicated to extending the Establishment through education or missionary work. Small, personal donations were crucial.

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[125] George Ganett to C.W. O'Hara, 4th March 1864, National Library of Ireland (NLI) Ms.20347/2.
[126] *IT*, 29th April 1865.
[127] *BNL*, 19th April 1865.
[128] O.W. Moore to O'Regan, 19th April 1865, TCD Ms.7243-6/624b.

But individuals funded the formal aspects of the Church's life—Lord Talbot de Malahide paying towards the restoration of a church at Ireland's Eye,[129] or Dennis Pack Beresford's funding glebe houses on the principle of their being essential for parochial work.[130] Samuel Alexander gently chided Lord Belmore for supporting the Church Education Society (a voluntary effort) but not paying towards a church on his estate at Fivemilecross. He later paid for another church building, at Garvey, Co. Tyrone.[131] The Ecclesiastical Commissioners themselves helped blur state and private action, such as agreeing to pay £200 towards a vicarage if met by a local contribution.[132] When Ogle Moore tried to raise a voluntary subscription to pay for two curates (whose salaries were normally paid by the clerics for whom they worked) he complained that '[c]ertain Orange heathens of large wealth and small brains and heart refuse to give one penny; four Xtian gentlemen who have comparatively little interest in the district will make up £30 a year, & produce the rest.'[133] Benjamin Lee Guinness paid for the restoration of St. Patrick's Cathedral; in 1865 the Cathedral's Committee of Management included the ultra-Protestant Tory MPs Sir Edward Grogan and John Vance as well as George Woods Maunsell, a newspaper editor, former member of the Dublin Corporation, and current member of numerous Dublin public societies.[134] One rector complained that the State's over-taxation of his local Poor Law Union in Tipperary left him reliant on voluntary agencies, when, as the minister of a State Church, he should be able to rely on the state.[135] There was clearly a tradition of lay initiative and finance whilst the Church was still connected to the state.

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[129] Bodl.Ms.Talbot.c.24, fols.162-3.
[130] M.G. Beresford to D. Pack Beresford, 25th November 1862, RCBL Ms.525/5.
[131] Samuel Alexander to Lord Belmore, 15th January 1857, Magee to Belmore, 15th May 1864, PRONI Ms.D3007/N/1,1-3;12,32.
[132] S.L. Wilson to Lord Courtown, 5th April 1864, TCD Ms.11183/P46/5/3.
[133] Moore to O'Regan, 3rd February 1864, TCD Ms.7243-6/606a.
[134] *IT*, 30th January 1865.
[135] W.P. Clemenger to Wodehouse, 4th, 11th September 1865, undated printed memorials and handwritten petitions, Bodl.Ms.Eng.c.4052, fols.6-9,14-19.

This lay patronage, in addition to the legal obligation of all landowners to pay tithes, deliberately confounded the idea of the Church as a pure extension of the British State, an imported organ. Lay finance was another stratum of the lay politics that underpinned the overlap between public associations and the Church. That May, Whiteside—further laurelled as the Church's prime parliamentary champion[136]—gave another lecture to the YMCA, this time directly on the Church. He traced the customary long history, trying to locate the Church of Ireland as part of a continuing anti-Ultramontane struggle, and drew cheers when he emphasised the importance of the Establishment to the Union—it was an agreement between equals, and both sides had the ability to leave if the terms were broken. The Church was at its strongest moment ever, and if they were disestablished, an absentee Church would join the absentee Parliament, Government, and aristocracy. He concluded that 'Our duty to the State is loyalty; but there is a reciprocal duty to be rendered by the State to us. If the State will allow a fundamental article of the Treaty of Union to be set aside….I maintain we would be perfectly at liberty to re-consider the question, and to re-consider the terms of our connection to England,' which apparently drew applause.[137]

The looming election sharpened these issues; the *Belfast News-Letter* already had Gladstone pegged as itching for disestablishment.[138] The election was a unique challenge since the Church question ran through it. When John Thomas Ball put himself forward for the representation of Dublin University, his lack of Tory credentials should have damned him. An experienced ecclesiastical lawyer and the Vicar-General for Armagh,[139] he advocated reforming the Church to stave off disestablishment. The *Irish Times* reminded the electors of the fledgling Parliamentary bloc, led by Gladstone, and determined to level the Church. Irish

[136] *IEG*, 20th April 1865.
[137] *BNL*, 6th May 1865.
[138] *BNL*, 5th, 6th June 1865.
[139] Vicars-general were the principal diocesan legal advisers.

Anglicans needed no more grand country names, but able, intelligent advocates, even if they were, like Ball, Liberal-Conservatives. Apparently the Primate and seven bishops supported Ball against Lefroy, eager to have somebody to represent the Church of Ireland independent of the Tories.[140] He was certainly aligned with the Primate, and recognised the importance his election could have for the Church, viewing clerical votes a core of his natural support.[141] Ball was also remembered as making the best speech in a room full of aggressive students, even if he was pilloried for Liberal politics,[142] and indeed his clerical supporters sometimes found favour with the Liberal Chief Secretary.[143] Even Whiteside's speech to the Dublin University constituents promised resistance, and maintaining the Constitution against the Government's own intentions.[144]

Traditional country Toryism was also worried. The election circulars of Carlow Conservatives and prominent, engaged Church of Ireland laymen Dennis Pack Beresford and Henry Bruen emphasised an urgent, unprecedented need for non-resident voting: they demanded a signal effort, beyond the normal mobilisation.[145] It seemed that more was at stake, with their Church on trial. E.P. Shirley later compiled careful notes on his tenants' voting, noting their denomination and economic standing, with comments such as 'vy dirty' or 'wants strong-lime for pigsty'. He included non-voting men and even women, building a broad picture of his tenants' political views.[146]

The *Times* characterised the Church as 'the onerous inheritance bequeathed to us by our forefathers', and claimed that most of the House of Commons secretly

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[140] *IT*, 7th June, 10th July 1865.
[141] J.T. Ball to Beresford, ND, CUL Ms.Add.9407/5/5; Ball to Charles Graves, 30th July 1865, Bodl.Ms.Eng.c.4029, fols.81-2.
[142] J.G. Swift MacNeill, *What I Have Seen and Heard* (London, 1925), pp.49-51.
[143] Ball to Wodehouse, 21st October 1865, Bodl.Ms.Eng.c.4034, fols.141-4; Graves to Lord Wodehouse, 25th October 1865, Bodl.Ms.Eng.c.4035, fols.5-6.
[144] *Times*, 1st July 1865.
[145] 7th July 1865, NLI Ms.29775/6.
[146] PRONI Ms. D3531/E/1, handwritten notes: 'Farney. List of Protestant Tenants & of Romanists who voted rightly in 1865'.

wished that the Irish had been better at 'resisting the imposition of a religious establishment repugnant to their wishes.' It concluded that peace could only be maintained in Ireland by the government's objectively balancing the two sides to maintain secular authority,[147] hardly the endorsement of the Establishment demanded by Irish Anglicans. When A.T. Lee savaged Earl Russell's supposedly inaccurate description of the Church's finances and organisation,[148] he quoted that *Times* leader as well.[149]

The spectre of disestablishment worked itself into numerous corners of electioneering: the *Belfast News-Letter* tried to rally Presbyterians by pointedly, yet presciently, arguing that the *Regium Donum* would fall with the Irish Church.[150] However, the High Church W.G. Carroll, rector of St. Bride's, Dublin, published a letter to the Dublin Liberal MP Jonathan Pim, a Quaker, about Pim's position on the Establishment. Carroll warned that if Dillwyn was successful, Ireland would be subject to 'a fierce propagandism and a ruinous congregational low churchism',[151] again demonstrating the seamless flow between liturgy, lay involvement, and broader politics. The Church question was even conflated with tenant-right into a wider attack on landlordism and elitism, and landlords equally conflated their defences. William Barlow Smythe of Westmeath, an active supporter of conversionist campaigns, defended himself from hostile priests' claims by saying he had only ever evicted one tenant during his tenure as a landlord. Faced with an attack on his religious politics, he responded by defending his record as a landowner.[152]

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147 *Times*, 13th June 1865.
148 Earl Russell [John Russell], *An Essay on the History of the English Government and Constitution; From the Reign of Henry VII to the Present Time* (London, 1865).
149 [Alfred T. Lee], *The Statements of Earl Russell, K.G., Respecting the Revenues of the Irish Church* (London/Dublin, 1865).
150 *BNL*, 10th July 1865.
151 *IT*, 13th July 1865.
152 NLI Ms.41573/23.

This strain of criticism was clearly the result of the determination of groups like the Irish Church Missions and the Hon. the Irish Society to secure the Establishment by securing a greater share of the population. Landlords' records and tenants' security could not be extricated from perpetual claims of the Irish Anglican clergy's functioning as resident gentry, and the overall social utility of a minority establishment. The Liberals won the election, increasing their overall majority to 13 seats in the Commons. In Ireland, the Liberals held 55 seats to the Conservatives' 45. Gladstone's March declarations on the nature of the Irish Church should have given Irish Anglicans cause for concern. Certainly the electors of Oxford University felt he was no longer an appropriate standard-bearer for British Protestantism—his famous declaration in South Lancashire that he was now 'unmuzzled' pointed at shifts in policy on both the Church as well as Reform. Political rumours seemed to be sharp reality.

After the election, the Tories renewed the perennial issue of suspect governance. Lord Claud Hamilton, brother of the Marquess of Abercorn and MP for Londonderry, warned that Wodehouse the always-tense situation in Dungannon had deteriorated into a worse situation. Whilst there were always 'a number of violent men of the two rival persuasions who are ready on any pretext to attack each other and create disturbances,' previously the gentry had managed to keep public order. However, the 'illegal' demonstration in Dublin last year had moved the tensions and violence into a new phase. He considered it

> [w]orse in this respect, that the Protestants had consented to forego their…displays in obedience to the law, although they considered that law one sided and offensive—but worse that they can point to a manifest and most flagrant breach of the law, tolerated in Dublin….they will no longer listen to reason or consent to take advice—they cannot be made to see that one breach of the law does not justify another….They are rough and uneducated men, and they say that they only claim an equal and impartial administration of the law[.]

The situation in Dungannon, and indeed Tyrone generally, was liable to explode any moment, and he requested extra police. However, Wodehouse demurred,

explaining the administration were already over-stretched trying to monitor Fenian activity in the South and West.[153] Crucially, this was not a debate about rights, history, claims of authority—the Protestant challenge to the government was over an unfair, imbalanced application of punitive laws, and the Government's response was to confess an inability to effectively police Ireland. In a volatile country, whose public order was fragile, this admission justified a wider sense of British failure, and makes more clear why the Church's advocates were so determined to justify their presence as a social, cultural good—an Irish-attuned institution, providing resident gentry and thus public order.

Soon the annual, peripatetic Anglican conference, the Church Congress, met in Norwich, and devoted a section to the Irish Church question. James Henderson Singer, bishop of Meath, continued the argument of the Church's social utility, and even blamed England for introducing Catholicism to Ireland. He also complained of the 'offensive caricature' of the Irish Church usually carried in the *Times*. Joseph Napier rehashed the principles of historical continuity, and Samuel Butcher, dean of Emly, differentiated a National Church from an Establishment. Trinity academic George Salmon attacked the description of Church population statistics in the English press, whilst the High Church MP A.J. Beresford-Hope and Conservative Lord Harrowby defended the wider principle of the Establishment.[154] The arguments were certainly well-worn, but were here advanced for an English church audience—and, through the press, the wider political community. The respected Church Congress platform gave these principles—so often treated as fringe ideas—weight and a respectable venue. It was carefully planned.[155] The Church deliberately joined this national debate.

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[153] Lord Claud Hamilton to Wodehouse, 11th September 1865, Copy Wodehouse to Hamilton, 13th September 1865, Bodl.Ms.Eng.c.4031, fols.98-100, 132-3.
[154] *BNL*, 9th October 1865, *IT*, 10th October 1865.
[155] Napier to Beresford, ND, CUL Adds.Ms.9407/5/92.

The Archbishops used the same structure, taking an ecclesiastical venue into the wider political sphere, in their Charges of that year. Charges were nominally the bishop's instructions to his clergy, but the political circumstances changed their function. Beresford provided the Armagh clergy with an extensive summary of his debates with the Government over Convocation, reiterating the principle that an English Convocation without an Irish corollary undermined the Union,[156] having just renewed his campaign on the issue.[157] Trench opened his Charge by declaring it was 'intended for a larger circle than that of its immediate hearers', and that he planned to refute English criticisms. He explained that the Church was vibrant and had a strong life of worship—over 40,000 people attended services on Sundays in Dublin. In addition to the public importance of the liturgy, he noted the politics behind the perception of their liturgical life. The Irish practice of hearing Morning Prayer at midday was (apparently) fodder for Roman Catholic criticism, suggesting they were lazy in their devotions. However, building and consecrating new churches was a riposte to the spate of Catholic construction. The prelate implied their physical presence through the country mitigated their small population.

Trench also praised the new church of St Bartholomew's, in Ballsbridge, for eschewing pew rents.[158] Its new vicar, Arthur Dawson, suggested that the normal practice of pew rents undermined the principles behind a National Church. St Bartholomew's was a distinctly ritualistic parish, against the grain of the normal practice of the Irish High Church. Yet Dawson urged a kind of High Church, anti-congregationalist financial voluntarism.[159] When the *Irish Times* reviewed Trench's charge, they also used it as an opportunity to explore the wider political concerns,

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[156] *BNL*, 7th October 1865.
[157] Trench and Beresford to Grey, 6th October 1865, NA HO45/7252, no.14.
[158] Richard Chenevix Trench, *A Primary Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the United Dioceses of Dublin and Glandelagh, and Kildare* (Dublin/London/Cambridge, 1865).
[159] Arthur A. Dawson, *Free Parish Churches and Free-Will Offerings* (Dublin, 1865).

explaining that Fenianism could not be animated by a hostility to the Establishment as the Irish Church's greatest opponents—the Roman Catholic hierarchy—were adamantly anti-Fenian.[160]

At the Down, Connor, and Dromore Diocesan Conference, Bishop Robert Knox claimed that their lay-clerical gathering was key to solving internal disagreements, and thus compensated for the lack of Convocation. The body elected Alfred Lee secretary, recognising his importance in combating hostile Liberals' characteristically English 'ignorance' of the Church.[161] Soon J.W. Hardiman attacked an English rector who lamented the Irish Church's 'cold, unimpressive, Puritanical services'. Hardiman upheld what he saw as a unique Irish vitality, and accordingly questioned the value of ritual and incense to Irish Protestantism.[162] The politics of the liturgy spilled into a defence of the Church's Irishness, its uniqueness, and the usual failure of English critics to understand Irish distinctiveness. The liturgy, Church finance, and the laity's role in both again intertwined with the Church of Ireland's function as a National Church. This overlap could have directly political aspects: the Gorey, Co. Wexford Rurideacanal Union deemed the Church Institution the appropriate body for a united Anglo-Irish defence of the Church. It voted the Earl of Courtown, the resident magnate, their representative to the Institution's London Council.[163] The ever-belligerent J.T. O'Brien renewed his commitment for the Institution, declaring the association 'defensive', not aggressive, yet still appropriate in bridging the laity and clergy.[164] They would have approved of the blood-and-thunder speech of the politically-savvy clergyman Henry Henderson, who, speaking in Holywood, Co. Down, used the image of the Siege of Derry as a symbol of Anglican-Presbyterian cooperation

[160] *IT*, 25th October 1865.
[161] *BNL*, 25th October 1865.
[162] *BNL*, 1st November 1865.
[163] *IT*, 8th November 1865.
[164] James Thomas O'Brien, *The Church in Ireland; Our Duty in Regard to its Defence* (London/Oxford/Cambridge, 1866).

against hostile forces, extending the principle to the present, with Gladstone poised to strike against the Church.[165]

Fundamentally, a wholly-clerical focus was substantially different. Both Edward Hincks, rector of Killyleagh, Co. Down, and Edward Hoare, dean of Waterford, pressed for sweeping, comprehensive reforms, including reductions in clerical and Episcopal stipends. They hoped this would negate the constant hostile press, and indeed, imminent Parliamentary attack. Hincks even titled his proposal 'How to Save the Irish Church'.[166] When the Liberal Charles Graves urged the Government unite two parishes, this technicality of diocesan administration had inevitable political implications: it would remove an outspoken rector deemed unsuitable by the local landowner, ironically the Radical MP Ralph Bernal Osborne. But more importantly for Graves, '[t]his parish, as it now stands, is one of those the maintenance of which must be regarded as anomalous, to say the least of it'. It was a reform that removed one of the weapons which armed the Church's critics.[167] Similarly, the Whig Robert Knox forwarded a copy of his diocesan conference paper to Wodehouse, explaining that 'all true friends of the Irish Church must desire such a redistribution of its Revenues as would tend to remove many of its anomalies….I have long felt that a full and comprehensive measure of Reform is the only means of saving the Irish Church Estabt.[,] calculated alike to increase its efficiency & to answer its Enemies.' He noted that the Irish bishops had previously prepared their own scheme of reform, which 'would, with some further Expansion, be admirably adapted to form the basis of further legislation & would correct many of the Church's anomalies.'[168] These were, admittedly, technical responses to a sweeping problem.

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[165] *BNL*, 7th November 1865.
[166] *IT*, 10th, 15th November 1865; *BNL*, 11th November 1865.
[167] Graves to Wodehouse, 26th October, 4th November 1865, Bodl.Ms.Eng.c.4035, fols.19-20,110-11.
[168] R.B. Knox to Wodehouse, 22nd December 1865, Bodl.Ms.Eng.c.4038, fols.146-7.

Lord Lifford saw a wider picture when, in addition to defending the Church's catholicity, he defended its property by claiming he could not 'adopt the principle that the wishes of mere numbers are to interfere with the rights of property, or with trusts held for public benefit. This question of numbers is in reality the great democratic principle cropping out at all points.' The next Parliamentary session would have two main issues to confront—whether the Irish Roman Catholic Church's numbers required a reduction of Anglican property, and whether English £5 householders required the franchise, in recognition of their numbers. He concluded that '[t]hese are the principles at issue which will break up existing parties'.[169] Parliament opened with the Irish Church scrambling a defence by feverishly recapitulating its history, rights, and claims. F.P. Dunne complained 'however obvious it is…that we should never assent that we are a province of Great Britain and not a separate nation I need not tell you how apathetic Irish members are in supporting our separate nationality'.[170] Yet through all of the jostling over Convocation, through all of the politicised history dragged through the press, through all of the liturgical controversy, the Church of Ireland was certainly carrying a banner of distinctive nationality, underscoring their differences from England, culturally as well as legally. Furthermore, they did so through the nexus of public meetings and the press, deepening the purpose of the Church's associational culture. In this sense, the Church's public societies dovetailed with other, nondenominational institutions.

[169] *IT*, 24th November 1865; *BNL*, 25th November 1865.
[170] Dunne to O'Neill Daunt, 20th November 1865, NLI Ms.8045/4.

III

The Franchise and Fenianism

January 1866—March 1867

The *Times* suggested that the State's paying Roman Catholic priests might curb Fenianism: although the Catholic Church officially condemned the movement, individual priests were forced to wink at it to keep their flock happy, and thus themselves paid.[171] Although the paper condemned stripping the Church of Ireland's property, state-funded Catholicism was perilously close to the idea of concurrent endowment which ultimately undermined the idea of an Anglican National Establishment. The *Times* also carried two articles from Aubrey de Vere, a conscientious Limerick landlord and convert from the Church of Ireland to Catholicism. De Vere argued that although the Church Establishment did not specifically motivate the Fenians, it contributed to the discontent which did. He advocated 'equality', not leveling the Irish Church. These articles soon became an articulate pamphlet.[172] Alfred Lee's inevitable riposte could only detail, in a typically legalistic and cumbersome style, their rights to their property.[173]

Sir Frederick Heygate, Conservative MP for County Londonderry, approached Wodehouse about 'a public meeting of loyal & well-disposed people of the country passing resolutions of confidence in the government and institutions of the country....There is certainly a good deal of uncomfortable feeling even in Ulster at what is going on.[174] The country was Ireland—Heygate proposed a cross-party gathering supporting law and order, a Liberal-Conservative associational fusion to uphold Irish institutions. At the start of February 1866, a major public meeting in

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[171] *Times*, 19th January 1866.
[172] *Times*, 19th, 24th January 1866; Aubrey De Vere, *The Church Settlement of Ireland, or, Hibernia Pacanda* (London/Dublin, 1866).
[173] *Times*, 29th January 1866; Alfred T. Lee, *The Ecclesiastical Settlement in Ireland* (London/Oxford/Cambridge/Dublin/Belfast, 1866).
[174] Sir Frederick Heygate to Wodehouse, 3rd January 1866, Bodl.Ms.Eng.c.4039, fols.67-8

the Pillar Room of the Rotunda deliberately brought together Liberals and Conservatives, Protestants and Catholics. It was attended by numerous individuals beyond Dublin, encompassing a circuit of country names and Big Houses. The Tory Lord Downshire took the chair, and declared they were not there to discuss politics or religion. They were to determine a response to an imminent public calamity. The Liberal Lord Charlemont proposed the first resolution, and explained the meeting's convivial, clubby origins: the idea initially came from a conversation between the arch-Tory Sir Edward Grogan and himself in the Kildare Street Club, followed by a circular and a further private meeting at the Liberal Lord Lurgan's house. His resolution drove home the sense of disenchantment with the state of governance—he demanded more effective action from the Government to quash Fenianism.

In his speech, Charlemont reiterated the principle that prosperity secured loyalty, and poverty increased disaffection. The Tory Knox Gore seconded the motion, emphasising his being a perpetually-resident landlord. The Earl of Erne, another Tory, proposed the second motion, and used his speech to underscore their role in reminding the Government of the seriousness of Fenianism, and the state of the country. Alexander Parker, representing the commercial classes, declared that '[t]here may be a class of patriots who object to [the] British connection; but if patriots would make the most of that connection we might do a great deal more than we have done.' He lauded Scotland as similar to Ireland in being populated by 'a singularly national people' yet still achieving prosperity and peace through their Union. In closing, the Hon. Cavendish Butler also stressed his own residence in Ireland and thus similarly knowing the true state of the Country: they were not 'alarmist' but trying to support the Government in the best way. The meeting was attended by numerous prominent Church of Ireland partisans, with support from

influential others. Every motion was proposed and seconded by a Tory and a Liberal.[175]

They formally lobbied the Chief Secretary, who took the meeting seriously enough to send a report to Sir George Grey.[176] The structure and function of this meeting was important—an extra-Parliamentary, non-partisan attempt to lobby the Government. The idea that Britain failed to understand Irish concerns, or take Ireland seriously, loomed through this. It was a loyal meeting that constantly upheld the Crown against the Fenians. But it was nevertheless determined to make the Union work more in Ireland's interests, and brought Liberals and Conservatives together to do so.

Whatever univocal support could be mustered against the Fenians, Parliamentary rumblings against the Church continued to increase: the *Freeman's Journal* announced that its owner, the former O'Connellite Liberal Sir John Gray (a nominal Anglican elected for Kilkenny City in 1865) intended to bring the Church question before Parliament. It described its own proprietor as 'this worthy knight', calling him 'the ecclesiastical leader of the Irish Liberals', thinking his own Protestantism critical to the success of the *Freeman's* campaign against the Establishment.[177] Before Gray made a move, though, on 8th February MPs pilloried the Church of Ireland in a Commons debate on Fenianism and the state of Ireland, with the Church easily included in a list of grievances motivating the disaffected and rebellious. It seemed ominously easy to consider the Church as a legitimate objection for an entirely illegitimate body—a theme that continued in the debate on the suspension of Habeus Corpus in Ireland. Sir Frederick Heygate tried to argue

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[175] *FJ*, 2nd February 1866; In attendance were, aside from those mentioned, the Earls of Howth, Longford, and Clancarty, Lord James Butler, Lord Lurgan, Lord Claremont, and Lord Powerscourt. Notably active Church laymen included R.C. Gunn Cunningham, Edward Wingfield Verner, MP, Sir Robert Shaw, Robert Staples, and Maxwell Close of Armagh. The Earls of Enniskillen and Bandon, Mervyn Archdall MP, Robert Otway, and William Forde MP sent letters of support.
[176] Copy Wodehouse to Grey, 4th February 1866, Bodl.Ms.Eng.c.4041, fol.40.
[177] *FJ*, 24th January 1866.

that increased trade and prosperity alone would diminish Irish grievances,[178] unintentionally foreshadowing many later Federalist arguments, but clearly continuing the theme of the previous Dublin meeting.

However, this weak—yet Parliamentary—riposte was complemented by grassroots theological stirrings. A letter from 'Mayo' responded to Alfred Lee's pamphlet and called on the Church's laity to 'bestir themselves and hasten to the defence', not leaving all the work to the clergy. Developing evangelical ecclesiology, the article claimed that '*we* are the Church', and therefore the laity had an obligation to stem Parliament's action. Another letter recognised that Grey's motion was only 'the first blow against the Church' in what would be a continuing battle.[179] The mingled themes of lay activism, aristocratic leadership, nationality, and the need to improve the economy and governance continued in another pamphlet, by the Antrim Liberal Robert Shafto Adair, published in early March.[180] He cheered how

> [u]nder the excitement of the intensely national feeling of 1782, Dublin became a city of noble dwellings, of public buildings, of large charitable institutions, the true representative city of Ireland. On that occasion, under the impulses of their new-born release from Imperial control, the Irish people, so far as the Protestants were concerned, governed themselves[.]

For Adair, the Act of Union 'substituted for this effervescence of independent thought and animated action the uncertain, hesitating rule of the English Government in Ireland.' He praised the Church's revival, its increase of lay-clerical conferences and newly-restored buildings. From this, Adair criticised the Parliamentary debates which suggested all Ireland needed was more English money. For him, however, Ireland required the ability to retain its capital: a system of economic internal investment and good local governance. Even though it might

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[178] *Hansard*, HC Deb., 8th, 17th February 1866, vol. 181 cc195-274,*667-727.*
[179] *IEG*, 21st February 1866, emphasis original.
[180] *FJ*, 8th March 1866.

'not altogether consist with Imperial ideas, it must be based on aiding the national bent and tendencies'. People still alive remembered all the rebellions back to 1798.

He asked 'whether the convulsive struggles of either or any of these eras were not less fraught with danger to the national progress, and less dis-honour to the national character, than the sullen throbs of the Servile War on which we have settled down.' Neither the Fenians, nor the Belfast rioters, nor even the combatants at the Battle of the Diamond had proper aristocratic leadership. The immediate problem was absenteeism, and not merely for its financial loss. He thus concluded that '[t]he future of Ireland…is now distinctly in the hands of her wealthy and her educated classes; the times are especially favourable for their action.…Public opinion as distinct from popular belief has yet to be created; that must be the work of individuals, of time, and of long patience.'[181] This was, in essence, the nub of later Federalist arguments—public spirit, local governance, and a closer relationship between wealth and the rest of Irish society. Adair's speculations on the immediate crisis in his Church went through a strong belief in Irish nationality to the conclusions of the early Home Rulers, a few years before they launched their society.

However, the real political theatre was the franchise, as Gladstone introduced the Government's Reform Bill on 12th March. The Irish issues were not far from this debate. On 16th March the House of Lords debated Earl Grey's motion to establish a Committee examining the state of Ireland. Son of a Prime Minister and grandson of a Speaker of the Irish House of Commons, much of his opening speech damned the Church as a result of conquest, and an injustice which 'poisons the whole state of society in Ireland'. Grey commended the Irish Anglican Clergy and the Church's doctrine; he criticised their Establishment and proposed a comprehensive reform of the Church's property and funding. The first stipulation of

[181] Robert Shafto Adair, *Ireland and her Servile War* (London/Dublin, 1866).

his motion showed the national character of the Church debate—'That in legislating for Ireland it is the duty of the Imperial Parliament to adopt such measures as might be expected to gain the approval of an Irish Parliament, fairly representing the people, and expressing the opinion of the majority of men of education and intelligence in Ireland'. He asked for a commission of inquiry to manage and redistribute Church property towards the other denominations.

Although Lord Dufferin, a member of the Government and Lord Lieutenant of Down, responded by reiterating that altering the Church Establishment was irrelevant to reconciling the Fenians, the real response came from M.G. Beresford. The Primate opened by attacking the idea that the Church's small population was legitimate grounds for disestablishment: they were only a minority if severed from the Church of England, which would politically undermine the Union and ecclesiologically undermine the past 700 years of Church practice. However, this pro-Union stance was not the same as an entirely pro-British defence. Beresford reiterated the idea of the Union as a 'national compact' between two parties, and, furthermore, one to which the Roman Catholic prelates agreed. Lord Belmore proceeded to the Church's defence by quoting J.H Todd's work on the Reformation, blaming English policy for the failure of Protestantism in Ireland. Even a rebuttal of the Church—from Lord Lyvden—recognised the national tenor of the debate. Speaking of the Church, he claimed 'its existence did foster a spirit of anti-nationality which in itself was a fruitful source of evil.' Earl Russell argued that dividing the Church endowments amongst the other denominations would only increase animosity, and the motion died.[182]

Still, the ramifications of this debate were unquestionably awkward—the Church was under increasing scrutiny, and pegged its defence to the Union. Lord Grey was from one the grandest Whig houses, but by the 1860s had been out of

[182] *Hansard*, HL Deb., 16th March 1866, vol. 182 cc358-418.

office since 1852 and was considered a cross-bencher. His attack on the Church was not part of the Liberal Government's machinations, but his name still carried cachet and weight. Certainly some elements of the Church's defence certainly connected the politics of Reform with disestablishment.[183] Christopher Wordsworth, archdeacon of Westminster, closed a long defence of the Church's historic position, ecclesiology, and antiquity by preaching that '[w]e deny that Tables of Population afford any adequate test and right criterion, whether a church ought to be established.'[184] He connected disparaging the Church of Ireland's paltry numbers with expanding the franchise on the grounds of population, on whether majorities decided principles.

John G.V. Porter, an Ulster liberal and son of an Englishman made Bishop of Clogher, also responded to the debate that March.[185] After the 'disgrace of suspending the Constitution in Ireland' (suspending Habeus Corpus), if loyal Catholics did not come forward and accept that they had the benefit of nearly 40 years governance in their favour, 'liberal Protestants, like myself, must in future remain silent.' Porter considered disestablishment inevitable, and urged they accept a rational, compromise settlement: far preferable to total disendowment. However, if the Irish Church were a true grievance, '[i]t is only fair to add that Irish R.Cs. must blame themselves for a continuance of this grievance. At no time since beginning of this century have there been wanting Protestants who have strongly and ably condemned this Institution'. As with so many other liberal Protestants, Porter took his political cues from contemporary Italy, not history: the temporal claims of the Pope prevented the proper unification of Italy 'under one free, constitutional Government'. Given this, it was ridiculous that Pope was the

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[183] R. Jermyn Cooper, *A Letter to Earl Russell & Earl Grey on the New Reform Bill, The Irish Church, &c., &c., and the Extreme Danger of Further Innovations on the British Constitution* (London, 1866).
[184] Christopher Wordsworth, *The Church of Ireland, Her History and ClaiMs: Four Sermons Preached Before the University of Cambridge* (London, 1866).
[185] *Pall Mall Gazette* (*PMG*), 15th March 1866.

inheritor of a fisherman (St. Peter) and Christ, 'who taught "that his kingdom is not of this world."' He argued that Irish Catholics wanted 'the most liberal government in Ireland yet support the most cruel grinding debasing tyranny at Rome', whilst, equally, evangelicals lambasted Italy yet tried to replicate another instance of politically-unjustified religious endowments. Porter called for significant reform in the Church: a diocesan revival, and a more active life—meeting in national and diocesan synods. He concluded by suggesting the Union of Churches within the Act of Union 'has long debased a Church, and misled a State.'[186] The actions of the non-landed members of the Rural Deanery of Kilmacduagh, in Galway, showed the Church's response through lay activism, and thus the deeper conflation of the Church with the body politic. They petitioned both the Commons and Lords (through the MPs for Dublin University and their Archbishops, respectively) for a reduction in their tithe rent charge. They were expected to pay both for the Church and poor relief, and their objections to this area of tax law expanded to a defence of the Church's endowments and its security in the Union.[187]

The real attack would come from Sir John Gray in early April 1866, asking the House to examine the Church; the details came out a month before the actual debate, in his own newspaper.[188] Again, the cycle of April annual meetings was the perfect venue to combine the potency of lay activism and political rebuttal—Archbishop Trench used a meeting in support of orphanages to declare that they were locked in 'a conflict…for the spiritual possession of this land', and, furthermore, it was a conflict they could soon win.[189] Trench's terminology was not necessarily hyperbolic. On 6th April the Dublin Corporation actually debated the Church. Comprehensively attacked, the first move of its defenders was a feeble

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[186] J.G.V. Porter, *The State of Ireland in 1866: Its Chief Evils, and Their Best Possible Remedies* (Dublin/London, 1866).
[187] *IT*, 22nd March 1866.
[188] *FJ*, 9th March 1866; *IT*, 12th March 1866.
[189] *BNL*, 5th April 1866.

attempt to ban the Corporation's discussing political or religious matters at all. After long speeches attacking the Church and weak discussion of a pro-Church obfuscatory motion (which lost), John Norwood, a stalwart of Dublin Anglican diocesan life, proposed a motion which defended the Church Establishment as instrumental to the Union, a bulwark against 'religious domination', and claimed that disestablishment would undermine law, order, and property. It was hooted down, and the meeting descended into pettiness and tetchy procedural jostling. The resolution against the Church eventually won.[190]

However, there was an enormous theological conflict within their own ranks at the crucial time, on the eve of Sir John Gray's important motion. The already-tense liturgical politics became even more contentious, and exemplified the political and national tones of the Church's public life. W.G. Carroll, rector of St Bride's, Dublin (in the Liberties), introduced a sung litany and Communion Service following Morning Prayers—a deeply ritualistic practice. In response, belligerent Protestants hung placards around Dublin, calling for a crowd to attend the church and stop Carroll. On Sunday, 8th April 1866, he was forced to perform divine service to a mob bellowing 'No Popery' and 'No Puseyism'. During the litany, they ostentatiously shouted the responses over the choir's chanting, each side trying to drown out the other, and the crowd filled the rest of the service with hissing and Kentish fire.[191] Every time Carroll turned away from his congregation or seemed to face east, they shouted about confessionals.

The culmination was a rush at the highly-decorated Bible from which Carroll read, with the imported members of the congregation ripping embossed cloth tabs away from the book whilst the priest was at the lectern. His evening service was also disrupted. After more insults and the amazing scene of a Protestant

[190] *Feeman's Journal*, 6th April 1866.
[191] The practice of ironically cheering louder and longer than appropriate, thus being simultaneously disruptive and satirical.

congregation bellowing 'No Surrender' at a Church of Ireland rector in the middle of Evensong, police formed a cordon in front of the altar and demanded the congregation stop. In response, one man challenged them that he was 'a true Orangeman and true Protestant', and charged the congregation to accept no innovations in the liturgy. This sparked scuffles with the police as they ejected anyone who shouted. Finally, the crowd sang the 100th psalm and the doxology, and the police were finally forced to end the service.[192]

Irish evangelicals saw ritualism as an English import; even the Irish High Church was traditionally austere. Attacking the tenor of Carroll's service was a way of distinguishing the Church of Ireland from both the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England. Given the national context, the charge of Puseyism had extra meaning in evangelical Ireland. The psalm the crowd chose carried the idea that the laity, not the clergy alone, were the essence of the Church. Furthermore, the crowd's invoking Orangeism shows much: beyond exemplifying the mob's strain of Irish Protestantism, it revealed their wider politics. Orange demonstrations were banned, and the perception of Gladstone's imminent fusion with the Catholic Church to support disestablishment increased the idea that the British authorities were working against Irish Anglicanism.

Trench himself despaired that Carroll had been cowed by the mob, although privately he confessed 'I do not at all regret the disappearance of his feeble imitation of a Cathedral service', as it was not supported by St. Bride's Parishioners. But Trench feared that the ritualist parish of Grangegorman, held by William Maturin, would soon be targeted next.[193] The evangelical Joseph Napier counseled Beresford that Trench's refusal to condemn Dublin ritualists urged evangelicals towards internal 'disruption'. He concluded that '[t]he danger is imminent and may weaken us greatly by so formidable an element of division. We

[192] *IT*, 8th April 1866; *BNL*, 9th, 10th April 1866.
[193] Trench to Wodehouse, 21st April 1866, Bodl.Ms.Eng.c.4046, fol.39-40.

cannot afford to have internal quarrels'.[194] Essentially, this invasion of a Church of Ireland parish was an extreme example of the way the liturgy, and the Church's wider public life, was a lived political experience.

Thus in both Parliament and the Church's charitable and liturgical life, nationality and the Union were central contexts to discussions of disestablishment and disendowment, creating a wider symbolic meaning for what could have been discussions limited to property and funding. Even the *Times*' leader on the eve of Sir John Gray's anti-Establishment motion was explicit about how crucial the Church's nationality was to the whole debate. It credited the Church's institutional weakness to 'the attempt to introduce bodily, among a people so distinct from ourselves, an institution so closely identified with our national peculiarities'. It argued 'If there be one thing which is distinctly English, it is the Anglican Church. It represents alike English virtues and English faults. It is the growth of English history, and bears marks in every feature of English struggles and of English compromises.' The paper concluded that the Irish Church only flourished in places of English settlement and was always doomed to fail in the less-planted parts of Ireland. It came out against disestablishment, but only because the problems of abolishing the Church were too great—abstractly, for the leading Conservative paper, the Irish Church was indefensible, and some kind of concurrent endowment the preferred option.[195]

On 10th April 1866 Gray introduced his motion by stating that the Church question had large ramifications for England as well as Ireland, struck at the heart of the principles of equality, and was analogous to other political challenges. It united a constellation of concerns. He specified he was 'at war with a system', not the individuals in the Church (of which he was, of course, a nominal member). Through a lengthy assault on the history of confiscation and conquest, Gray

[194] Napier to Beresford, ND, CUL Ms.Add.9407/5/90,90ii
[195] *Times*, 10th April 1866.

disparaged Christopher Wordsworth's defence of the Church, which claimed that the Church was not responsible for the Penal Laws. Wordsworth had followed a strong Irish Anglican line in crediting them to England, and Gray was happy to acknowledge the English Government's historic role. However, Gray upheld the contemporary British Government as an imminent font of equality, and castigated the deep connection between the Irish Church and Irish Parliament. In this sense, by appealing to Russell's administration to create Irish equality, he reversed the classic Irish attitudes towards the government: essentially, Catholics could look to Britain for improvement, and Protestants ought to look back to the time when their Church was conflated with their own Parliament as the source of their (much valued and cherished) position. After trawling through the statistics of empty parishes and over-paid priests, Gray closed by arguing that the Church question was the 'root of all the evils' in Ireland: the essence of the conflict over education, land, and the Catholic sense of 'degradation' and inferiority.

However, the Government's response was equally worrying for the Church. Chichester Fortescue, Liberal MP for Louth, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, and, like Gray, a member of the Church of Ireland, only feebly opposed the motion, essentially following the same line as the *Times*. He accepted Gray's position in the abstract, and said he was himself 'dissatisfied' with the position of Irish Protestantism. The only reason for the government's declining to accept the resolution was their not having any plans for what to erect in the Establishment's place. He denied that the Church descended from St. Patrick, and urged the House to ignore the idea of the Church of Ireland's not being a minority within the whole United Kingdom. Rather, 'Ireland...ought to be treated by us as a separate country.' The Irish Church could not be considered a sister to the Church of England in this debate, and he welcomed further Parliamentary discussion on the matter.

After more speeches attacking the Church, James Whiteside finally rose to its support. He immediately connected the attack on the Church to the Reform Bill. He also moved the Church's defence towards the issue of nationality, stating 'I deny that the country, as a nation, is a Roman Catholic country. I have always understood that the intellect of a country—its property industry, and intelligence—formed some part of the nation'. Whiteside charged that Gray was essentially the agent of the National Association, and (sarcastically, yet presciently) speculated that Cullen's object was to so infuriate Protestants with disestablishment that it would move them into the nationalist camp. The Establishment was both a safeguard of, and safeguarded by, the Union, and the Catholic prelates promised never to use Catholic Emancipation to attack the endowments of the Established Church. Whiteside went on to describe the Union as a contract, and, of course, one fundamental to the whole character of the United Kingdom. He then lauded the final phase of Irish Protestant governance—apparently, more 'remedial measures' were passed between 1782 and the Union than before.[196]

The Church's chief pamphleteer, Alfred Lee, immediately responded to the debate. His opening charge was that 'the object of the present movement is to make Rome, by the abolition of the Established Church, supreme in Ireland, in all questions, political as well as religious.' Lee's normal appetite for historical quibbling continued, as he trawled through the exact nature of land investiture following Tyrone's Rebellion, the statistics used by Sir William Petty, and the warhorse issue of an unbroken Episcopal succession. But the heart of the matter was, of course, governance. Lee used Edmund Burke to claim that the penal code was political, not religious, and an aspect of Irish governance since before the Reformation. However, now a different power struggle was at work—the Irish Establishment did not interfere with individual Roman Catholic rights or the ability

[196] *Hansard*, HC Deb., 10th April 1866, vol. 182 cc973-1070.

to worship, as individuals and subjects, but did prevent Rome from becoming politically dominant. Lee warned that

> whatever else happens, the Irish Church will not cease to be the Established Church of Ireland, without a struggle and a convulsion such as this country has not passed through since the Reformation.…There can be no doubt that the disestablishment of the Irish Church is a question which deeply concerns the interests of the whole Empire, which cannot be treated as a mere Irish matter.…Sever the union in any single case, and you do much towards severing it in the other cases also.[197]

Although the debate was specifically over the Church's endowments, it seemed that the Union, Fenianism, and the relationship between the Church of Ireland and Irish nationality were also inextricable from the discussions—for both sides.

This continued through the Church's associational culture, and the constant swing between press, pulpit, and Parliament—Sir John Gray responded to M.G. Beresford's using a Church Institution meeting to attack the version of Irish history with which Gray grounded his Parliamentary motion.[198] The day after the Commons debate adjourned, an Irish Church Missions meeting declared further conversions would somehow stymie Fenianism.[199] James Thomas O'Brien, bishop of Ossory and the acknowledged leader of the extreme wing of Irish Protestants who opposed the National Schools, argued a fundamental disjunction between the interests of the State and the interests of the Church of Ireland as a national Church, in that the state inhibited 'true' religious teaching.[200] It was a classic example of the differences in English and Irish thought on the matter: the former looking at the Establishment, and the latter, their distinctive, and distinctively national, Church. This significant divergence underscored much of the conflict and distrust between the English and Irish camps, and explicates the hostility of the *Times*, a paragon of the status quo—it was, of course, the English status quo.

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[197] Alfred T. Lee, *The Irish Church Establishment. The Statements of Sir John Gray, M.P.* (London/Oxford/Cambridge/Dublin, 1866).
[198] *FJ*, 23rd April 1866.
[199] *BNL*, 11th April 1866.
[200] J.T. O'Brien, *The Irish Education Question* (Dublin/London/Cambridge, 1866).

The same themes and structure carried on in the row about St. Bride's—under the chairmanship of arch-Protestant Sir Edward Grogan, MP for Dublin until 1865, prominent Dubliners held a public meeting in the Rotunda about the disturbance. Trench's English training and career apparently marked him as suspect, unable to comprehend the danger facing the Irish Church. Given the threats against them, the Church needed to maintain its unity, which St. Bride's 'innovations' undermined.[201] The laity's liturgical policing of their own rectors was, it seemed, an aspect of defending the Church from the British government. Typically, the *Times* completely misunderstood the mood of the Irish, but recognised the symbolism in the debate. It commented that '[a] revolt of the laity against the authorities of the Irish Church would be unfortunate at any time, but particularly so at the present moment, when the Establishment may be said to be on its trial before Parliament.' Yet it warned ritualistic Irish rectors against producing 'a paltry imitation…electro-plated Popery', which would only strengthen case for endowing the Roman Catholic Church instead of their own.[202]

The issue did not die and Sir Edward Grogan chaired a further, larger meeting at the Rotunda in mid-May. The list of speakers was a roll-call of important Dublin legal figures and politicians,[203] and one of the motions stated the importance of Church unity in the face of the 'crisis'.[204] This prompted a High Church reaction, and on 14th May leading laymen of that school, such as the historian J.R. Garstin, met with clergyman (including George Salmon) in Trinity College to form a 'Liturgical Defence Committee'. The group decided on the usual round of public meetings and published polemic to counteract the evangelical

[201] *IT*, 14th April 1866; *IEG*, 21st April 1866.
[202] *Times*, 16th April 1866.
[203] William Brooke, Thomas Lefroy, Joseph Napier, Dennis Kelly, William Barlow Smythe, and Richard Gamble.
[204] *FJ* 12th, 16th May 1866; *IEG*, 19th May 1866.

campaign.[205] Even the High Church relied on a lay-clerical associational culture to propagate their side of the debate. Furthermore, they also emphasised their idea of the Church's distinctly Irish history, and nationally-grounded liturgy. Trench published a long article in the *Times* describing a trip through Connemara, praising newly-built Churches and growing Protestant congregations, specifically trying to confront the charges of bribed conversions.[206] This had to be a defence of their social role, the cultural value of an Establishment, beyond the specifics of obviating the most odious criticisms leveled against them.

The collapse of the Russell Government at the end of June 1866 ended the prospect of Government intervention for the immediate time. Derby's third government included important Irish Anglican peers—the Earl Belmore and the Earl of Longford held minor offices in the Home and War departments, respectively, next to the expected Abercorn and Naas as Viceroy and Chief Secretary. Disraeli made Belmore's grandson Montagu Lowry-Corry his private secretary. More importantly, Derby formed an entirely Conservative ministry—there were no Whigs, no Adullamites in his Cabinet. His purpose of preserving the Irish Church Establishment, explicitly renewed since November 1865, would be presumably unimpeded.[207] However, the previous years' prospects of confrontation remained a possibility from the Liberal side, as long as the Irish Church Establishment was not reformed.

The Church's internal theological jostling continued, however. The High Church coterie formed their Liturgical Defence Committee into a more formal association, the Irish Church Society. Using meetings and a pamphlet to counteract evangelical 'excitement' and strengthen their laity, they defended the history of the Church, and thus its Irishness. Formally, and significantly, they

[205] RCBL Ms.148, p.5.
[206] *Times*, 10th May 1866.
[207] Angus Hawkins, *The Forgotten Prime Minister: The 14th Earl of Derby, Volume II: Achievement, 1851-1869* (Oxford, 2008).

refused to join with consonant English High Church associations.[208] Other laymen moved in ways that differed from both the evangelicals' bullish No Surrender and the High Church's academic preciousness. But they demonstrated the importance of nationality, and the way the Church conflict reanimated broader concerns over Anglo-Irish governance. F.M. Jennings' wide-ranging discussion of Irish disaffection and its causes demanded a renewed aristocratic leadership. Although some significant reduction of the Church was necessary, 'I desire that whatever changes take place it may not be a blow to our nationality, that is a blow that will favour centralization or seriously reduce the few resident gentlemen in country districts.'[209] Jennings was a member of the Royal Irish Academy, and his interest in resident leadership, nationality, a strong economy, and a more localised government certainly found a presence in the Home Government Association just four years later.

Similarly, the Dublin Corporation discussed an address to the government, first mooted in April. The most contentious point was whether the Church Establishment ought to be included with the causes of distress in the country. They also considered the appropriate language with which to respond to the Derby Government's seemingly blanket condemnation of Ireland in its criticism of Fenianism. This debate, and its particular location within the centre of local government, was not just about the merits of the Church Establishment. It went from there to encompass the role of local government in confronting the disingenuous and unfair descriptions of Ireland in the House of Lords, the local Irish ability to respond to English misapprehension and misgovernance.[210]

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[208] RCBL Ms.148, pp.8-15; William Maturin, *Irish Church Society. The Distinctive Principles of the Church* (Dublin, [1867]).
[209] F.M. Jennings, *An Inquiry into the Causes of the Poverty and Discontent in Ireland, with Suggestions for their Removal* (Dublin/London, 1866).
[210] *BNL*, 15th August 1866.

The same themes resonated through the autumn episcopal visitations. In his Charge of that year, William Fitzgerald continued to use a nominally ecclesiastical space to advance political, thoroughly national arguments. He warned that although the Establishment was not touched by legislation in the last Parliamentary session, the danger had not passed. He quickly developed the now-customary national-historical speculations, arguing that what really undermined their Church was not the spiritual lethargy of the Georgian age, but 'the fatal, blighting influence of the penal laws—laws framed apparently for the express purpose of crushing down the Roman Catholic population into a state of hopeless poverty, ignorance, discontent, and undying hostility to everything that bore the hateful name of English.' Disestablishment would not place the Roman Catholic Church under the closer control of the Government, but it would make the Protestant Church essentially a web of missions governed by Exeter Hall, paid for by English money.[211]

Trench's charge dwelt on the St. Bride's debacle at length, and stressed the importance of having the parochial laity united behind the rector. His primary concern was to maintain the law in the face of a mob, and prevent Dublin from being ruled by 'a reign of triumphant violence'. He expanded this into concerns over their position as a National Church—it could only be secured (against the other contending denomination) by maintaining the Prayer Book as it was. This itself was a shot against evangelicals who were agitating to revise the Book: for Trench, upholding Anglican theology secured the Church's national life. He concluded by arguing that the Parliamentary debates of the past two years proved that the extreme wing of the English Liberals wanted disestablishment more than any force

[211] William Fitzgerald, *The Case of the Church Establishment in Ireland Considered in a Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Dioceses of Killaloe and Kilfenora, Clonfert and Kilmacduagh, in August, 1866, at the Ordinary Visitation* (Dublin, 1866).

in Ireland, and the cause was not supported in their island.[212] The Church of Ireland would be doomed by British concerns, but their Irish nationality was untouched by any Parliamentary measure. John Gregg of Cork returned to the dynamics of government, meditating on the Irish Church's returning more value to the State than the Government invested in it.[213] This was clearly a piece of rhetoric, a trope in one debate. But it revealed how government and politics were still contexts of ecclesiastical discussion.

When the Bishoprics of Tuam and Meath fell vacant, the looming crisis made the symbolic weight of their appointments exceed the normal politicking. Edward Hoare, dean of Waterford, asked the Viceroy, the Marquess of Abercorn, for Tuam on the basis of his past relief work in Sligo during the Famine, and his current support for the National Schools.[214] His chances may have been hurt by the fact that he was rumoured to support disendowment,[215] as the decision was always political at heart. The Earl of Bandon pressed his brother, the Hon. and Rev. Charles Brodrick Bernard forward for a bishopric, and Lord Lifford reminded Abercorn that, not only was Bandon a consistent Tory, he 'is one of the few Irishmen who have a pocket borough.'[216] As a result, Abercorn felt that 'Bernard would be only a political Bishop, made without any other recommendation'. On purely clerical grounds William Alexander, dean of Emly and rector of Larne, was the frontrunner.[217]

However, the Earl of Roden suggested they translate John Gregg from Cork to the rural, Irish-speaking Tuam because 'he is master of the Irish language and would have an opportunity of being of greater benefit to the Irish Population

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[212] *Times*, 24th September 1866.
[213] *BNL*, 5th October 1866.
[214] Samuel Hoare to Abercorn, 20th October 1866, PRONI Ms.T2541/VR/73.
[215] NLI Ms.29775/6.
[216] Lord Bandon to Abercorn, 20th October 1866, Lord Lifford to Abercorn, 23rd September 1866 PRONI Ms.T2541/VR/74,78.
[217] Abercorn to Lord Naas, 23rd Oct 1866, NLI Ms.11142/10.

than a Bishop who could only communicate with them in the English language which so many understand so imperfectly'.[218] Abercorn, though, felt that a Bishop who spoke 'celtic' would be 'looked upon with aggression…by the RCs as a converter' and emphasised 'the sake of political considerations'. The notoriously combative Gregg might create 'difficulties' in the troublesome West of Ireland by inciting 'ultra Protestant community zeal'.[219] The see of Meath went to Samuel Butcher. Primate M.G. Beresford applauded this decision, despite an early support for Charles Leslie, a leading Kilmore clergymen. In his praise for both men, the Primate stressed their sound administrative skills—important, as the Bishop of Meath served on the Irish Privy Council, and thus needed personal qualities for managing non-ecclesiastical institutions.[220] Ultimately, filling sees in the State Church prioritised the State and Party, not the Church.

When, in the end, the see of Tuam went to Bernard, the London *Examiner* reported his consecration: '[t]he well-trained and highly-paid actors in that mystery of mysteries, the un-Irish Church in Ireland, are resolved to play out the farce to the last. The play is a State Play performed by command for the entertainment of a select audience'. Bernard was '[a] younger son of one of the great Planter families of Munster, who in all their generations have lived sword in hand amidst a subject race, having to make choice of a calling, chooses for his vocation the ministry of the Act of Parliament Church.'[221] Similarly, at Samuel Butcher's consecration as Bishop of Meath, George Salmon preached a remarkable political theology. He began from the classic position that there was no sharp distinction between Divine and Secular law. God's authority was conveyed in both, upholding a common principle of obedience to right authority in both Church and

[218] Lord Roden to Abercorn, 23rd October 1866, PRONI Ms.T2541/VR/80.
[219] Abercorn to Naas, 24th, 27th October 1866, NLI Ms.11142/10,11
[220] Beresford to Naas, 30th July, 6th August 1866, NLI Ms.11142/3,4.
[221] *The Examiner*, 12th January 1867.

State. However, he expanded this to a shot against both Irish Ritualists and the English Church:

> Just as in our political institutions, our Government, though nominally monarchical, is in great measure practically republican, so there seems to be a danger, lest, while our form of Church government remains in name Episcopal, it may in practice reduce itself to the system of the Independents.[222]

The issues of government and authority were clearly pertinent to an Episcopal consecration at such a time.

Following on from the consecrations, Sheldon Amos offered a major attack on the Irish Church in the radical *Westminster Review*. Declaring that '[t]here is scarcely a single accredited maxim of sound statesmanship which has not been flagrantly violated in the course of the English administration of Ireland', he concluded that without denominational equality, 'Ireland can never be relied upon as an organic and invigorating section of the British community.' He conceded that the Church of Ireland was not the sole grievance of the people, and removing the Establishment would not immediately improve their material position. But it was the most obvious symbol of the system to which the Irish were opposed, and the least defensible part.

The Irish Establishment would not be tolerated in the colonies, nor by any other European nation. It was maintained in a country so hostilely irreconcilable to British governance that the nation's politicians rarely felt compelled to justify it. However, Amos predicted a transformation in British politics through the Church Question: '[a] new style of political reasoning (it is dreaded) may be forged for the purpose of the Irish controversy, which will not be readily laid aside. New axioms may emerge from the conflict, which will be the starting-points of all future discussions.' Establishments were only useful through 'proved conformity to the ends of all government—the ultimate improvement and happiness of the whole

[222] George Salmon, *The Advantages of Episcopal Rule.* (Dublin, 1866).

population.' He conceded that 'the Established Church in Ireland is a courageous and consistent herald of Protestantism there, and further…the Catholic faith, as there existing, is exhibited in its most debased, servile, and superstitious form. It would doubtless be better for Ireland if the Catholic faith could be swept out of the country and the Protestant substituted in its stead.' But politicians' immediate concerns were sadly not 'Utopian'. Working on a European canvas, Amos suggested that a wave of secularisation was imminent, and government could no longer uphold religious minorities: a rational 'science' of ethics was replacing historically-conditioned religious morality, governments could no longer uphold bigotry for reasons of history.[223]

However, at the Down, Connor, and Dromore Diocesan Conference, William Mulcan, rector of Templecorran and Kilroot, actually defined their Church as not only pre-Reformation, but pre-Christian. The National Church apparently dated from the first Celtic invasions of Ireland, when the conquering tribes first set aside land for the Druids; their Church inherited this land and social function, having acquired Christianity from St Patrick. Mulcan used this idea to develop the idea of missions solidifying the Church's nationality.[224] The Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette published, in full, a weighty paper in the Convocation of Canterbury on 'Diocesan Synods in Relation to Convocation and Parliament',[225] indicating the continued interest in the Church's self-governance, and its constitutional implications. As the year closed, the Young Men's Christian Society organised a mass walk-out on one of Trench's sermons, protesting his perceived support of ritualism. The Society was an entirely voluntary organisation, which gained in prestige for having an Alderman as its patron, demonstrating its respectability and importance. It was an anti-

[223] [Sheldon Amos], 'The Irish Church', *Westminster and Foreign Quarterly Review*, no.2 vol.30 (October, 1866), pp.281-310.
[224] *BNL*, 9th November 1866.
[225] *IEG*, 20th November 1866.

clerical association, yet composed of the 'bone and sinew' of Dublin life.[226] This was yet another example of a political, engaged laity, responding to threats in both Church and State, and treating the life of the Church as a model of wider social statements—whether it was ritualism, the role of the Establishment, or the prospect of Electoral reform.

However, R.B. Knox, the Whig Bishop of Down, Connor, and Dromore, turned Parliament into the venue for an inter-Church squabble. In February 1867 he tabled a motion mandating the Ecclesiastical Commissioners produce accurate returns of the Church's property. He considered disestablishment inevitable, and wanted the debate conducted on the most solid footing. Accurate information would enable the Church to reform itself, and stymie its harshest critics. However, Trench joined Lord Derby to oppose him in the Lords, winning the argument on the grounds that Knox's motion would create unnecessary work.[227] This move was known in advance. The idea of opposing it on the grounds of its creating a useless burden for the Commissioners passed from the established lawyer and member of the Ecclesiastical Commission, Arthur Gayer, to Ulster magnate Lord Belmore through the chief Irish Tory, Lord Naas.

However, M. G. Beresford acknowledged a wider political complication—Knox seemed to want 'to bring the Irish Church before the attention of the Legislature without any expressed definite object[,] any pressing necessity or the prospect of any useful result.'[228] Beresford and J.T. O'Brien immediately used the joint lay-clerical platform of a Church Institution meeting to launch a renewed defence of the Irish Church.[229] Both Beresford, in his private correspondence, and Trench, in the Lords, acknowledged the awkward situation where the State Church was

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[226] *The Era*, 2nd December 1866.
[227] *Hansard,* HL Deb., 11th February 1867, vol. 185 cc207-10.
[228] A.E. Gayer to Naas, 8th February 1867, Beresford to Belmore, 7th February 1867, PRONI Ms.D3007/N/22,50-1; 23, 52-4.
[229] *BNL*, 11th February 1867.

decidedly uncomfortable with attention from the State—where their disestablishment was imminent. Knox's commitment to reforming the Church was in line with other Irish Liberals, and followed the arguments of R.S. Adair and J.G.V. Porter. Similarly, the 26-year-old Richard Bagwell, Liberal MP for his family's pocket borough of Clonmel, quickly used a debate on opening to Roman Catholics the few remaining restricted state offices to declare that the barriers on Catholics were injurious to Protestants as well. He wanted his whole country to be Protestant, but as that would never happen, the next best option was equality. The lingering memory of conquest, grounded in the Church Establishment, was damaging for Irish Protestantism.[230] Questions of Church reform and the Church's continuing establishment prompted reflections on the social-cum-historical legacy of Irish Protestantism.

The long-anticipated Fenian Risings finally broke out on 5th March 1867, bringing these issues to the front of political discussions. Although the rebellion was directed against the State, not the Church of Ireland, it obviously raised the prospect of violence against the Protestant Church. Even though the Rising was a military failure, Irishmen still took up arms against the British Empire. In one notably symbolic exchange, in Wexford, the local authorities refused to defend the parish church, only posting troops at government buildings. Twenty days after the Rising, with fears clearly lingering, Lord Courtown thus drew up plans to defend their local church by bringing the gentry's dining room tables into the building to create platforms from which they could fire out of the Church's windows. The idea was for all the local Protestants to gather in the Church, now converted into a fort.[231] It was redolent of Protestant preparations in 1641.

The themes of Church defence carried through the political, clubby world in London, too. In parallel with the anti-Fenian preparations, Carlow landlords Arthur

[230] *Hansard,* HC Deb., 27th February 1867, vol. 185 cc1*099-1101.*
[231] TCD Ms.11183/P37/5/15,20.

Macmorrough Kavanagh and Henry Bruen joined the Church Institution's Council. William Pennefather pressed Courtown to marshal the two men towards a more robust defence of the Church: following Lord Naas' equivocal stance on opening up the Lord Lieutenancy to Catholics, Pennefather complained of the Government's 'eating away one by one from safeguards of Protestantism.' He presciently suggested that lay-clerical fusion, through the basis of societies, ought to be the basis for Church defence, writing: 'If the severance of the Church from the State and its disestablishment in fact take place such association wd. be as near to being already a nucleus for future action as we can have'.[232] Church governance and Church life were inextricable from wider political questions, and, in turn, conditioned the Church's response to political challenges. Those resumed when Sir John Gray revived the Church Question in May.[233] Beresford had to act almost as a whip, writing to the Chief Secretary that '[a] hostile select committee of the House of Commons might in the present state of Public feeling do us irreparable injury. I hope the Government will secure the fullest possible attendance of its supporters for our defence'.[234]

The constant riposte with public meetings tied into established, standard norms of Victorian public life. For instance, the opening meeting of the Law Students' Debating Society brought leading Dublin lawyers and politicians together discussing the purpose of debating societies. Isaac Butt, Joseph Napier, Sir William Wilde, J.P. Vereker, and Edward O'Hagan joined numerous leading Dubliners, both Protestant and Catholic, to conclude that these societies were important ways of creating public opinion and cultivating thought.[235] They were critical intermediaries with remote government: the *Irish Times* argued that a public meeting was the best

[232] W. Pennefather to Courtown, 16th, 25th March 1867, TCD Ms.11183/P37/5/17,18, minor changes to punctuation.
[233] *Hansard* HC Deb., 7th May 1867, vol.187 cc96-185.
[234] Beresford to Lord Naas, 9th May 1867, NLI Ms.43836/6.
[235] *FJ*, 22nd November 1865.

way for magistrates and the Lord Mayor to address Government's laws on public houses, and Galway citizens used a meeting to pressure their Town and Harbour Commissioners to relieve poverty in the city, discussing the nature of poverty and its remedies.[236] The *Irish Times* even argued at one point: 'Should an important subject arise, local or imperial, gentlemen by experience, capacity, education, and position, well qualified to lead public opinion upon the matter, meet together and decide upon a certain course of proceeding. A public meeting is convened and series of resolutions passed.' The meetings now always ended with a deputation to the Lord Lieutenant, who had proved either unable or unwilling to influence the Government to aid Ireland. The paper was forced to question his cachet in London, as 'on all questions respecting material advantage this country has received very little proof of its existence.' They deserved 'that a fair and just proportion of the revenue derived from Ireland should be expended in and for Ireland and that the State, as an absentee landlord, should not exhaust this country in the idea that it can enrich itself.' It urged Irish MPs to join together, setting aside their differences, and force Governments to work in Ireland's interests.[237]

One business society was formally a charitable institution: it organised dinners and widows' funds, but also discussed issues of economics and commercial prosperity, on the principle that its members' travel gave them a sense of Ireland's needs. They were plugged into the 'pulse' of Irish economic life, and read papers which engaged with the economic and governmental problems of the day.[238] But the most important was the College Historical Society ('Hist') at Trinity College, a crucible of political discussion that was simultaneously a student training ground of Irish Toryism, and, through the formal Opening Sessions, a ritualised shared space for Dublin's Conservative and Liberal luminaries, a public ritual combining

[236] *IT*, 24th, 27th January 1865.
[237] *IT*, 24th February 1866.
[238] *First Report of the Irish Commercial Travellers' Association, Read at a General Meeting Held April 22, 1867, Andrew Bagot, Esq, in the Chair* (Dublin, 1867).

civic pomp and engaged criticism. The platform for the Opening Sessions in 1864, 1865, 1866, and 1867 included serious politicians in the Lord Mayor, James Whiteside, Isaac Butt, H.E. Chatterton, Sir Edward Grogan, Sir John Gray, Sir Dominic Corrigan, Jonathan Pim, Edward FitzGibbon, Edward Gibson, and the Hon. David Plunket. Senior clerics such as George Salmon, W.C. Magee, Samuel Butcher, James MacDonnell, John West, and H.H. Dickinson accompanied the intellectual elite in William Rowan Hamilton, Sir William Wilde, Frederick Shaw, John Kells Ingram, Humphrey Lloyd, Anthony Traill, J.P. Mahaffy, and Samuel Haughton. Their chairman was once Joseph Allen Galbraith, and the debates ranged from the franchise, women's rights, European politics, and Irish history, when, in debating Pitt and Cromwell, was a way of debating contemporary Irish society.[239] Butt, Wilde, Galbraith, Shaw, and Haughton would all debate similar topics in the Home Government Association.

The Church's response to the political crisis of the mid-1860s was rhetorically direct, a fusion of pamphlets and preaching that matched Parliamentary criticism. But this took place within a self-conscious associational culture, incorporating the Church's laity. They complemented, extended, and intervened in their Church's public life. This was itself part of a wider mode of public life which, in many instances, bridged political divides: non-party, but wholly political. When disestablishment became a viable threat, the Church's campaign to preserve its establishment drew on these structures, and already presented a corpus of articulate, energetic, politicised, and practical laity.

[239] TCD MUN/SOC/HIST,vols.30,31.

Chapter Two
Disestablishment and its Discontents
1867-1869

This chapter documents the Church of Ireland's battle against disestablishment, exploring the Church's point of view within a political narrative. It particularly examines the evolving mood of the laity, charting their anger at and alienation from the Westminster establishment. Although newspapers and local parochial records to a large extent record this debate, the most immediate sources are the private correspondence of those peers, prelates, and politicians who tried to manage the vociferous Church of Ireland laity. These letters reveal the mentality of the Church's leadership, and, in revealing the back-story of the Church's haphazard response to Gladstone, show broader elite discomfort at the Church's evolving politics.

Crucially, from an early stage in the battle Conservative Party grandees seemed to abandon the Irish Church. Accordingly, the Church had to evolve its own representative methods to combat Parliament. Creating, and then managing, this mechanism meant the Church's leadership spent as much time (if not more) negotiating internal battles as they did confronting Westminster. Furthermore, the series of committees and conferences the Church spawned over this intense period inherited the cultural politics of the previous years. It was, from the start, dominated by joint lay-clerical cooperation, which drew on all of the diocesan conferences, parochial meetings, and charity associations which had dominated the Church's public life of the previous years. Accordingly, the nascent wrangles and contests explored in the previous chapter coursed through the Church as it fought Parliament. The High and Low Church fault-lines, the confusion between state and individual action, the Act of Union, and evangelical ecclesiology dominated the State Church's effort to fight the Government in order to stay connected to that same state.

I
The Prelude to Disestablishment
April 1867—November 1868

In early April 1867 the North Dublin Poor Law Guardians confronted disestablishment. One of their members, Thomas Atkins, complained that there were too many Protestants on the Board, and the large numbers of Catholic rate-payers ought to be rewarded with a Catholic Vice-Chairman. He endorsed this through Sir John Gray's public criticism of the Church Establishment.[240] Soon the Reform bill passed into its Committee stage, with the notable amendments coming equally from both sides of the House: 'duality was virtually abandoned'.[241] Comprehensive Reform was imminent; the urban electorate would expand dramatically, and do so through a blur between political parties. This disestablishment debate in Dublin had a wider symbolic meaning: melding concerns. Disestablishment, a measure so clearly linked to Reform, was now another way of recognising urban population, and also an aspect of sound local government.

The overlap between the two parties' policies further damned the Church. The Tories' finally securing Reform in May was a predicament for the Liberals. Gladstone needed to steal back the progressive initiative to keep his fledgling party together, to unite their political cliques through a cause the new electorate would reward with a Commons majority.[242] Irish Church reform was perfect, particularly as it 'had been the defining symbol of common Liberal purpose in 1834-5.'[243] W.C. Magee sagely worried: 'Reform settled, our time must come, and all the quicker if Reform was settled by the Tories….Gladstone is prepared to play trumps next

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[240] *FJ*, 4th April 1867.
[241] Maurice Cowling, *1867 Disraeli, Gladstone, and Revolution: The Passing of the Second Reform Bill* (Cambridge, 1967), p.14.
[242] Angus Hawkins, *British Party Politics 1852-1886* (Basingstoke, 1998), pp.142-3.
[243] Jonathan Parry, *Liberal Government*, pp.225,255-6.

hand; and the best trump he has is the Irish Church.'[244] The issue moved past electoral jostling. Disestablishment was not merely a weapon against the Tories, but a live context to evaluate the efficacy of local and imperial government: William Fitzgerald closed an analysis of Fenianism in a letter to John O'Regan, archdeacon of Kildare, 'we shall see a revival of the United Irishmen' if the Establishment was 'destroyed'.[245] In a series of letters to the *Nation*, Samuel Haughton, a fellow of TCD, argued that social and economic progress were the real measures of the state of the country. He pointedly suggested that '[w]e have never had a real union with England—let us try it now with Liberalism, or Democracy'. This set Irish national aspirations in a wider European context, placing the Celt-Saxon mélange alongside other composite countries.[246]

The first salvo against the Church came when Lord Dufferin opened the Social Science Association meeting in Belfast that September with a speech calling for disestablishment. This prompted a Tory walk-out, the inevitable riposte from A.T. Lee,[247] and a squabble over the political use of the nominally non-partisan institution.[248] But the *Belfast News-Letter* saw his speech as part of the wider challenge facing the Church, one exemplified in the imminent Royal Commission that had been 'forged in the offices of the *Freeman's Journal*'. It predicted a political 'storm', noting the importance of Dufferin (an Irish landlord and member of the Government) advocating disestablishment.[249] With the Royal Commission established in mid-October,[250] many in the Church felt the Government was placating their enemies. The timing connected this to Fenianism, Reform, and the

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[244] Magee to MacDonnell, Newell, 11th, 30th May 1867, *Life of Magee,* pp.154-6.
[245] Fitzgerald to O'Regan, 6th June 1867, TCD Ms.7243-6/691c.
[246] *Nation*, 3rd, 17th August, 7th September 1867.
[247] Alfred T. Lee, *The Irish Church Question: A Letter to the Right Hon. Lord Dufferin* (London/ Oxford/Cambridge/Dublin, 1867).
[248] John Bew, *Glory of Being Britons*, pp.10, 172; Lawrence Goldman, *Science, Reform, and Politics in Victorian Britain: The Social Science Association 1857-1886* (Cambridge, 2002), p.64.
[249] *BNL*, 28th September 1867.
[250] NA Ms.HO45/8864.

growing confidence of the Roman Catholic Church. Disestablishment and disendowment were not merely threats of Gladstone—they formed part of a wider political and social upheaval, where the Queen's government was cowed by rebellious and seditious forces.

Also in October, the Church Congress at Wolverhampton offered the next year's Congress to Dublin. Given the charged political environment, granting Ireland the annual, peripatetic showpiece of Anglican culture, discussion, and worship was symbolic of the United Church's pan-British commitment. It was an opportunity for the beleaguered Irish Establishment to defend itself. R.C. Trench accepted the offer to prove the close ties between the two Churches, and give the 'active spirits' in the Church a venue to speak in the absence of Convocation.[251] It was to be 'as goodly a muster as possible of Irish Churchmen and their English friends, in the face of their enemies and critics'.[252] Trench convened a meeting of senior clergy and lay parochial officers as a Provisional Committee at his Palace in St. Stephen's Green on 21st November, 1867.[253] W.C. Magee, a moderate evangelical, thought the Committee broadly inclusive. This was important given the stakes. He wrote: 'I fear we are making a leap in the dark. This Congress will do us great good, or great harm, according as it turns out.'[254] There was no mistaking Magee's allusion to Robert Lowe, the Liberal opponent to the Reform Act of that year, further linking disestablishment to democratic developments.

The Convocation debate also resurfaced, with the entire correspondence between the Irish prelates and various governments since 1861 printed in early November.[255] Again the Government refused an Irish Convocation, knowing it would turn into a public platform to condemn disestablishment. Accordingly the

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[251] Mrs. Hamilton Maude, *Memoir of the Late Right Rev. Robert Daly* (London, 1875), pp.391-2.
[252] Magee to Newell, 1st October 1867, *Life of Magee*, pp.160-1.
[253] RCBL Ms.4/1.
[254] Magee to MacDonnell, 18th November 1867, *Life of Magee*, p.164.
[255] NA Ms.HO45/7252, no.18.

Church planned to use the Congress itself. It had two flagship sermons—the plums of prominent preaching in a week of public discussion. One was given to Samuel Wilberforce, celebrity Bishop of Oxford, and the other to W.C. Magee, considered by Trench 'certainly the best foremost speaker & preacher in the Irish Church'.[256] Another speaker was the Hon. and Rev. William Conyngham Plunket, grandson of two noted politician-cum-judges,[257] who, according to his sympathetic biographer, had the mind of a whiggish politician, in touch more with the laity than the clergy.[258] The Church lined up denunciations of disestablishment in advance, and did so by planning through a joint lay-clerical committee whose laymen were political figures.

When their Sub-Committee on subjects finalised the proposed topics, they included a discussion on 'Convocation and Diocesan Synods: their workings and possible improvement in England; their Revival in Ireland'. This contentious topic passed. The only modification was Lancelot Studdert's implying Synods were extinct when they were, in fact, dormant, pointedly implying they should be revived. Suggestions from a lay canvass ranged from the legality of Synods, their practical structure, the model provided by Synodically-governed colonial and North American Churches, as well as the revival of the diaconate, the establishment of lay brotherhoods, and 'Women's work within the Church'.[259] Beyond the liturgical dimensions, lay involvement had clear political potential—infusing a confrontational spirit into the imminent debates.

One Church of Ireland partisan conflated the threats facing the Church, declaring: 'If these adversaries have their National Associations, their Fenian Brotherhoods, their Reform Leagues, let us have a League too, a Protestant League,

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[256] Trench to Wodehouse, 7th April 1866, Bodl.Ms.Eng.c.4043, fols.25-26.
[257] William Plunket, 1st Baron Plunket and Charles Kendal Bushe.
[258] F.D. How, *William Conyngham Plunket, 4th Baron Plunket and Sixty-First Archbishop of Dublin: A Memoir* (London, 1900), p.64.
[259] RCBL Ms.4/1-2.

that will make itself felt both by friends and by foes'.[260] On 30th October thousands of Presbyterians and Anglicans met at Hillsborough, Co. Down, for a mass demonstration. The meeting went to great lengths to avoid being a mere Orange Order event—Protestant, but not Orange. As Richard Nugent, son of an Ulster family who lived in London, described it, 'though 10,000 Orangemen were present not a ribbon was to be seen, not a party note heard, not a flag waived. It was a great victory of resolute men over themselves.'[261] Partly this was to avoid prosecution under the Party Processions Act. Although many of those present were in the Order, this disassociation was also designed to ensure the meeting was portrayed as respectable and 'defensive', a check to the allied Irish Ultramontane and English Voluntary threat. It also claimed to 'strengthen' the Government.[262]

In this sense it was an important departure for mid-Victorian Irish Protestantism: the launch of a non-institutional, non-party, yet wholly political movement. Although nominally an Ulster cause, MPs from across Ireland attended. Although it was also nominally aligned to the Conservative Government, this was more about presenting a 'constitutional' front in the face of Fenianism. Historically, Hillsborough was the location of the early council of war for the East Ulster Williamite militias, from which the first Protestant army met the Jacobites in 1688. It was also the site of the meeting between Presbyterians and Anglicans on the same date in 1834. Then, the Conservative Presbyterian minister Henry Cooke famously pronounced the banns of marriage between the two denominations to present a united face against O'Connellite aggression—and Cooke was on the platform for this second meeting as well. It was another instance of the politics of the 1830s redux. Gathering in that field was a strong assertion of both an anti-

[260] 'J.H.B.', *An Address to the Members of the Established Church in Ireland, and to All Who Wish Them Well* (Dublin,1867).
[261] R. Nugent to E.P. Shirley, 4th November 1867, PRONI Ms.D3531/E/1, emphasis original.
[262] *BNL*, 14th, 16th, 23rd, 25th, 31st October 1867; *Authentic Report of the Protestant Meeting at Hillsborough, in the County of Down, Held on Wednesday, 30th October, 1867* (Belfast, 1867).

revolutionary purpose, and, moreover, continuity. It also demonstrated an ability to organise effectively a body of angry men behind this renewed Protestant politics.

From this, the first dedicated antidisestablishmentarian body was formed in late November 1867—when the Tory Derby was still Prime Minister, and Gladstone had yet formally to adopt disestablishment as a way of tactically undermining Disraeli. Called the Central Protestant Defence Association (CPDA), it was an exclusively lay, pan-Protestant league intended to fight on a broad anti-Revolutionary, pro-Establishment front. Building a network of local groups across Ireland, the cream of the ultra-Protestant wing of the Irish Tories soon joined: the 'bible gentry' Lord Farnham and the Earls of Bandon, Roden, Enniskillen, and Erne,[263] and MPs Sir Benjamin Lee Guinness, Henry Bruen, Edward Wingfield Verner, Mervyn Archdall, Thomas Conolly, Edward Verner, Anthony Lefroy, Dennis Pack Beresford, Ion Trant Hamilton, Henry Cole, and most other prominent Irish Anglican names.[264] Even Sir Frederick Heygate, who did not attend Hillsborough, found himself growing closer to their camp over the Government's application of the Party Procession Act. He complained that 'it really does amount to one law for the Protestants & another for the R. Catholics….it has really now come to this that it will be impossible any longer to support a government which appears to look with different eyes on Roman Catholic and Protestant issues.' Northerners 'are really rocked by a sense of injustice'.[265] The *Express* underscored the issue of governance, 'regarding the stimulating of our languishing industry and the development of our resources as much more consonant with justice and reason than the spoliation of the Irish Church, the confiscation of the rights of Irish landlords'.[266]

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[263] Irene Whelan, 'The Bible Gentry: Evangelical Religion, Aristocracy, and the New Moral Order in the Early Nineteenth Century' in Crawford Gribben and Andrew R. Holmes (ed.), *Protestant Millennialism, Evangelicalism, and Irish Society, 1790-2005* (Basingstoke, 2006).
[264] *IT* 30th November, 20th December 1867; *BNL*, 2nd December 1867; *Times* 7th February 1868.
[265] Heygate to Lord Mayo, 11th, 15th December 1867, NLI Ms.43845/5.
[266] *DE*, 23rd December 1867.

Even the Liberal *Pall Mall Gazette* emphasised the CPDA's markedly Parliamentary nature, commenting on its rapidly gaining 'the adhesion of influential Irish Conservatives' and their particular attempts to recruit MPs.[267] Deliberate attempts to distance itself from the Orange Order, despite shared membership, confirmed its essentially Parliamentary character. Later it even went so far as to expel people from one of its meetings for waving orange handkerchiefs.[268] However much it might draw on the Conservative ranks, though, it had an uneasy relationship with Tory officialdom. They asked R.R. Warren, MP for Dublin University and Irish Attorney-General to speak at one of their early meetings, and he decided it was inappropriate for him given his 'official position', although he still supported their efforts.[269] This sort of campaigning association was far from an extension of Tory governmental policy, and the inability of Warren to join underscores their political independence. Indeed, one of their local meetings opened with a rector describing a battle between Orangeism and the Government, and how because of it they could no longer look to England for protection. The *Irish Times* commended the large number of influential names who had already adhered to the Association, and predicted it would soon be the most influential public body in Ireland.[270]

The Association's dedication to Presbyterian-Anglican cooperation would have certainly made the Irish High Church nervous. Pan-protestantism, although politically useful, was, to them, theologically destructive. However, their agenda forced internal dissension, the Church's tendency to self-police their own liturgical politics. At this critical moment, the ritualist services of Arthur Dawson in St. Bartholomew's prompted Trench to send his cousin into the church and write a

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[267] *PMG* (*PMG*), 26th December 1867.
[268] *Times*, 6th March 1868.
[269] R.R. Warren to Mayo, 25th January, 1st February 1868, Warren to I.T. Hamilton, 1st February 1868, copy, NLI Ms.43859/1.
[270] *IT*, 2nd, 7th January 1868.

lengthy appraisal, detailing every aspect of the service that might spark evangelical disquiet. The Archbishop confessed that 'I am pretty nearly sick of being dragged at Dawson's heels through the dirt of an Irish riot'.[271] The political meanings in the liturgy forced this, and would only increase with the development of national politics and the reaction of England.

Indeed, in January 1868, the leading English Broadchurchman F.D. Maurice published an article squarely condemning the Irish Church as an anti-national result of English work, damning the Church's foundations.[272] Unsurprisingly, the *Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette* outlined a 'determined crusade against the Church in Ireland'. The *Gazette* tended towards High Church sympathies, yet in this instance its political analysis was completely aligned with the demotic aspects of politicised Protestantism usually associated with militant evangelicals. It reminded its readers that Fenianism had more of an influence on the Church question 'than is commonly supposed.' But most importantly, the Church's enemies—English Nonconformists, Ultramontanists, Gladstonians—planned the total abolition of the Irish establishment, not any redress of inequalities or anomalies. Furthermore, the matter would be settled in England, not Ireland. Which ever side won the most English seats 'in the Reformed House of Commons' would triumph—and the emphasis on Reform was also telling, an interpretation supported in the *Irish Times*.[273]

What was, for them, a unique and cherished Irish institution would be subjected to the assaults of British forces, campaigning on wider British issues. Soon the *Freeman* published a telling suggestion of all Irish MPs meeting together, in Ireland. Yet the anonymous writer of this letter claimed that '[a]s a loyalist, as a

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[271] Trench to Cooke Trench, 29th December 1867, RCBL Ms.327/1/74, Cooke Trench to Trench, 29th December 1867, RCBL Ms.327/2/4.
[272] F.D. Maurice, 'The Irish Church Establishment', *Contemporary Review*, vol.7, no.1 (January, 1868), pp.54-66.
[273] *IEG*, 18th January 1868, *IT* 10th, 11th January 1868.

unionist, I think they should not hesitate now to occupy, as it were, the position of mediator, if they still believe the maintenance of the Union and the preservation of the country are not incompatible with the prosperity of the country and the happiness of its inhabitants.' Later 'A Northern Protestant' published, in an other edition, the idea of organising an elected regional assembly, to moderate between the Irish population and Parliament—he modeled it directly on the Irish Commons.[274]

Simultaneously, the CPDA issued an 'Address to the Protestants of Ireland'. The present was 'a crisis unparalleled even in the dark and troubled history of our country', and the course of the century's politics suggested the current trouble was merely the most recent instance of a perpetual link between Catholicism and revolution. United action between all Irish Protestant denominations was the only way to preserve Britain's unique civil liberty in the face of a 'sacerdotal conspiracy', currently encouraged by a Conservative British government.[275] The *Times* reported the CPDA's attempt to form 'a complete organization of the Protestant party' by creating branch associations, and noted its prominent patrician tone.[276] An *Irish Times* leader praising the Association continued that '[t]he abolition of the Protestant church would but prepare the way for the removal of every other Irish or national institution.'[277] Another meeting followed in early February. Held in Dublin, it contained delegates from every Irish county. Although the resolutions declared loyalty to the Union and Crown, they also contained more than a whiff of resentment at the treatment of Irish Protestants under this system. A constant theme in the meeting's motions was that Ireland was being treated as a separate

[274] *FJ*, 16th, 20th January 1868.
[275] *IT*, 20th January 1868; *BNL*, 22nd January 1868.
[276] *Times*, 6th, 7th, 13th February 1868.
[277] *IT*, 31st January 1868.

country, and denied the benefit of the Union itself.[278] This returned to the 1840s, when many nationally-minded Tories, including Isaac Butt, reacted to the Famine with similar sentiments. Another pamphlet echoed this principle, warning England that the meetings at Hillsborough and Dublin proved, to the Irish, that they needed to trust their own associations alone:

> Time was when every Protestant in Ireland was a warm supporter of the Union…We are not without fear lest that time is well nigh past, and that ardour is becoming cold among the lower classes in the North….They might well ask what service the Union had ever done….How can the proposed measure add to the loyalty of Irish Protestants, who think they are entitled to what it will snatch away, and who are already deeply, though silently, discontented?

It luridly held out the spectre of a Protestant counterweight to the Fenians, contending through the island. [279]

In late February 1868 Disraeli succeeded Derby as Prime Minister. On 2nd and 3rd March, key civil servants suggested Disraeli remove the Irish Church's endowment, and the Cabinet decided to delay the issue.[280] Cairns worried that '[i]f Gladstone & his friends…go for complete disendowment of every body, they may catch voluntaries, radicals, & anti-popery men, & make a formidable phalanx.'[281] When the Commons debated the Conservatives' Irish policy in mid-March, the Tories lost badly.[282] The *Irish Times* savaged the prospect of the Government's abandoning the Church with proposed concurrent endowment.[283] Indeed, Whiteside immediately alerted Humphrey Lloyd, Provost of Trinity College, 'I have a gloomy opinion of the future of our Irish Church from the miserable defence made for it by our representatives[.]'[284] In response to the debate, Disraeli consulted

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[278] *IEG*, 20th February 1868; *Report of the Proceedings of the Central Protestant Defence Association, and of the Great Public Meeting Held in The Rotundo, Dublin, on Wednesday, 5th of February, 1868* (Dublin, 1868).
[279] 'A Lover of Peace', *The Irish Establishment and Irish Discontent* (Dublin, 1868).
[280] P.M.H. Bell, *Disestablishment in Ireland and Wales*, pp.72-4.
[281] Cairns to Disraeli, 2nd March 1868, Bodl.Ms.Dep.Hughenden/91/1,fols.39-42.
[282] *Hansard,* HC Deb., 12th, 13th, 16th March 1868, vol. 190 cc1459-549,1595-675,1698-292.
[283] *IT*, 13th March 1868.
[284] Whiteside to H. Lloyd, 19th March 1868, TCD Ms.3487, pp.21-2.

Cairns, and their tactical thinking would hardly encourage Cairns' fellow churchmen in Ireland. Disraeli took Gladstone's devastation of their government in the debates as an opportunity, if they fought on British lines and disavowed the Irish Church itself:

> I think we ought to hold, that the whole question of national Establishments is now raised; that the Irish Ch. is but a small portion of the question; & that those who wish to demolish it, must be held to desire the abolition of national Establishments in the three kingdoms. But we must detach the Irish Ch. as much as possible from the prominent portion of the subject, for, there is no doubt, it is not popular.[285]

Gladstone duly followed the debate by submitting a notice that the Irish Church should be disestablished, confirming the Anglican fears of the past year.[286] From the first instance of Gladstone's electoral positioning, the Tories were more concerned with long-term political coalescence, not the Church itself.

Indeed, the *Gazette* wisely grasped this from the Parliamentary debates alone, lamenting that the Church of Ireland would become 'the chief battle-cry of contending parties; and from such a conflict, whatever the party who retains office may gain, the Church is almost sure to lose much.'[287] Gerald Fitzgibbon, a leading Irish Tory and Freemason, took a similar line and further complained they were being denied the benefits of the Union. He also explained this current crisis through extensive accounts of the politics of the 1830s.[288] Irish Anglicans would have to rely on their own power, which William Emery, archdeacon of Ely, recognised when, in the middle of the Commons debates, he advised J.R. Garstin that '[i]f Parliament do not force this year a change or abolition, the Church Congress in Dublin may be of use & a turning point for good.'[289] At this stage, Irish Anglican apologetics emphasised the Establishment, to steel an uncertain British

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[285] Disraeli to Cairns, 19th March 1868, NA Ms.PRO/30/51/15/1/6.
[286] *Hansard,* HC Deb., 23rd March 1868, vol. 191 cc32-5.
[287] *IEG*, 20th March 1868.
[288] Gerald Fitzgibbon, *Ireland in 1868, the Battlefield for English Party Strife; its Grievances, Remedies: Confined to the Church Question* (London, 1868).
[289] William Emery to Garstin, 14th March 1868, RCBL Ms.14/18.

public. William Alexander, bishop of Derry, told an English audience (and readership) that disestablishment was more an attack on religion than on Establishments.[290] Even though W.C. Magee reiterated nationally-conditioned visions of the Irish Church 'protesting for Irish life against the anti-national despotism of Rome', he still warned that 'Democracies sweep clean and sweep fast', further grounding disestablishment in Reform.[291] This won the approval of the *Irish Times*, and was more than apposite, as the Irish Reform League formally adopted disestablishment as part of its programme.[292] This strain of rhetoric pushed the debate into a more substantive direction, beyond the details of one election. It reaffirmed the importance the eventual result would have on Ireland's role within the Union, and a future redefinition of the British constitution.

When, in late March and early April, the Commons voted to form a committee to reexamine the Church of Ireland the debate began with Stuart Knox having the Fifth Article of the Act of Union read aloud.[293] Dufferin predicted that this committee would inevitably lead to disestablishment.[294] When Cairns wrote Disraeli a series of long memoranda on the Irish Church question in April, he worked through the constitutional ramifications—yet he did not consider the Church of Ireland's own concerns. Cairns worried that disestablishment would fundamentally alter the nature of the royal prerogative, and the relationship between Parliament and the Monarchy. He suggested the Tories base their opposition on this functionalist argument, not any concerns for the Church itself, or even the Union.[295] Disraeli's private secretary, Montague Lowry Corry,

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290 [William Alexander], *"Jerusalem Which Now Is." A Sermon Preached at St. Michael's, Cambridge, on Thursday Evening, March 26th, 1868* (London, 1868).
291 W.C. Magee, 'The Irish Church Establishment—A Reply to Professor Maurice', *Contemporary Review*, vol.7, no.3 (March, 1868), pp.429-45.
292 *IT*, 2nd, 20th March 1868.
293 *Hansard* HC Deb., 30th March, 2nd, 3rd April 1868, vol. 191 cc469-556,709-97,837-946.
294 *IT*, 9th April 1868.
295 Cairns to Disraeli, 11th, 20th April 1868, Bodl.Ms.Dep.Hughenden/91/1,fols.59-70,74-89.

confidently assured him that an election fought on Protestant lines would return a majority to the Conservatives, and that not all Liberals were ready to follow Gladstone's plans for the Irish Church.[296] They ignored the 'great concourses of working men' who flocked to disestablishmentarian meetings across Scotland and the north of England between April and June.[297]

William Fitzgerald fumed to Alexander Irwin that it would have been easy for the bishops to decide a plan 'after some hours conversation in a room at Bilton's behind closed doors'. For the past year everyone knew 'this attack would be made', and yet the bishops had done nothing towards joint consultation.[298] Even Charles Longley, archbishop of Canterbury, complained of Irish episcopal inactivity.[299] Yet it seems clear that as early as spring 1868 the English and Irish camps diverged. Irish Anglicans thought in terms of saving their Church, British politicians thought in terms of the Establishment. The PDA held a blizzard of meetings across Ireland, and began to extend their efforts to England,[300] putting the prelates' inactivity under even more scrutiny and pressure.

There does not appear to have been much contact between the Irish Bench and the Conservatives at this stage, although Lords Longford and Erne were in touch with Disraeli and Longley. There was no direct communication (or at least none preserved) between the Prime Minster and the head of the Anglican Communion about disestablishment when Gladstone first started his Parliamentary machinations.[301] Trench reported to Wilberforce that they would refuse 'Dizzy's proposal—namely a starved & cut down Establishment which will

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296 M. Lowry Corry to Disraeli, 14th April 1868, Bodl.Ms.Dep.Hughenden/94/1,fols.136-9.
297 Eugenio Biagini, *Liberalism, Retrenchment and Reform*, p.241; G.I.T. Machin, *Politics and the Churches in Great Britain, 1832-1868*, pp.368-9.
298 Fitzgerald to Irwin, 14th April 1868, PRONI Ms. DIO4/10/5/58.
299 Charles Longley to Wilberforce, 18th April 1868, Bodl.Ms.Wilberforce.c.16,fols.79-80.
300 *IT*, 6th April 1868.
301 Longford to Disraeli, Longley to Erne, forwarded to Disraeli, 6th, 17th April 1868, Bodl.Ms.Dep.Hughenden/134/3,fols.31,37-8; Beresford forwarding address to Disraeli, 25th April 1868, Bodl.Ms.Dep.Hughenden/118/4,fols.67-8.

leave all cause of irritations existing still.' They would fight, and if they lost, would reject 'the process of gradual starvation to which D'Israeli wd. submit us, to go in for instant death at the hands of Gladstone that death being one out of which a new life might spring.'[302] Similarly, at a Cork clerical meeting, over 120 clergyman of all shades of political opinion agreed that they should press for autonomy and 'no petty Establishment'.[303] A meeting in St. James' Hall, with the platform dominated by the episcopate and nobility of both countries, defended the connection of Church and State, even if the *Times* thought the mostly-clerical attendance undermined the gathering's value.[304]

Despite the public, British, show of support for the wider constitutional aspects of the debate, Magee still described their immediate demand as 'absolute self government' if they were disestablished. In contrast, 'a large body of our English Brethren & totality of the English Bishops are now nervously anxious to preserve the Irish Establishment at almost any cost or risk to the Irish Church in consequence of the danger they now forsee (sic) to the English Establishment from our Dis-Establishment.'[305] Similarly, Trench and Beresford decided to fight disendowment entirely, without negotiating.[306] William Fitzgerald's frustration with a lack of direction from the Archiepiscopal leadership was justified—whilst Beresford and Trench floated plans for committees and sent letters to English bishops, the Protestant Defence Association were galvinising Anglican ire. Furthermore, they were taking the resistance in a direction that worried High Churchmen like Fitzgerald, Beresford, and Trench. Rather than organise a specific opposition to Gladstone, they fomented Anglican-Presbyterian solidarity as part of a broader re-alignment of Irish Protestant priorities.

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[302] Trench to Wilberforce, 18th April 1868, Bodl.Ms.Wilberforce.c.6/2,fols.194-7.
[303] Magee to MacDonnell, 3rd May 1868, *Life of Magee*, p.179.
[304] *Times*, 7th May 1868; *IT* 7th, 8th May 1868.
[305] Bodl.Ms.Wilberforce.c.16,fols.81-3. Emphasis original. This letter was written by W.C. Magee to 'My Dear Lord Archbishop' and forwarded to Wilberforce.
[306] Trench to T. Cooke Trench, 20th May 1868, RCBL Ms.327/1/88.

Charles Leslie, a senior Kilmore clergyman of a prominent Monaghan Orange family, was involved in Defence Association meetings in Cavan. According to his report to Beresford, three or four thousand people met in Cavan town on 20th May to hear speeches and letters of support from William Brooke, the Hon. Cavendish Butler, Edward Saunderson, and Lord Farnham: a seasoned politician who used evangelicalism as an electoral rallying cry in the similar politics of the 1830s and 40s.[307] Importantly, beyond the content of the meeting, the crowd were pleased with its having taken place at all, with some kind of organised resistance. A second meeting at Cootehill a few days later was even more successful, with a reported five thousand attending. Leslie crowed that 'the perfect applomb (sic), the cool self-possession of these men, & the feeling and facility of expression' would scupper Wilberforce's views of Ireland and the Low Church. Again, the simple act of organising like this was encouraging.[308] The overtones of these meetings were clear—the political magnates were organising with local clergy to support a growing evangelical cohesion between Low Anglicans and Nonconformists. They shared anti-High Church, and thus, in this context, anti-English feelings, and directed this at the British political establishment, with a pride in a uniquely Irish political organisation.

The Protestant Defence Association sent their own deputation of nobles and notables to meet Disraeli and present him with a petition in June, as proof that they were prepared to 'die hard'.[309] Some of the clergy were not so committed, however. The Church of Ireland Junior Clerical Society heard a revealingly-titled paper from the Rev. G.R. Wynne on 'The Internal Weakness and Strength of the Irish Church Establishment'.[310] The emphasis on the Church's 'internal' abilities was telling. With disestablishment looming, the clergymen with their careers still before them re-

[307] PRONI Ms.D3975/C/5
[308] Charles Leslie to Beresford, 21st, 25th May 1868, CUL Ms.Add.9407/3/108,108ii,109.
[309] *Times*, 9th, 10th June 1868.
[310] RCBL Ms.142/1, 3rd, 4th June 1868.

appraised the nature of Church governance. The two sides could possibly fuse, however. Trench organised a meeting with trusted laymen and clerics to write a petition to Parliament; Lord Erne suggested using the CPDA. W.C. Plunket advanced the idea of reanimating their vestigial diocesan synods as a way of incorporating the laity into the Church's political response.[311]

Despite this activity, Connop Thirlwall, bishop of St. David's, wrote to the Rev. Lord Arthur Hervey to deny that Irish disestablishment would hurt the Church of England. Hervey claimed that the Irish Church was 'actually a bulwark, and source of strength', when Thirlwll saw it as 'a burden and a weakness, to the Church of England'. Yet Thirlwall concluded that 'the fate of the established Church of England depends on the prevailing disposition of Parliament, and then again on the prevailing disposition of the public mind….That the hostility will be stronger and more dangerous, if the Irish Church should be…disestablished—seems to me, as I have said a simple paradox.[312] Thirlwall thought sacrificing the Church of Ireland would assuage the demotic opposition to the Church of England's establishment.

However, by the first week of June Cairns conceded that they needed to fight an election.[313] Disraeli's preparations traded on the symbolism of ecclesiastical positions. He installed the noted Antrim-born evangelical and slated Congress speaker Hugh McNeile as dean of Ripon. Lowry Corry assured Disraeli that this appointment would be 'the one which is most likely to unite all branches of the Low Church Party in your support.' [314] Disraeli then moved William Connor Magee to the see of Peterborough. However, Magee received the fateful letter 'with a feeling of surprise amounting almost to dismay….I tremble at the awful responsibilities &

[311] Courtown to J.T. O'Brien, 7th June 1868, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/5.
[312] Connop Thirlwall to Lord Arthur Hervey, Bodl.Ms.Eng.lett.c.297, fols.243-8.
[313] Cairns to Disraeli, 1st, 5th June 1868, Sir Joseph Napier to Disraeli, ND, Bodl.Ms.Dep.Hughenden/91/1,fols.97-100, 101-2.
[314] Disraeli to Lowry Corry, 14th, 22nd August, Lowry Corry to Disraeli, 14th August 1868, Bodl.Ms.Dep.Hughenden/95/1, fols.24-5,38-9; 94/1,fols.142-5

difficulties of it, especially for an Irish man.'[315] He was expected to be instrumental in fighting disestablishment, despite confessing to Trench in early April he thought that battle already lost.[316]

Disraeli suggested to the Viceroy, the Marquess of Abercorn, that he thought they should make an Englishman dean of Cork to replace Magee. He somehow felt this would strengthen the government's position for the elections, and that 'an English appointment might seem, & serve, as a fresh proof & instance of the identity of [the] two Churches.'[317] William Alexander suggested Alfred T. Lee for the Cork deanery as 'his pamphlets [have] been the basis of the best speeches in defence of the Irish Establishment'. Lord O'Neill echoed this, arguing that Lee's work had 'contributed much to a reaction of opinion in England with respect to the Irish Church Establishment'. His promotion was an excellent electoral tactic.[318] Abercorn had made Lee his domestic chaplain in 1866, but did not promote him to the deanery—Irish Churchmen felt that, as an Englishman and possibly High Church, he was not sufficiently anti-Ritualist for Irish tastes.[319]

The chief Irish antidisestablishmentarian cliques had little actual sympathy with some general trends in English politics or churchmanship. They used the struggle to remain united with the Church of England as a way of pursuing distinctly Irish agendas. The group fighting disestablishment for anti-revolutionary reasons—the CPDA—did so without any British connection, campaigning independently, and venting considerable anger over English churchmanship and politics at their meetings. The other, more clerical, party tried to revive Synods and create an opportunity for the laity and junior clergy to influence the Church's

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[315] Magee to J. H. Jellett, 7th October 1868, RCBL Ms.205/1.
[316] Trench to T. Cooke Trench, 8th April 1868, RCBL Ms.327/1/82.
[317] Disraeli to Abercorn, 9th, 13th October 1868, PRONI Ms.T2541/VR/252,257.
[318] William Alexander to Abercorn, 15th October 1868, Lord O'Neill to Abercorn, 16th, 17th October 1868, PRONI Ms.T2541/VR/260,262,264.
[319] Sir Charles Lanyon to Abercorn, 19th October 1868, A.T. Lee to Taylor, forwarded to Abercorn, 24th October 1868, PRONI Ms.T2541/VR/267,271; Magee to Wilberforce, 13th October 1868, Bodl.Ms.Wilberforce.c.16, fols.98-101.

leadership. This would change the Church's ability to influence politics, beyond its internal governance. As one rector complained: 'Who knows or cares what we, as a Church, think? The landed interest is consulted: so, also, are the manufacturing and commercial interests: the Roman Catholic Church speaks, and statesmen lend an attentive ear: the Presbyterians are also heard: but what voice does the Reformed Church of Ireland utter?' The Church's political and spiritual life was equally weak 'because she has no organization'; the two problems of political impotence and a lack of internal discussion shared the same cause.[320] The idea was legally contentious: Magee fumed that '[t]hose lawyers are strangling the Synod with red tape.' The idea died by August.[321]

The polemicist who called for a 'Protestant League' in 1867 did so to compensate for the political weakness created by the absence of internal governance: 'The part assigned to us is the idle one of spectators, when the fitting time comes...we may be invited to be present at the final consummation, but it will be only as witnesses—to look on, while the sacrifice is offered by the expectant rulers to their policy of self-expediency.' This was, again, a rejection of the English Churchmanship—despite Ireland's historic reverence, the present Church of England was too divided and conflicted for Irish tastes.[322] Richard Nugent told Disraeli there were numerous Liberal Protestants ready to support him, but were prevented by the rumours of the state's paying Catholic priests through concurrent endowment. He further fumed about the internal divisions in the Church of Ireland, and the impediments they caused.[323] Trench's visitation stressed similar points—their attempt to use a synod to counteract Parliament, within the expected

[320] H.W. Stewart, *Diocesan Synods: A Paper* (Dublin, 1868).
[321] Magee to MacDonnell, 11th June, 8th, 20th, 21st July, 8th August 1868, *Life of Magee*, pp.181-2, 184-5; *IEG*, 19th August 1868.
[322] 'J.H.B.', *An Address to the Members of the Established Church in Ireland.*
[323] Richard Nugent to Disraeli, 25th August 1868, Bodl.Dep.Hughenden/138/1, fols.136-41.

defence of the Church.[324] William Fitzgerald also resented how 'we can not stand with dignity as long as we are persistently denied a liberty of talk granted to the English Provinces.'[325] The Church Congress, which met in early October 1868, encapsulated this strand of thought.

It confronted the picture of the Church as a remote, elitist institution. In his sermon, Magee developed the metaphor of a net binding closer unity between both the Church and its laity, and the English and Irish Churches. He also raged 'that whatever fate befalls the Irish Church, it may not die that most inglorious and agonising death of all—"*asphyxiation by lawyers*".'[326] Magee's close friend J.C. MacDonnell, dean of Cashel, also argued they were not the Church of the rich alone—according to him, a rector often would not even know many of the landowners of his parish, and charitable contributions came from 'struggling' residents.[327] The *Gazette* hailed the Congress as a triumph. It showcased the 'life and energy' in the Church, and undermined the critics who presented it as a dead institution. The *Gazette* also blamed English politicians of the Reformation who kept the Church 'poor and impoverished, crushed down by the State, and forbidden to preach to the Irish, or circulate the Scriptures amongst them in their native tongue,'[328] reviving the historical arguments and affirming their Irishness in the face of being robbed for Imperial policy and a British electorate. Soon Gladstone publicly the Church served 'to inflame religious animosity' in Ireland.[329]

On 11th November 1868 Parliament dissolved for a General Election. By then, Disraeli and Gladstone turned this into a referendum on the Irish Church. Although drawing its strength from the Irish Conservatives, the CPDA was

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[324] *IT*, 4th September 1868.
[325] Fitzgerald to O'Regan, 21st September 1868, TCD Ms.7243-6/702.
[326] W.C. Magee, 'The Breaking Net', *The Gospel and the Age: Sermons on Special Occasions* (London, 1884); *Life of Magee*, p.194.
[327] *Times*, 1st, 2nd October, 1868.
[328] *IEG*, 20th October 1868.
[329] *Times*, 24th October 1868.

independently active in the contest, trying to influence the elections in parallel to the Tory party. It campaigned in Lancashire despite its Irish membership:[330] in the bastion of both Radicalism and English Orangeism, and Gladstone's own constituency. Frustrated with the way both British parties handled Irish concerns, some constitutionally-conservative, establishmentarian Irishmen used their own political organisation in a General Election.

Also on the 11th, Trench called a meeting of an Archbishop's Consulting Committee on Irish Church Affairs, the first in a series of committees which led, both institutionally and intellectually, to the eventual governing system of the independent Church. This initially innocuous Consulting Committee transformed itself as the Church's chief venue for confronting and managing the political storm. Its debates and evolution are a crucial window into the rapidly-changing mindset of engaged Irish Anglicans at this watershed. As this first meeting also considered how to best gauge lay opinion, some of those present suggested using a recently-formed public association: the Lay and Clerical Association (LCA).[331] The LCA was an exclusively Anglican organisation, dedicated to fighting disestablishment, but using the fight to create greater lay and lower-clerical influence within the Church. Unsurprisingly, its leadership had significant crossover between the Consulting Committee.

Soon the Consulting Committee issued a private, printed notice requesting a joint lay-clerical committee 'for strengthening and completing the internal government of the Church, and for giving the Laity their rightful share in its Councils; and to collect information for this purpose respecting the constitution and working of other Churches.'[332] This was a tremendous declaration. It

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330 Richard W. Gamble, *The Protestant Endowed Churches: Shall They Be Sacrificed?* (Dublin, 1868); *Liverpool Mercury*, 13th January 1869.
331 RCBL, Un-catalogued General Convention Papers (GCP), Minute Book of the Archbishops' Consulting Committee (MACC), 11th, 14th November 1868.
332 TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/6.

committed the group formally convened to advise the Archbishops on how to best prevent a decisive change to the Church's governance with finding a way of altering that governance to include the laity. Within three days of Parliament's being dissolved for a General Election on the fate of the Irish Establishment its leading members were agitating for drastic change. The appeal to the laity, through a public association, quickly produced a radical demand for an inclusive, politically conscious Church. Immediately, it grew from the specific discussions about Synods that summer, but drew on the long-standing debates about synods and convocation (and bolstered the already-strong lay associational culture).

Yet Bishops Charles Graves and Robert Knox were notably absent from these meetings. Knox had long felt disestablishment and disendowment inevitable,[333] and his consultative diocesan meetings were a clear template. However, he supported Dufferin's disestablishment speech at the Social Science Association, and his Archdeacon of Down, Walter Mant, led a protest of clergyman against him.[334] The absence of Knox and Graves, the most notably Liberal members of the Irish Bench, demonstrated the emerging clique's colours. On 19th November the Committee heard that Trench and Beresford accepted the principle advocated by the Lay and Clerical Association, and provided a list of suitable names for the panel.[335] Trench was determined to fight for their interests, despite the election.[336]

However, Sir Joseph Napier, concerned about this trajectory, wrote to A.C. Tait, bishop of London, to encourage support for the PDA. He argued that '[t]he leading persons on the Defence Committee have been very earnest & I think they deserve to be supported. They have stimulated action of the useful kind'. Napier worried that the Irish Bench failed to recognise the broader political stakes, lamenting 'I do not think they appreciate adequately the nature of the objects of this

[333] R.B. McDowell, *The Church of Ireland*, p.31.
[334] *BNL*, 28th October 1867.
[335] RCBL, GCP, MACC, 19th November 1868.
[336] Trench to Wilberforce, 21st November 1868, Bodl.Ms.Wilberforce.c6/2, fols.202-7.

assault upon the Irish branch of the Church…they have not observed as they ought, the tendency of recent democratic development'.[337] On the other side, Magee was livid about the approach advocated by Napier and his set, calling it 'the last effort of the reactionary, no surrender, old Orange Puritan sect….They were bent on stifling the Lay and Clerical Society *which represent the Irish Church of the future*.'[338] Yet in a letter subsequently published in the *Times*, M.G. Beresford retreaded old issues, arguing that disestablishment would force emigration from the scattered, rural Anglican population. Families had 'the choice between apostasy and emigration.'[339] The emotive issue of emigration, and Protestant numbers deserting Ireland, had a controversial (albeit rooted) legacy.[340] The PDA, at least, was a strong symbol of resistance, and a distinctively Irish focus for the island's protestantism.

With disestablishment looming, the Irish antidisestablishmentarian camp was divided by fundamentally different interpretations of the crisis: a re-tread of historic, defining battles, or a chance to create a new, inclusive Church. Disraeli, their nominal champion, had barely engaged the Irish leadership on their views. These mentalities dominated the rest of the battle, and had been set early on. More importantly, the structure of political action was clear. The Church of Ireland divided into sparring public associations, with an unofficial consulting committee mediating both themselves, and Parliament.

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[337] Napier to Tait, ND, LPL Ms. Tait,vo.l.85,fols.185-185a,190-3. Napier's referring to the 'Defence Committee' was unambiguous. The panel convened by Trench was variously called the 'Archbishops' Committee', the 'Provost's House Committee', and the 'Consulting Committee'. The word 'defence' was never used for it.
[338] Magee to MacDonnell, 30th November 1868, emphasis original, *Life of Magee*, pp.204-5.
[339] Beresford to W.E. Gladstone, 23rd November 1868, British Library (BL) Adds.Ms.44416, fols.222-9; *Times*, 25th November 1868.
[340] Hobart Seymour, *My Experience in the Church of Ireland: A Letter To the Earl of Derby*, fifth edition (London, 1868).

II
Gladstone's Ascendancy
December 1868—April 1869

Gladstone won the election with an 110-seat majority. It was expected. The contest had properly begun with his rumbling Disraeli on Irish Church motions in March. 1868 was a single-issue election. Disraeli's choice to stand on general Protestant principles was a disaster. Despite his serious efforts to establish himself within Englishness,[341] the ethnically Jewish-Italian son of an intellectual, baptised for social convenience, was a suspect defender of traditional British Protestantism. During the campaign, however, Disraeli further alienated some of his potential support with the particularly crude interpretation of the Church he proffered to the electorate.[342]

The confident Tory election literature must have grated for Irish Anglicans. Even after the result, Conservative strategist Robert Baxter still felt that '[i]f England thus contains two-thirds of the population, two-thirds of the members [of Parliament], and twice the wealth, it is entitled to speak emphatically upon every great constitutional question. It is undoubtedly also the fairest field on which to test the result of the election in regard to the Irish Church.' He was confident, as the Conservatives had gained ground in England relative to the population. Disestablishment was only supported by the Celtic fringe.[343] This was clearly little consolation for the Irish. Given the result, it would seem that fairness lay with what the Church of Ireland saw as unjust theft, and the Tory future in utterly abandoning them.

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[341] J.P. Parry, 'Disraeli and England', *The Historical Journal*, vol.43, no.3 (September, 2000), pp.699-728.
[342] Richard Shannon, *The Age of Disraeli 1868-1881: The Rise of Tory Democracy* (London/New York, 1992), pp.52-9.
[343] Robert Baxter, *The Voice of the Country upon the Irish Church* (London, 1869).

In December a large number of the men nominated for the Archbishop's Committee met and agreed a series of governing rules.[344] By this point it is clear that what had begun as a kitchen cabinet for Trench and Beresford had snowballed into a panel of the most influential members of the Irish Church, both lay and clerical, structuring an imminent and inevitable confrontation with the British Government. Within this, they were discussing the future of lay influence (and thus quasi-voluntarism) as an inextricable aspect of the fight against separating the Church from the State (the essence of anti-voluntarism). But it was operating under the Archbishops' aegis and was the Church of Ireland's semi-official body confronting disestablishment. With its combination of senior ecclesiastics and prominent laymen it was a strange blend of civil society and a clerical conference. It was without question a smoke-filled room.

Lord Courtown felt the LCA and Consulting Committee were incompatible, and wrote to W.C. Plunket, a leader in both groups. Courtown described the LCA as 'antagonistic to the action of the Consulting Committee', even if the Association considered itself committed to a different sphere of action. Plunket replied that an Association automatically included a 'broader' range of individuals than a private committee. Furthermore, the Association numbered

> many members who, while…attached to our Church, & ready to do battle for it when the time comes for making terms as to its Endowment, are yet more or less unfavorable to a continuance of its state-connection. There are also many who…are opposed…to any policy of resistance which might needlessly protract the present struggle[.]

Most were concerned that decisions not be made 'behind their backs'.[345] Courtown conceded that the Consulting Committee might 'be suspected as having too clerical a bias', and that many would prefer 'some body of more popular origins'. But it would justify disestablishment by demonstrating how prepared they were. He was

[344] RCBL, GCP, MACC, 1st December 1868.
[345] Courtown to W.C. Plunket, Plunket to Courtown, 17th, 19th December 1868, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/11,13.

swayed by the line that the Lay and Clerical Association 'was intended to secure a position which wd. enable it to active independence...in the negotiations which are looked for after the disestablishment of the Church, if that event should take place.' This canny appraisal accepted the society's importance as a political mechanism, beyond its actual avowed policy. Consequently, J.T. O'Brien was determined to protect the Church from such bodies, as 'I can not look forward with any feeling short of dismay to the prospect of an Ecclesiastical Parliament[,] the qualification for seat in which...is the payment of 5s per an[num]'.[346] A self-constituted public society appointed itself an intellectual clearing house-cum-vanguard party for ecclesiastical reform within the Irish State Church. It revealed a new venue for political action, reflected in O'Brien's language. Like the Protestant Defence Association to which it was opposed, it created a new dimension in Irish Anglican political expression. Furthermore, it bolstered the nascent mood of self-government within the Church.

Gladstone became Prime Minister on 3rd December 1868. He began drafting the details of disestablishment on 17th and 18th December, and at the end of the month circulated plans to Chichester Fortescue, the Irish Chief Secretary, Lord Granville, Leader of the House of Lords, and the Irish Attorney General.[347] Immediately, he launched complex, triangulated deliberations with the Irish prelates. The issue was whether or not the Church of Ireland would negotiate the terms of disestablishment. Their response showed how important it was for the Irish archbishops to manage the laity's political anger. Gladstone and Trench tried to establish some kind of communication which would not compromise either; Trench and Beresford were keen to avoid any charges of 'acquiescence' whilst Gladstone preemptively declined to discuss 'adjustments'. They all agreed that in

[346] R.W. Hall Dare, O'Brien to Courtown, 26th, 28th December 1868, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/17,19.
[347] P.M.H. Bell, *Disestablishment in Ireland and Wales*, pp.112-3.

principle some method of communication was desirable, but felt constrained, as leaders of opposed blocs, from acting in a way that would be seen as collaborative.[348]

Gladstone intimated to Trench that the bill would be more or less severe in direct relation to the Church's hostility, implying if they did not attempt a Parliamentary fight they might be more generously treated.[349] Beresford's described Gladstone's position as: 'the measure is capable of mitigations if met by a compromise or surrender…of which it is not capable if carried after a strong resistance.'[350] However, Trench and Beresford recognised the whole country thought the imminent struggle involved principles far beyond the minutia of the Irish Church's eventual settlement. It was clear the bulk of the Church of Ireland wanted resistance, not collusion. The Archbishops would have lost clout and respect if they were seen to be working with Gladstone. At this point, they were not so much leading the Church as trying to tactfully manage an increasingly vociferous and self-confident body of laymen on whom their future (probably) rested. The limited nature of the correspondence was to be expected, but that it even took place was not.

Even more unexpected was an overture from Edward Stopford, archdeacon of Meath. He offered to consult with Gladstone on the details of the legislation he now accepted as inevitable. Stopford was a key member of the Lay and Clerical Association, and determined to prevent the Church question's being subsumed into a revival of Protestant politics. He approached Gladstone 'to withdraw the Church in Ireland from the arena of party conflict', preventing a struggle which 'will throw us back on a traditional system of Church defence which I have long disapproved

[348] Gladstone to Trench, 14th, 22nd December 1868, Trench to Gladstone, 15th, 24th December 1868, BL Adds.Ms.44417, fols.138-42,153-4,238-9,241.
[349] Gladstone to Trench, 23rd December 1868, NLI Ms.29810/14.
[350] Trench to Beresford, 17th December, Beresford to Gladstone, 21st December, Beresford to Trench, 26th Dec 1868, CUL Ms.Adds9407/3/71, 71ii, 71iii.

and which I wish now to be terminated. Such a measure might prolong a party conflict…with a view to take advantage of what may arise on other questions; to the great injury, I think, to the Church in Ireland.'[351] Similarly, William Atkins, dean of Ferns, also asked for a repeal of the Convention Act so they could be 'free of state control' and revive their synods, a principle echoed by James Byrne, dean of Clonfert, who felt that 'Irish Churchmen will expect…complete autonomy, & independence of State control', even if many in England opposed this.[352] A clutch of pragmatic senior Irish clergymen reminded the Prime Minister of their insouciance for English concerns and the belief that self-government was their right. They espoused the twinned ideas of removing the Church from a rough party fight, and restoring its self-government. It was not a large leap from that position, to seeing the autonomy of an Irish institution possible when removed from British politics. Those LCA-connected clerics who approached Gladstone did so to remove the CPDA's cause and avoid the confrontation they desired. However, even if both associations differed on whether or not to confront the Government (something of a pragmatist/idealist divide) they were entirely aligned in defending the autonomy and individuality of their Church—and through it their community.

The implications of this mood became clear through a dialogue between Wilberforce and Trench. Wilberforce urged him to compromise before any specific legislation was introduced. Trench refused, confident that Gladstone underestimated the task.[353] Wilberforce, however, suggested that even if they managed to restore Disraeli to power, he would merely cut the Church down, producing 'death by starvation'. Trench, forwarding this to Beresford, suggested they could be disowned 'by the larger body of the Clergy & Laity—as having no

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[351] Edward Stopford to Gladstone, 22nd, 26th December 1868, BL Adds.Ms.44417,fols.233-6,257-60.
[352] Atkins to Lavan, forwarded to Gladstone, 19th December 1868 BL Adds.Ms.44417,fols.201-6; James Byrne to Gladstone, 29th January 1869 BL Adds.Ms.44418,fols.225-30, emphasis original.
[353] Trench to Wilberforce, 28th December 1868, Bodl.Ms.Wilberforce.c6/2,fols.210-14.

authority to transact for them.'[354] So Trench replied to Wilberforce that any compromise 'wd. be disallowed by the larger number of clergy & laity—those who entered into disowned.' Any compromise 'wd. be regarded by the whole body of Irish Churchmen as a betrayal of their interests'.[355] Their chief stewards, the Archbishops, felt unable to quietly negotiate an advantageous settlement (which some senior clergy suggested to Gladstone himself) as the laity's politics demanded a vindication of their rights. This was expressed in candid correspondence, not public rhetoric or polemic, grounding its credibility.

Even Gladstone recognised the Church's confrontational mood when Cabinet refused a reconvened Convocation as an 'assembly' dedicated to 'resisting the measures they think essential for the public good.'[356] Despite the difficulties of navigating the hostile laity, Trench accepted that in the absence of Convocation they needed some practical structure to hand. His response was to suggest the clergy influence churchwarden elections at the Easter Vestries, picking men who were 'the most intelligent & and those that wd. carry most weight; that so if these were made suddenly' into a body entrusted with 'the welfare of the Church, there might be something like a lay machinery ready to hand',[357] transforming honorific posts into a new structure.

The CPDA passed a motion 'that any suggestion taking for granted the disestablishment and disendowment of the Established Church in Ireland cannot be looked upon in any other light than as sanctioning the proceedings of the enemies of Protestantism.' W.C. Plunket retorted that the CPDA equated discussion of the Bill with its acceptance, proving the need for 'some more authorized system

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[354] Trench to Beresford, 2nd January 1869, copy Wilberforce to Trench, 30th December 1868, CUL Ms.Add.9407/3/72,72ii-iii.
[355] Trench to Wilberforce, 5th, 11th January 1869, Bodl.Ms.Wilberforce.c.6/2,fols.227-32, 235-9.
[356] Gladstone to Trench, Trench to Gladstone, 14th, 18th January 1869, BL Adds.Ms.44418, fols.149,169-70.
[357] Trench to Beresford, 15th January 1869, CUL Ms.Adds9407/3/77,77ii-v.

of Church representation (lay as well as clerical), through which the voice of the Church generally might make itself heard'.[358] The self-confidence and assertiveness of the Church of Ireland grassroots was more than an 'obstacle'.[359] It hamstrung the Archbishops—proudly rejecting crumbs from the English political table was more important to the majority of Irish Anglicans than securing an advantageous financial settlement. But because of that, the Church had to gamble on the energy and ability of the normally moribund House of Lords to stop a triumphant House of Commons. They were unaware that Gladstone had presented the Queen with a sketch of his plans on 23rd January, and emphasised how Irish disestablishment would 'shelter from assault the fabric of the established Church in England, and the ties which connect that fabric to the State'.[360] Even the Tory Lords could presumably support that.

Additionally, W.C. Magee tried to convince Wilberforce of the weakness of the 'moderate' clique. Although he agreed with Wilberforce that compromise was wiser than pointless resistance, making public these views would 'estrange' too many. On 1st February 1869 Charles Graves wrote to Wilberforce as well, urging him to stay quiet. Any whiff of 'capitulation' from a bishop 'believing that he was strictly doing his duty as a Patron of the Church, and a true Patriot… would provoke a violent reaction. The passive resistance of many would be converted into an active and envenomed hostility.' Graves insisted that the opposition to disestablishment grew from its being 'calculated to establish a Roman Catholic Ascendancy[,] endangering the integrity of the Empire'. Already, 'there is just now a good deal of suppressed murmurings against the Bishops'.[361] Indeed, William Maziere Brady, a rare ordained Irish Anglican supporter of disestablishment complained that 'the

[358] *DE*, 12th January 1869.
[359] P.M.H. Bell, *Disestablishment in Ireland and Wales*, pp.123-5.
[360] Quoted in J.C. Beckett, 'Gladstone, Queen Victoria, and the Disestablishment of the Irish Church, 1868-9', *Irish Historical Studies*, vol.13, no.49 (March, 1962), pp.38-47
[361] Magee, Graves to Wilbeforce, 28th January, 1st February 1869, Bodl.Ms.Wilberforce.c.16,fols.182-3, 186-9.

Protestant Defence people are not for Religion or for the Church. They prefer revolution & bloodshed and don't hesitate to whisper that this must end in civil war.'[362]

Tait, now Archbishop of Canterbury, stressed to Beresford that whatever the Irish Bench did, the most important goal was maintaining the 'intimate union' with Church of England, and cautioned against involving the laity.[363] However, the Irish Bench of Bishops met on 3rd February, and issued a temperate declaration that, in the absence of Convocation, they would work with the laity to fight disestablishment. However, the very next day the CPDA held their inaugural annual meeting. The Earl of Bandon, in the chair, complained about British misgovernance. Ireland was underdeveloped and the economy stagnant; the Government should work to improve it, instead of reviving religious animosity. He knew from his own time in the Commons that majorities could be overturned. The report of their year's activity claimed that 316,373 individuals had signed their petitions to Parliament. The Association reiterated its determination to remain active, commending the spirit of joint lay-clerical meetings against disestablishment.[364]

Perhaps influenced by this, Robert Knox publicly dissented from the Bench's pro-laity declaration, arguing the Church should look not for a fight but 'what is best calculated to secure her financial stability'.[365] It is revealing that Knox considered any measure to incorporate the laity into this process would imbue it with a sense of resistance and hostility. Importantly, both 'moderates' and the highly-political CPDA, both evangelicals and High Churchman were adamant about involving the laity in opposing disestablishment. Furthermore, although the two

[362] W. Maziere Brady to Gladstone, 29th January 1869, BL Adds.Ms.44418, fols.208-15.
[363] Tait to Bresford, 1st February 1869, CUL Ms.Add.9407/2/25; copy LPL Ms.Tait.87, fols.50-1.
[364] *IT*, 4th February 1869.
[365] *PMG*, 6th February 1869.

sides differed on the political tinges of this involvement, nobody thought lay involvement could be anything other than political. This was partly the direct result of their anger, but more importantly it was also a recognition of the political meaning already present in the lay associational culture.

On 8th February senior members of the English and Irish Benches met at Lambeth. Trench explained why they would not negotiate with Gladstone. Magee, the Irishman newly-consecrated an English bishop, urged that compromise with Gladstone was preferable to an uncertain life under the untrustworthy Disraeli. Charles Graves, Samuel Butcher, and William Alexander reminded the English Bench of 'the jealously watchful laity and the imperative necessity of doing nothing to alienate them with a view to future reconstruction.' The English bishops urged the Irish to accept the inevitable and negotiate, preempting any chance the laity's dark mood would be enshrined through vestry elections. Beresford flatly felt that they could not concede, and accepted that the elections in the imminent Easter Vestries might produce a radical, organised laity.[366] Lord Carnarvon's working notes on the situation, considering negotiations from the Church's point of view, accepted that any talks with Gladstone might 'alienate [the] "no surrender" party'. He felt if they were to be disestablished anyway, there was no danger in resistance.[367]

Magee met with the Queen following this meeting, explaining the rival camps' mentalities. Her office approached the government to protest about the imminent treatment of the Irish Church. They said Victoria 'feels more & more the importance of not allowing it, if possible to prevent it, to be made the subject of fierce & acrimonious contention, both in & out of Parlt.' However, Granville responded that Gladstone had tried to approach and negotiate with the Church as

[366] Magee to MacDonnell, 10th February 1869, *Life of Magee*, pp.215-18.
[367] BL Adds.Ms.60820, f.85.

soon as they formed a Government, but were spurned. He had heard from Magee that any offer they made would be rejected by the Irish Church themselves.[368]

In many ways the laity were a larger concern than the government. The Irish Bench spurned the help offered by the Church of England's hierarchy at the Lambeth meeting because it would be rejected by their own members. Trench and Beresford refused to negotiate with Gladstone and confidentially secure their Church's financial future because they had to maintain influence in Ireland, and so keep up the public front of not deigning to talk to the Church's enemy. However, Trench did attempt to reach Gladstone through a secret, back-door intermediary. Crucially, though, the reasons for doing so were not just to gain a decent settlement. It was to manage disestablishment in a way that defused the laity's anger, and stymied the long-term consequences of a politicised Church body.

Trench had dinner on 10th February with Roundell Palmer (a preeminent Liberal lawyer who declined a post in Gladstone's cabinet because of his opposition to disestablishment) and Lord Carnarvon, one of the most influential Conservatives in the House of Lords. With Trench's approval, Palmer wrote to Gladstone the next day, summarising the conversation. Palmer explained that no-one would 'acquiesce' in their own disestablishment. But if certain guarantees were made, it might be possible to carry the legislation 'without a dangerous struggle, and permanent evil consequence'. Trench suggested that the Church retain its non-Episcopal endowments and property. He also asked for time to allow the Church to create its own government, with lay representation through a 'National Synod'. Ultimately, they wanted complete freedom of the Church from the state, as with other 'un-established Churches'.[369] Not surprisingly, Trench felt the laity would be assuaged only with financial and organisational control solely in Irish hands. The Church's

[368] Lord Grey to Lord Granville, draft of Granville to Grey, 10th, 13th February 1869, NA Ms.PRO.30/29/22A/8, fols.17-19, 21-27.
[369] Memorandum dated 11th February, 1869, LPL Ms.Selborne.1863, fols.206-9.

leadership was caught between English insouciance and their own fear of confrontation with the Anglican lower classes. The Rev. J.W. Blakerley regretted Gladstone's 'rallying the Liberal party under the flag of Irish disestablishment',[370] but looked forward to the rest of the Government's programme, so counseled Tait that '[t]his is just the time when golden silence is preferable to silver speech.'[371]

In Ireland, these concerns dominated the Archbishop's Committee. Their attempts to move away from the No Surrender camp, and towards the clericalist moderates, eventually produced a system of representation which, ironically, had radical organisational potential. At this stage the Church was conscious of a paradox in their position. Any representative meeting or conference that made an effective show of opposing the government would, in some ways, also undermine their case by showing the Church as well-organised and capable of managing itself. Furthermore, it mapped out for the nationalist blocs a successful way of countering the British Government. The opposition to disestablishment widened political action, as the central issue was the constitutional fundamental of Church-State relations. However, there was a deeper level of constitutionality at work, in that the opposition was eventually organised through the parochial system—the font of government until only thirty years earlier. The opposition to disestablishment—even on a level as simple as motions passed at parish vestries—was the largest Protestant political movement since 1782, or possibly even 1641. The issue presented the largest challenge to their position, status, and sense of self, their role in Ireland. Defending that would soon incorporate the whole community, mobilising them around salient constitutional principles.

As this debate evolved, the Archbishops' Consulting Committee's attempts to work with the CPDA were unsuccessful. Accordingly, the Committee shifted their emphasis, moving into line with the Lay and Clerical Association. At their first

[370] J.W. Blakerley to Gladstone, 28th November 1868, BL Adds.Ms.44416, fols.260-7.
[371] Blakerley to Tait, 11th February 1869, LPL Ms.Tait.87, fols.60-3.

meeting following the pro-laity declaration of the Irish Bench on 3rd February, Humphrey Lloyd, Provost of Trinity College, submitted notice of a motion on whether or not the Committee formally accepted the Lay and Clerical Association's scheme for systematic lay governance. P.M.H. Bell, who mentioned the LCA by name, saw this as the Church 'unconsciously…preparing itself for disestablishment.'[372] However, there was nothing unconscious about this. The LCA knowingly capitalised on the threat of disestablishment to restructure the Church, issuing their own instructions on voting in Easter Vestries.[373] They were using the response to Gladstone to introduce a Trojan horse—lay consultation would lead to lay representation. They were, in essence, acting as an ecclesiastical fifth column by conservative church standards. More importantly, the men involved recognised the implications this process had for the Constitution.

When Courtown revealed that he opposed disendowment, but was not adverse to severing the Church from the state, the Rev. William Pennefather argued with him that, under Gladstone, disendowment would follow disestablishment 'as death follows consumption.' But tellingly, Pennefather reiterated the constitutional arguments:

> We are citizens as well as Churchmen and we are greatly interested in the welfare of the state as well as the Church. I have a strong opinion on the constitutional question involved. The maintenance of an established religion lies at the foundations of all the relations of the state with its subjects….and the maintenance of the Protestant as the Established Religion has been over & over acknowledged as an essential part of the constitution of [Ireland].To dispose that connection there is not to repeal an act of Government, but to make a revolution[.][374]

The constitutional arguments were not being rehearsed solely in pamphlets cranked out for the English electorate. They were discussed in the private correspondence of two men who had a large influence on the shape of Church's

[372] RCBL GCP, Archbishops' Consulting Committee Minute Book.
[372] P.M.H. Bell, *Disestablishment in Ireland and Wales*, pp.129-30.
[373] *IT*, 15th February 1869.
[374] W. Pennefather to Courtown, 15th February 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/30.

efforts, and thus shows how conscious they were that their actions had constitutional, legal, and cultural ramifications. They can hardly be considered irrelevant[375] to the Irishmen shaping the future of their Church, and through it their country.

Pennefather wrote to Courtown on 15th February, 1869. The next day Courtown chaired the meeting of the Archbishops' Consulting Committee which discussed whether to accept the Lay and Clerical Association's Plan, and with it mass-elected, anti-government representation within an institution still legally part of the State. Conservatives saw disestablishment as the end result of the previous several years' Fenian subterfuge, confrontational mass-democratic marches, and tortured Reform debates. Now a predominantly Conservative body proposed to elect representatives on a franchise far wider than any in the Reform bills, creating an assembly dedicated to opposing the British Government. If legal, Conservatives would have created a powerful nationalist template.

The Committee's modifications retained the Lay and Clerical Association's statements of purpose, but stripped away the pointed language on 'representation'. As Courtown subsequently explained to the Viscount de Vesci, '[t]he organization recommended by the Lay & Clerical Ass. and now by the Consulting Commee. has grave defects but it is a legal organization having all the elements of representation, area, constituencies, and representatives all legally defined.'[376] However, even if, by avoiding direct elections, they remained within the pale of the law, Courtown's thoroughly Parliamentary language was a solid indication of how political the anticipated body would be. The plan called for parishes to elect diocesan delegates at their Easter Vestries, which would then elect delegates to a national Synod. They contentiously suggested that the Vestry elections take place with any adult male

[375] D.H. Akenson, *Church of Ireland*, p.226
[376] Courtown to de Vesci, 19th February 1869, NLI Ms.39005/2, emphasis original.

Anglican householder in the parish eligible to vote.[377] In some senses, it was a return to an older form of parish politics, inclusive yet potentially radical.[378]

There was also nothing to stop their gaining control of the Church's response by getting their members elected. But more importantly the plan's precedent was potentially enormous to Irish nationalists—a point the *Freeman's Journal* spotted. It swiped at the plan as a poorly-designed Conservative scheme to put electoral muscle behind their party, noting the Tory tinge of the Archbishops' Committee. But it also realised the implications of this system. *The Freeman* reminded its readers that legally anybody (including Catholics) who paid tithe or cess could vote in a vestry, as long as they did not vote in the election of Churchwardens.[379] Irish Conservatives had accidentally proposed a potentially legal and successful model of opposing the British Government, and the nationalist press held out the suggestion of steamrolling their elections (exactly as Bishop O'Brien worried).

These concerns were not solely confined to their Committees, though. Early drafts of the Irish Church Bill show a similar intellectual trajectory. The first, printed on 22nd February, had an almost equal concern for the ecclesiastical commissioners as for the Church, and focused on compensation. The second, far longer and more comprehensive, was less ambiguous. But most importantly, it prioritised ending the link between Church and legislature, more than elaborating the mechanics of the Bill. It made the constitutional aspect explicit.[380]

At the same time Trench held a side meeting where he floated the news of Palmer's overture to Gladstone. Those present agreed the terms forwarded to Gladstone were the best they would ever get, but even so thought not enough

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[377] TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/28; *BNL*, 16th February 1869.
[378] Mark Goldie, 'The Unacknowledged Republic: Political Participation in Early Modern England', in Tim Harris (ed.), *The Politics of the Excluded* (Basingstoke, 2001).
[379] *FJ*, 19th February 1869.
[380] Bodl.Ms.Eng.c.4063, fols.1-27.

Churchmen would accept a compromise with Gladstone to defuse confrontation. Accordingly, Trench asked Palmer to bury the idea, and not even inform him if Gladstone responded, so Trench could keep some influence over his own Church.[381] The Consulting Committee met again on the 26th February and after a 'long conversation' about the nature of synods the meeting resolved to create a Committee of Laymen 'for the purpose of preparing a scheme of Lay Representation'.[382] A sympathetic article in the *Times* commended the Lay and Clerical Association and derided the Protestant Defence Association as merely 'collecting funds for the renewed attack upon the English people by pamphlets, lectures, sermons, and speeches'. The LCA, however, had proposed a constructive plan to deal with the threat and once suitable men had been elected, the *Times* was certain it would disband.[383]

William Pennefather, however, worried to Courtown: '[a]s to the Lay & Clerical Assoc. my suspicions about it deepen daily'. Its leadership contained men who seemed committed to compromise, not resistance, and Pennefather was certain the Association would negotiate independently of the Bishops if given the chance.[384] From this there was a backlash against both representation and the LCA. The Lay and Clerical Association's refusal to condemn disestablishment outright damned the representative principle they advocated. The Dean of Limerick even publicly proposed using the Protestant Defence Association instead of Vestry Elections, and Alexander Irwin provided the Primate with his own scheme for a

[381] Trench to Palmer, 17th February 1869, LPL Ms.Selborne.1863, fols.210-17.
[382] RCBL GCP, Archbishops' Consulting Committee Minute Book. The conversation was between Trench, O'Brien, Courtown, George Salmon, A.E. Gayer, H.E. Chatterton, Sir Joseph Napier, Fleetwood Churchill and W.C. Plunket, respectively, two bishops, one peer, an academic, a lawyer, one sitting and one former judge, an obstetrician and a clergyman who would inherit a barony.
[383] *Times*, 16th February 1869.
[384] W. Pennefather to Courtown, ND, February 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/39.

solely invited body.[385] Before the elections could take place the Committee of Laymen had to draft the representative system conceded by the Archbishops. It met for the first time on 26th February, in the Provost's House of Trinity College. The proliferation of lawyers at the meeting was partly the result of normal social forces, but was more a recognition that in drafting the mechanics of lay representation these men were grappling with serious legal precedents—the Church was not voluntary, it was still governed by law, and, as they were aware, their actions could also set dangerous precedents for the nationalists.

Also on the 26th, Beresford, ignorant of developments in Dublin, wrote to Trench to complain about the laity's inactivity. He suggested creating a lay subcommittee of the Consulting Committee, unaware that one was meeting that very day. He included important concerns, reminding Trench that 'the object is to avoid still more…the Elective principle….the whole course of legislation since Henry 8th has opposed every thing in the shape of a Clerical Parliament'. His answer was for a 'vague invitation' from the Archbishops that avoided the legal pitfalls. He claimed that he 'could without much trouble select 100 men of worth and piety from the Province of Armagh' but accepted that the laity would read this as his stitching things up, so suggested an informal series of letters to prominent Anglicans, specifically including Whigs.[386] He had no idea that a formal subcommittee had already been created, and consisted almost wholly of exasperated Tories, in large part responding to Gladstone's notice of a bill to end their Church's establishment.[387] The details of subsequent discussions showed the solidly political elements of this exchange.

At its first meeting, the seasoned Tory politician Hedges Eyre Chatterton proposed an electoral scheme. It passed with only Sir Joseph Napier dissenting.

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[385] *Times*, 24th February 1869; Irwin to Beresford, 24th February 1869, CUL Ms.Add.9407/6/13.
[386] Draft, Beresford to Trench, 26th February 1869, CUL Ms.Add.9407/3/78.
[387] *Hansard* HC Deb., 1st March 1869, vol. 194 cc412-70; *IT*, 3rd March 1869.

When the meeting resumed on 2nd March Napier refused to return to the Committee, but they were joined by new additions: Thomas Lefroy and Sir Edward Grogan, both powers within the Protestant Defence Association. The expanded meeting continued to discuss the details of Chatterton's plan. It was reshaped and altered, but ultimately his elective system was accepted.[388] Trench and O'Brien's feeling 'that considering the exigencies of the times we ought not feel ourselves bound by a law the spirit of which was not against us whatever the letter might be' decided the question.[389] After the meeting Courtown wrote casually to Grogan. As members of both the LCA and PDA were involved with the Lay Committee he hoped it would get the 'approval of both of their important societies.' Grogan's formal reply on the Central Protestant Defence Association letterhead was cutting—the CPDA declined to accept it and considered the matter 'unsettled'.[390] Sir Joseph Napier also had concerns, and wrote to Thomas Greene on 4th March to give his 'reasons for dissenting from the line taken by the Committee of Laymen.' He enclosed a lengthy judgment, which began that he 'could not concur in the use of the principle of representation….I believe it to be of more than doubtful legality…and I cannot think that it can be used lawfully in any way, at all adequate to the occasion, when we are threatened with a gigantic scheme of spoliation and sacrilege.' The issue was the Convention Act of 1797. If they were to create an assembly they would have to be careful about the mechanism: '[t]his must not be used as a cover for introducing the representative element and constructing a representative assembly', thus exceeding the Church's remit and establishing an illegal political platform,[391] especially as the text of the disestablishment bill was just published.[392] Napier was a hardened Conservative, yet at this point seemed to concur with a Liberal

[388] RCBL, GCP, Minutes of the Committee of Laymen (MCL), 26th February, 2nd March 1869.
[389] Courtown to de Vesci, 3rd March 1869, NLI Ms.39005/1.
[390] Copy, Courtown to Grogan, Grogan to Courtown, 3rd, 4th March 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/47,48.
[391] Napier to Thomas Greene, 4th March 1869, RCBL, GCP.
[392] *IT*, 4th March 1869.

government's position; the only reason he could have had for taking the same line was that he himself believed it. It was slightly ironic that the relevant legislation was the Convention Act, a measure designed to suppress nationalist agitation. What would have been supported by their fathers and grandfathers was now turned against mid-Victorian Irish Conservatives. But for all its irony it was no less relevant. Whatever the ideology of the men involved, there was no way around the fact that they were proposing nation-wide elections to create a public assembly to oppose the British Crown.

They all agreed that what they were doing was technically illegal but pressed ahead. Beresford's reservations were entirely political. On 5th March 1869 he wrote that Chatterton's scheme 'would here be regarded by Friend and Foe as an acceptance of Mr. Gladstone's policy, and as the formation of the "Church Body" he speaks of, as necessary to carrying out his scheme of demolition.' However, he offered his own emendations, plunging into the detail of how many representatives each diocese would supply, in the interests of making the plan more manageable. Although he agreed to 'the practical working part' of their plan, he wanted the word Vestry 'changed into Parish Meeting, as in a Vestry Roman Catholics & Presbyterians can vote and nullify or override the proceedings.' This was the last thing Anglicans wanted if they were establishing a challenge to the British State. Beresford concluded 'I think the less methodized & formal our plan appears to be the better.'[393] He was acutely aware of the political precedents created by an elected challenge to the government.

Napier also dissented, as he 'could not suppose that an unlawful assembly could have a moral effect upon loyal men. I cannot think that the use of the representative element is wise or lawful'.[394] The whole Committee heard the Archbishop's concerns on 6th March. They knew the range of reservations and

[393] Beresford to Lord Meath, H.E. Chatterton, 5th March 1869, RCBL, GCP.
[394] Napier to Greene, 5th March 1869, RCBL, GCP, emphasis original.

objections. But even Beresford conceded that the current exigencies and the need for an immediate response overrode his concerns. J.T. O'Brien—trusted by both Courtown and the Archbishops—spoke to Beresford and Trench on the Committee's behalf. In a private letter of the 6th, O'Brien explained to Courtown that Trench and Beresford were 'startled' by the report. But he explained to the archbishops 'if they withdrew from the task, it wd. be taken up by the Lay & Church Assoc or the Defence Commee'.[395] Essentially, a plan with potentially radical legal implications was accepted on the understanding that tactical moderates would manage it. They prioritised potential long-term radicalism over short-term upheaval. This correspondence shows how much effort the Church's leadership invested in managing their own members, when managing Parliament. The two largest topics in all discussion of Church resistance were the legality of organising through elections and the awkwardness of success. The senior clergy assumed that organisation entailed resistance, given the laity's political culture. They were able to propose a system that was potentially cumbersome and awkward because of the Church's vibrant associational culture, because the Church's members were versed in making these kinds of campaigns work. But this carried significant political ramifications.

At this time Trench was in London. On 6th March he met with Tait and Disraeli,[396] who the *Irish Times* anticipated would 'make a sham fight' for the Church: 'No politician has a stronger interest than he in getting the Irish Church question out of the way', as it stood between him and the Premiership.[397] Whilst discussing Parliamentary manoeuvres, Trench simultaneously accepted the extreme anti-Parliamentary plans from Dublin, and submitted alterations, discussed on 6th

[395] O'Brien to Courtown, 6th March 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/50.
[396] Tait to Disraeli, 5th, 6th March 1869, Bodl.Ms.Dep.Hughenden/144/4,fols.9-12.
[397] *IT*, 5th March 1869.

and 9th March.[398] These plans were not secret, however. After the 3rd March meeting Courtown circulated an explanation to the Wexford Assizes, as part 'steps to have…clergymen warned against being entrapped into hasty adoption of any scheme of the Pnt. Den. Assn.'[399] Alexander Irwin, who complained about the cross-purposes of the two public associations and the Consulting Committee, reported from Armagh that, because of the prompt discussions, 'I do not expect that the Prot. Defence Society will lead any of the Parishes in these parts into any precipitate action'. He also continued to expound that 'England has no idea of the boiling indignation of the mass of the Protestants in the North of Ireland. There is growing up a feeling of alienation from England, on account of this breach of faith, which will show itself in a very unpleasant manner. The Queen's Government will rue the day that they loose (sic) the support of the Protestants in Ireland.'[400] There was no way of removing these plans from the political-cum-constitutional context.

The results were a series of drafts printed under the title 'Lay Co-Operation in Diocesan and General Synods or Conferences'. The change during the course of these discussions was remarkable. All versions opened by quoting in full the Resolution of the Irish Bench of Bishops of 3rd February requesting lay involvement. When sent to Trench, the original version was deliberately constitutional. It established a principled context for lay action in the Church beyond the present crisis, proposed a highly detailed system to ensure that representation balanced both lay and clerical influence and the geographic disparities in the Church population, and concluded by establishing the rules of order of the 'House' when it met.[401] This was a formal, decisive plan, which clearly assumed the Committee of Laymen were establishing a permanent structure, not a quick scheme to enable a few hundred men to gather in Dublin and condemn disestablishment. The

[398] RCBL, GCP, MCL, 6th, 9th March 1869.
[399] Courtown to de Vesci, 3rd March 1869, NLI Ms.39005/1.
[400] Irwin to Courtown, 7th March 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/52.
[401] RCBL, GCP, MCL, printed circular 'Lay Co-Operation in Diocesan and General Synods'.

Committee of Laymen had without question submitted a document close to the draft framework of future governance.

However, instead of dismissing the scheme out of hand and inviting their own hand-picked assembly, Trench and Beresford simply modified the plan. The new version outlined a method for assembling, and stripped away the language which, touching on purpose and motive, implied new foundations. Beresford culled all the discussions of voting and theories of representation, noting in the margin of his copy the need to restore the bishops as the source of authority. Throughout the piece he cut most specific recommendations and points of action, such as the notably radical mandates that all male householders have a vote, and the provisions for a permanent body of rules.[402] These marginalia reveal a political conservative trying to squash potential radicalism, and a religiously conservative High Churchman trying to maintain clerical authority by suppressing any sense of automatic lay claims. Trench's edits followed roughly similar lines, although he does not seem to have offered alternative language.[403] The two archbishops represented different schools of Churchmanship—Trench an English, Tractarian school, and Beresford the old Irish purist High Church. Yet they differed only in details when purging the radical plan proffered by the laity.

Despite these edits, the scheme did retain elections, keeping the 'principle' behind the original plan.[404] It still suggested parish meetings where all Anglican male householders could vote for Lay representatives equal to the number of clergy in the diocese. These would meet in diocesan synods, electing representatives to a 'General Synod or Convention'. This would have an equal lay to clerical ratio,

[402] CUL Ms.Add.9407/8/14.
[403] RCBL, GCP, various marked copies of printed circular 'Lay Co-Operation in Diocesan and General Synods'.
[404] Courtown to de Vesci, 6th March 1869, NLI Ms.39005/1.

although preserve the differences in population between the dioceses.[405] Its mechanisms were strikingly close to a kind of nascent church government, which its architects recognised. This possibly seemed to forecast disestablishment, or appear as if they were aiding Gladstone by colluding in their own reorganisation.

The Lay Subcommittee accepted this amended plan on 9th March, in the TCD Provost's House. Sir Edward Grogan and R.R. Warren proposed sending a copy to every incumbent in Ireland, but Arthur Gayer and Lord de Vesci wanted to let the Archbishops vet the final version first. More than logistics, this confrontation was actually over the source of authority—whether the Archbishops, and thus the ecclesiastical hierarchy, the Committee working in cooperation with the local parishes, and thus everybody, had the real power in the Church. This discord had both theological and political ramifications. Beresford's fears that lay involvement would inevitably lead to lay governance were coming further true.

Arthur Gayer submitted advance notice of a motion to the Archbishops' Consulting Committee to publish the names of everyone involved,[406] so that their awkward status as part-cabal, part-founding fathers could be made public. The high stakes of these discussions was carried out against a backdrop of serious anger amongst the rest of the Irish Anglicans. The Liberal Viceroy, Lord Spencer, was surprised that even 'among moderate Protestant churchmen the Bill had a staggering effect'.[407] The Irish Church Society, a distinctly High Church group, attacked the Bill in a public meeting where C.H. Todd condemned, beyond the confiscation of charitable donations, a weakening of episcopal authority.[408] The CPDA immediately steeled themselves and demanded that the laity be included in

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405 RCBL, GCP, MCL, printed circular 'Lay Co-Operation in Diocesan and General Synods'. Armagh, Down and Dublin (with a population of over 100,000) received 24, Derry and Kilmore (50,000) received 18, Cork and Ossory (35,000) had 16, Meath, Tuam, Cashel, Killaloe and Limerick had 12.
406 RCBL, GCP, MACC, 2nd, 9th March 1869.
407 Lord Spencer to Thomas O'Hagan, 8th March 1869, PRONI Ms.D2777/8/21.
408 *IT*, 10th March 1869; *BNL*, 11th March 1869.

any conference, even proposing their own vision of a representative scheme (suspiciously similar to the one tortuously crafted in Dublin).[409] The poorly-maintained secrecy and infighting of the official Church response could hardly help assuage the confrontational mood.

When the Archbishops' Committee reconvened on 11th March, Trench agreed to attend and establish 'what chance there is of a cordial cooperation between the Episcopal Bench and the Laity of Ireland, which is at present the pressing question.'[410] The lay-to-clerical ration in the plan was further amended, and the membership of the Committee omitted from public statements.[411] This was a precaution, preempting criticism. But the concern over their own Committee's composition revealed another leitmotif: the social structure in the Church's leadership. This plan was shaped by a group of professionals, mostly Dublin lawyers, and begrudgingly accepted by the two Archbishops. Courtown, the solitary peer present through all these meetings, did not like it either. But it would have enormous implications for the entire Irish Anglican community. At this point, Courtown suggested they somehow balance the influence of the Dublin professionals by enlisting more nobility. He suggested Lords Erne, Enniskillen, Lifford, Bandon, Oranmore and Browne, Clarina, and Longford; revealingly, he proposed that '[i]t would be well to consult Ld. Meath though being a Dublin man he is not quite in the same boat as we are',[412] a clear indication of landed and rural discomfort at this Dublin dominance.

Similarly, Robert Daly, bishop of Cashel, reminded Thomas Greene how impractical this Dublin-constructed plan was for rural dioceses. Daly also damned the plan as the work of the Lay and Clerical Association, and their dedication to re-

[409] *BNL*, 8th, 10th March 1869.
[410] Greene to Courtown, 10th March 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/55, emphasis original.
[411] RCBL, GCP, MACC, 11th March 1869.
[412] Courtown to de Vesci, 9th, 11th, March 1869, NLI Mss.39005/2; 39005/1.

organising the Church whether or not disestablishment passed.[413] The plan had been initially proposed by men associated with the LCA—Humphrey Lloyd and W.C. Plunket—and significant opposition came from the Protestant Defence Assocation's representatives to the Committee of Laymen, Sir Edward Grogan and Thomas Lefroy. When it was first proposed they had actually suggested outflanking the official plan with their own circular to the clergy. Robert Stephen of Queen's County wrote to de Vesci that he much preferred the CPDA's plan for the Synods than that which he described as coming from the Lay and Clerical Association, 'as defence and "no surrender" is the first object'. The official plan seemed to 'prepare the ground for Gladstone's sacreligous (sic) scheme', which would not happen if the synods were 'under the direction of the Protestant defence Association.'[414] However, a PDA meeting in Cavan, held immediately following the start of the Bill's second reading in the Commons, resolved that its passage would transform their feelings towards Great Britain.[415] The Committee, even if highly coloured by the LCA, were a moderating body, trying to diffuse politicised tensions. Yet they also awkwardly created a plan that provided this politicking with a venue.

It was no surprise then, that the preparations for the synods were in some cases a collision between the emerging democratic politics and older forms of patrician manipulation. A good example was J.T. O'Brien's dioceses of Ossory, Ferns, and Leighlin. O'Brien asked Dennis Pack Beresford and Lords Courtown and de Vesci to travel around their dioceses, advising parishes on the 'most acceptable candidates'.[416] There was a backlash of public meetings against Courtown for his attempt to steamroll the diocesan elections.[417] The next day he told de Vesci that,

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[413] Robert Daly to Greene, 13th March 1869, RCBL, GCP.
[414] Courtown, R. Stephen to de Vesci, 3rd, 15th March 1869, NLI Ms.39005/1, emphasis original.
[415] *BNL*, 17th March 1869; *Hansard,* HC Deb., 16th March 1869, vol. 194 cc1547-59.
[416] O'Brien to de Vesci, 15th, 18th, 20th March 1869, NLI Ms.39005/3; J.T. O'Brien to Courtown, 12th, 13th, 15th March 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/58,60,61.
[417] Thomas Moolory to Courtown, 22nd March 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/65.

after receiving O'Brien's plan, he 'had obtained the consent of many of our leading men…but the result has been that such a storm of disapproval has been raised'.[418] Courtown consulted other gentry and was surprised when he engendered resentment from the rest of the community. O'Brien relied on a network of magnates—Courtown, de Vesci, Pack Beresford, Lord Carrick, Sir John Blunden and Henry Bruen—to secure diocesan approval of the elective system.[419] After the grassroots rejection of Courtown's trying to rig the Ferns elections he complained there was 'a feeling of jealously' about episcopal influence over the laity.[420] This highly contentious system endowed evangelical ecclesiological disquiet with a new mechanism, just as the Commons passed the Bill's crucial second reading.[421] As Edward Saunderson, the evangelical Whig MP for Cavan, told his wife, '[a] great debate is expected tonight but the issue is no matter of doubt….the poor Church is tottering to its fall.'[422]

In Westminster, the Church's internal culture or concerns never seemed to trouble the two men most naturally placed as their advocates. Disraeli and Tait's strategising focused entirely on Parliamentary details.[423] But in Ireland, the Defence Association, launched as a purely Parliamentary association, were now trying to control the Church's process. Robert Stephen reported to de Vesci that the CPDA were sending out their own circulars and organising meetings. Stephen warned de Vesci that the pro-Bishop clique were losing influence, as 'It is much remembered how changed the spirit of those who used to fight for the rights in the

[418] Courtown to de Vesci, 24th March 1869, NLI Ms.39005/1.
[419] Courtown to de Vesci, 9th March 1869, NLI Ms.39005/2.
[420] O'Brien to Courtown, 24th March 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/69.
[421] *Hansard,* HC Deb., 23rd March 1869, vol.194 cc2004-13.
[422] E. Saunderson to H. de Moleyns Saunderson, 22nd March 1869, PRONI Ms.T2996/2/B/41.
[423] Disraeli to Tait, 24th March 1869, LPL Ms.Tait.87, fols.90-5; Tait to Disraeli, 25th March 1869, Bodl.Dep.Hughenden/144/4, fols.13-16.

Queens County is now for (sic) former days and it has a depressing influence on the middle and lower class of our Protestants.'[424] The Ulster branch declared that

> [t]he time has come when the Protestants of Ireland must consider their position relatively (sic) to England and the country they have rescued from barrenness and barbarism….They sacrificed the independence and self-government of Ireland, for Union with England on certain terms; but Mr. Gladstone and his Ultramontane advisers propose to rupture the bond after the most violent fashion. It will alienate the feelings of loyal men[.][425]

The CPDA's straightforward message might upstage measured elections to a cumbersome diocesan synod, especially if there was considerable resentment at their composition's being stage-managed from above. The ability of delegates to attend was a major sifter and filter everywhere—the men who framed this plan in Dublin were able to join a busy series of meetings, all of which began on weekday afternoons. The model of Church resistance and potential governance they outlined precluded most of the non-professional or non-landed by virtue of its most basic elements: location and timing. Yet through this uncertain system the Church elected its showpiece of resistance—the Church Conference. The Government's working papers at the time displayed an overwhelmingly technical focus, concerning themselves with the details of property transfer and capitalisation.[426] The Conference would demonstrate the starkly different way the Church viewed disestablishment.

[424] Stephen to de Vesci, 21st March 1869, NLI Ms.39005/1.
[425] *BNL*, 31st March 1869.
[426] Papers forwarded from Chichester Fortescue to Lord Dufferin, after 1st April 1869, PRONI Ms.D1071/H/7/10.

III
The Battle Against Disestablishment
April 1869—July 1869

The Meath, Limerick, and Ossory Diocesan Meetings made a point of declaring that the Conference was 'in no sense a governing body or the nucleus of one.' Trench was explicit at the Dublin Diocesan Meeting, quelling the 'apprehension' that the Conference would be the start of new Church governance. It was simply convened to express the Church's opinion on Gladstone and disestablishment.[427] This clearly stemmed from the assembly's being elected. Yet just before the Conference C.P. Reichel, one of the most respected scholars amongst the Irish clergy, urged Thomas Greene, the honorary secretary of the Committee of Laymen, to save all its papers, and specifically asked him not to destroy or give them to Trench. He felt that 'Only another Church Conference, or its committee, or the future governing body, can have any right to dispose of these documents.'[428] Reichel, with an eye to legality and the paper trail of precedent, was convinced that the Church Conference was the antecedent to whatever institution governed the disestablished Church. The day before they met the *Irish Times* published the ominous news that 120 Tory MPs agreed to support the amended Irish Church Bill on the second reading in (uncertain) the hope the House of Lords would amend the legislation.[429] The Irish Church could not expect much from organised Conservatism.

The first day of the Conference duly consisted of broadsides against the government. Beresford 'declared that the conference was not in any way "Mr. Gladstone's Church Body".' He also emphasised how they were uninterested in amending the Bill. It was a straight No Surrender convention, now bolstered by the new mood in Irish Anglican public life—anti-English speechmaking, from unlikely

[427] *PMG*, 1st April 1869.
[428] RCBL, GCP, C.P. Reichel to Thomas Greene, 12th April 1869.
[429] *IT*, 13th April 1869.

socially-conservative sources. Sir Frederick Shaw, the Recorder of Dublin, landed an immediate political shot by comparing disestablishment to Fenian amnesty, asserting that the corollary would never happen in England and complaining that 'English Statesmen seem as if they would never cease experimenting on Ireland.' James Byrne's argument that disestablishment would lead to political upheaval was prophetic. He claimed that 'this is the first time in our annals that rebellion has been followed by the confiscation of the property of the loyal.' If disestablishment embraced the principle that all Irish issues should be settled for the interests of the majority, why should Irish politicians go to London? He asked '[w]ould it not be better that they should deliberate in College Green[?]'

J.T. O'Brien complained about both the Tories and the Liberals: '[t]he one party left us gagged and manacled when we were about to be robbed, and the other party kept us in the same defenceless state'. But this was ultimately positive at it led to joint lay and clerical action, which itself created a new democratic mood, where 'it was brought home…to every, even the humblest member, of the Church, that the Church was his patrimony as well as that of the most exalted peer in the land.' Finally, Sir Edward Grogan proposed another elected committee to assist the Church's Parliamentary 'defenders.' As 'they could expect nothing from a Parliament with a majority of 118' against the Church, the Committee would also serve to show English Protestants their resolve.[430] This was the most important point of business in a Conference characterised by speeches of 'the most energetic, not to say violent character.'[431]

The second day's business was devoted to the property and financial questions raised by disendowment, and included the national-cum-reactionary argument from William Alexander 'That the churches of the Irish Protestants are

[430] *Report of the Conference of the Archbishops, Bishops, Clergy & Laity of the Irish Branch of the United Church of England and Ireland* (Dublin/London, 1869); *PMG*, 14th April 1869; *IT*, 15th April 1869; *BNL*, 14th, 15th, 16th April 1869.
[431] *Birmingham Daily Post*, 15th April 1869.

national monuments' and 'we are the Irish Nation,'[432] echoing Grattan's Parliament. Byrne, who suggested that Gladstone's logic compelled them back to College Green, was a 'steady Liberal'.[433] Alexander declared that 'my family are conservative….I have been able to serve Conservative interests.'[434] Yet now they were together arrayed against the British Government, and expressed that through Irish nationality. This return to the eighteenth century chimed with other strains of Anglican politics, such as a long pamphlet tirade against the Protestant Defence Association written by William McMechan, a delegate to the Dublin Diocesan Synod. He claimed it was merely a front for the Orange Order, comprising Belfast Presbyterians and Methodists who supported disestablishment. He urged Dubliners to organise a purely Dublin Anglican association to oppose the CPDA. Published that April, it was a histrionic pamphlet specifically pitched to working-class Dublin. It closed by urging them to take back the legacy of the Boyne from the Orangemen.[435]

Similarly, with other echoes of older politics, in April 1869 an Armagh group formed to confront disendowment's ramifications in one of the most complicated and emotive aspects of Irish politics—the land question. It was another Church association, campaigning independently of any formal party structures, and approaching strongly national sentiments. The Rev. Robert Ridall organised the tenants of Primatial lands to rally against the proposed changes to the legal terms under which they held glebe land. In both public meetings and private lobbying their language used many tenant-right arguments. Even Isaac Butt, the Anglican veteran of land politics,[436] printed a legal opinion in its favour. Not only did

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[432] *Report of the Conference...of the United Church of England and Ireland.*
[433] Graves to Wodehouse, 29th May 1866, Bodl.Ms.Eng.c.4047, fols.93-4.
[434] Alexander to Naas, 6th July 1866, NLI Ms.11142/1.
[435] William M'Mcechan, *Proposed Association of the Lay Members of The Dublin Diocesan Conference* (Dublin, 1869).
[436] Isaac Butt, *Land Tenure in Ireland: A Plea for the Celtic Race* (Dublin, 1866); Isaac Butt, *The Irish Querist* (Dublin, 1867).

disendowment undermine security to property by appropriating private lands, the legal changes to the tenure of glebe concerned fixity of tenure and compensation for improvements.[437] An Anglican umbrella group agitated for these against a Liberal government. The irony was that Irish landed families with strong Church connections usually leased glebe land at preferential rates. Armagh's rich and extensive lands were particularly notorious for being leased to Ulster's landed, politically-connected families.[438] This was a far cry from 'Tenant right equals Landlord wrong.' It was another example of disestablishment's forcing conservatives into strangely radical positions.

A further one was the final outcome of the Conference. The Standing Committee established by Grogan's motion could have drifted into insignificance. Instead, it became the centre of the Church's efforts to prevent disestablishment. On 16th April, it continued to meet in the Antient Concert Rooms after the rest of the delegates left, trying to sway Parliament. It joined elected, influential laity and senior clerics as an intermediary between Parliament and the Church of Ireland, a buffer reading Westminster through a distinctive lens. The Committee functioned in the same way as the other associations with which its members were comfortable, to which they were accustomed. The culture of this clique was standard; its structure as an elected, non-party lobby was not.

The legislative battle against disestablishment was not to be left to the Tory Party, the English Archbishops, or individual consciences in the Lords; it was to be directed by the Standing Committee of the Conference—as the guardians of the future Church. Beyond the evident distrust and bad faith towards the Church's ostensible champions, the members of this Committee found themselves in an unusual position: countering the Queen's Government to defend Irish interests. More so, they did this through a structure everyone acknowledged was redolent of

[437] PRONI Ms. DIO4/34/8/1-4,6,10,18.
[438] P.M.H. Bell, *Disestablishment in Ireland and Wales*, p.45.

self-government. The Standing Committee elaborated the Church's evolving response—planning motions and rebuttals to the Parliamentary debate. In these deliberations, they consistently resented English intrusions into their sphere, viewing English Tories as dubious friends who failed to understand the Irishness of their Church. However, they controversially began planning for the eventuality of disestablishment. Their response to the Parliamentary progress of the Irish Church Bill indelibly shaped their tentative preparations for an independent life.

The Commons went into a Committee of the Whole House on 16th April to debate the Irish Church Bill. Disraeli argued that Parliament could still 'entirely despoil the Irish Protestant Church; they may banish the Bishops from the House of Lords…they may terminate every ceremony, every privilege, and every practice which hitherto they have held up to odium, and alleged to be the cause of national jealousy and discontent' as long as they maintained the Union. This was far from the vindication of inherent rights that the Irish Church expected. For Disraeli, their cherished spiritual home was less important than the Union that now worked against them. Only John Thomas Ball, newly-elected MP for Dublin University, defended the Church itself.[439]

The Standing Committee was the body the Irish Church trusted to represent itself in the Parliamentary skirmishes, and consequently it organised itself into Sub-Committees. They also accepted the stewardship of technically and legally complicated causes, such as curate's compensation.[440] The first report of their Legal Sub-Committee had a strong theme of independence and autonomy. They asked that the right of appeal against legal decisions be modeled on the Irish Landed Estates Court, with appeals direct to the House of Lords,[441] and objected

[439] *Hansard,* HC Deb., 16th April 1869, vol. 195 cc993-1059.
[440] RCBL, GCP, Minutes of the Standing Committee of the Lay Conference (MSC), 16th, 17th April 1869.
[441] Mountifort Longfield, judge of that body until 1867, was a member of the Legal Sub-Committee.

to the power of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners 'to make general rules of procedure'. They also objected 'to Mr. D'Israeli's amendt. which would continue the patronage of the Crown after the passing of the Bill.'[442]

This desire for complete power over their own affairs was initially associated with the LCA's policy of localised ecclesiastical control. It now dovetailed with general resentments at how Irish Anglican interests were ignored and mismanaged by English politicians of both sides. Joseph Napier returned to his fears that they were inching towards the self-governance they tried to oppose, perfectly recognising the awkward mixture of anger at England and uncertainty over their own structures: '[t]his policy, by which we may suffer, suffices for the selfish purposes of England—but whether it will not accelerate some disruption with Irish Protestants, I leave you to judge. The convention left an unpleasant impression, & plainly satisfied me as Gladstone's plan in embryo.'[443]

Indeed, when the debate resumed in the Commons on the 19th, the Irish Protestant MPs enforced the gravity of the discussion, focusing on disestablishment's wider social and political ramifications. In doing so, they argued radical positions. Lord Claud Hamilton made a pointed shot about the overall treatment of Irish members and Irish interests when he prophetically said 'If, when Irish Members rose…to express the opinions of their constituents, they were to be told that was an obstructive course, there must be a repeal of the Union.' Edward Wingfield Verner, MP for County Armagh and Sir Frederick Heygate (both Tories), also criticised the attitude of English MPs towards Irish Anglicans. Heygate 'felt almost inclined to walk out of the House and let the Bill take its chance, rather than engage in the dirty and humiliating task of proposing hopeless Amendments that were sure neither to be carried nor fairly considered or temperately discussed.' The foreshadowing of the Irish Parliamentary Party was, of course, clearly

[442] RCBL, GCP, MSC, 19th April 1869.
[443] Napier to Lloyd, ND, TCD Ms.3487, p.37.

unconscious. But the sense that Repeal followed from the Irish being ignored in Parliament, and resorting to 'obstruction' was not out of place. It was another instance of the reversals of this moment, when the Anglican elite found themselves so dispossessed and disenfranchised that they came to the conclusions later used by Nationalists.

Henry Bruen even united the Church question with the land question when he reminded the Commons that, although Protestants owned seven-eighths of Irish land, many of those were English absentees. They either supported disestablishment, or, at the least, would not help domestic Irish Protestantism after the Bill's passage. Bruen said he would not have feared for a disestablished Church if the land were in Irish Protestant hands. But as it was really controlled by absentees he worried for their Church's future.[444] This rhetoric was extraordinary in any location. But it was now expressed in formal Commons debates, in the public theatre and forum of, in the words of the Book of Common Prayer they were defending, 'the High Court of Parliament'. Language that could have been mere posturing, if shouted in defiance at a public meeting in Belfast or Cork now carried serious weight, by dint of its life in Commons debates. The Legal Sub-Committee proposed ammunition for their Parliamentary advocates which demonstrated their absolutely objecting to disendowment, but pragmatically accepting some aspects of disestablished life. Disendowment was not merely their losing money and property, but the State's seizing private endowments and jeopardising the security of land ownership. It was a new role for the State, and one which self-government as a disestablished Church might obviate.

The Committee's responses to Parliamentary machinations reflected this confluence of objection and pragmatic efforts towards mitigation. But this was only possible with an important, early internal debate that made clear any attempt to

[444] *Hansard,* HC Deb., 19th April 1869, vol. 195 cc1099-157.

moderate the Bill did not imply they accepted it, facing down criticism that they were legitimising the Bill by doing anything other than opposing it wholly. Self-defining motions were more than face-saving, given the political and constitutional implications of disestablishment. The Church had to find a way of ensuring the best result for itself without acceding to the revolutionary principles within the legislation, and, indeed, their own methods of averting it. When prominent Dublin lawyer Sir Richard Orpen tried to end the Committee's potentially negotiating with Parliament, H.H. Dickinson, dean of the Chapel Royal, opposed him by quoting a resolution of the Church Conference.[445] The right to legislate on behalf of the Church now came from collective, synodical action.

On 20th April 1869, Sir Frederick Heygate tabled a Parliamentary question, asking Gladstone for a clause in the Bill enabling landowners to borrow from the Commissioners of Public Works against the value of their own land. The loans would be solely allocated to build new Churches. Gladstone declined on the interesting grounds that the principles behind Heygate's proposal would be addressed soon, alluding to imminent land legislation.[446] Irish landlords saw that much-rumoured event as an attack on their rights and the security of property. Heygate's proposal assumed that investment from resident landlords would be instrumental to the disestablished Church. Gladstone may have given a dangerous confirmation in conflating the two bills, reinforcing the sense that disestablishment was the start of a broad reduction of the Irish elite. Gladstone linked what Heygate intended as a pro-Church amendment to looming anti-Protestant antagonism.

In this context, the unease so many of the Church's leaders felt about even proposing amendments to the Bill is clear. Archbishop Beresford agreed to forward the Committee's decisions to other politicians without stating they came from any formal Church body, and Trench agreed to act as a link between the Standing

[445] RCBL, GCP, MSC, 19th, 20th April 1869.
[446] *Hansard*, HC Deb., 22nd April 1869, vol. 195 cc1357-8.

Committee in Dublin and a London Sub-Committee, who would begin meeting regularly. But even as they established links with London, the Committee passed a motion from Trinity academic George Salmon which affirmed that they would resist disestablishment, but if unsuccessful, the Church would 'claim for herself an entire freedom from any further state control: and that any legislation which, under such circumstances could in anywise interfere with her independent action as a free Church would only aggravate her wrongs, and seriously endanger her temporal and spiritual interests.'[447] This reinforced the Committee's role as a mediator between Irish Anglicanism and Parliament. But it was a crucial point given the debates in the Commons that same evening.

They discussed two key aspects of the Bill—compensation for the loss of advowsons[448] and the Church's legal standing in organising itself. At the Union about 500 advowsons to the Church's 1,120 benefices were in private hands.[449] Mervyn Archdall, Tory MP for Fermanagh and member of an old Ulster dynasty, proposed giving the compensation for lost advowsons to the future Church Body (the disestablished administration), not private individuals. Most of the MPs ridiculed this as worse robbery than the proposed disendowment. As usual, they missed the broader implications. Concentrating former individual rights in the lay-governed Church Body would ensure power remained with the laity, and lay landowners at that. Archdall was not only trying to swell the Church's funds, he was probably also trying to establish elite influence in the Church Body.

Disraeli attempted to clarify the Church's legal process for reorganising, mandating a national synod. J.T. Ball emphasised how important this would be to prevent Ulster, Leinster, and Connaught from forming separate Churches. It was also the model used in Canada and Australia. Edward Saunderson endorsed this.

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[447] RCBL, GCP, MSC, 23rd April 1869.
[448] The right to nominate a clergyman to a living.
[449] N.D. Emerson, 'The Last Phase of the Establishment', in W.A. Phillips (ed.), *History of the Church of Ireland* (London, 1933), p.290.

He suggested that Gladstone assumed the whole Church would gather in Dublin, but Saunderson predicted that without the specific requirement to do so regions would secede, some clergy would refuse to acknowledge the Church Body, and some laity would refuse to obey the clergy. The amendment passed.

The next evening they debated the position of Glebe lands and houses. Disraeli's opening speech, purporting to defend the Church's broad principles, in fact defended its supremacy to Roman Catholicism (not the Church's own spiritual life), and then scored points against John Bright. It took Thomas Connolly, MP for Donegal, to claim that pleading to retain their Churches and Glebes 'was a small and miserable thing to ask, but it was a wretched thing to be denied….He warned the Government that extreme severity—that the exaction of the last pound of flesh would produce a state of feeling which it would take many years to remove.' Henry Bruen stressed the need to establish local Irish ecclesiastical courts to settle both the glebe question and the lingering issue of retaining incumbents; without them they 'would be giving a license to any clergymen to hold his pulpit against all comers and to preach any doctrines he pleased, because there was no tribunal before which he could be arraigned.'[450] The prospect of arraigning clergymen whose theology clashed with their parishioners was exactly what the High Church clergy on the Standing Committee worked to avoid. Thus on 27th April 1869, James Byrne and Edward Stopford, two senior clergymen tarred as compromisers by William Pennefather, proposed motions to the Standing Committee about the disestablished Church. Stopford spoke on commutation; Byrne submitted a ban on any changes to doctrine, rites, or discipline. Bruen was not a fringe voice: he was a mainstay of the diocese of Leighlin. Prompted by a Parliamentary debate, some of the Church's Standing Committee were anticipating self-government.

[450] *Hansard*, HC Deb., 23rd, 26th April 1869, vol. 195 cc1473-531, 1585-648.

However, others were unwilling to accept defeat, and they tried to use extra-Parliamentary campaigning to influence remote Westminster. On 28th April Ulster magnate Sir John Stewart 'asked whether a Deputation from the Standing Committee to the House of Lords, and the Queen, would be legal'. Returning to the obsession with legality did not stem simply from a Victorian sense of propriety, but the understanding that the methods they used in opposing the British government had direct relevance to Fenians and other nationalists. Most felt they might, with enough effort, prevent disestablishment by influencing the Lords, even if the Commons were set against them. [451] But clearly they needed to influence this House themselves, having little faith in Westminster Conservatism.

The rest of the Irish Protestant laity were not resigned to defeat in the way the House of Commons seemed to be. On the 28th, a serious riot broke out in Derry when the Apprentice Boys took the opportunity of a royal visit to greet Prince Arthur with an anti-Gladstone, No Surrender demonstration. Their band duelled the Catholic Hibernia Flute Band, each side playing 'God Save the Queen' next to the more standard fare of 'The Wearing of the Green' versus 'Derry Walls Away'. The next day crowds traded stones and pistol fire. The Orange Order then turned out, and were met by a rival mob. The two armed gangs ran a pitched battle through the city, and two people were killed.[452] More broadly, the two gangs were contesting the city centre, using the physical space as a wider metaphor for purpose—controlling both the city and the debate. Derry's stance on political issues was exemplified by the gangs in its centre, not its Parliamentary representation, newspapers, or any other facet of 'modern' politics.[453]

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[451] RCBL, GCP, MSC, 27th, 28th April 1869.
[452] *Glasgow Herald*, 30th April 1869; *BNL*, 1st May 1869; *Parliamentary Papers 1870*, XXXII (411), *Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry, 1869, into the Riots and Disturbances in the City of Londonderry, with Minutes of Evidence and Appendix.*
[453] Sean Farrell, *Rituals and Riots*, p.172.

In early May 1869 Tait and Disraeli organised the Tory Peers for the battle, as the Commons deliberated.[454] As predicted, the Tories' Commons resistance as the Bill moved through the Commons was feeble. Irish Anglican MPs raised stormy objections which were meet with derision or insouciance—yet few English Conservative MPs were notable in the debates. The Church were banking on the Lords' rejecting the Bill outright, as Disraeli decided that trying to resist the Bill in the Commons would only highlight his weakness there. A stormy public meeting in St. James' Hall, London, attended by the heart of the nobility and strong Protestant wing of the Tories promised that the Lords would derail the Bill.[455] Yet as the Bill was passing out of the Commons Lord Courtown felt 'that that there could not be a majority of the Lords to throw out the bill on the 2nd reading, or even a strong minority.'[456] Indeed, after rounds of consultations Archbishop Trench complained to his cousin Thomas Cooke Trench that Disraeli 'is a vy "dark horse", & will let us see vy little of his hand….My personal impression is that the Lords…are perfectly prepared to commit themselves with the House of Commons, & to let Gladstone do his worst.' It was certainly Salisbury's plan, and Trench concluded 'he is but one of those whose courage will ooze away as the danger comes nearer….He does not at all terrorize Gladstone.'[457] Yet the Standing Committee in Dublin proposed their own deputation to see Cairns '& urge him on him to throw out the Bill on the second reading' in the House of Lords.[458] The Irish Committee was urging the exact opposite of what their London coterie were resigned was the Lords' inevitable action, even before the Bill had left the Commons. The constant flow of letters suggests this idea came from determination and anger, not confusion.

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[454] Lords Salisbury, Bath, and Cairns, and Disraeli to Tait, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th May 1869, LPL Ms.Tait.87,fols.105-8,110,112-5.
[455] *IT*, 4th May 1869.
[456] S.A. Richards to Courtown, 4th May 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/81.
[457] Trench to Cooke Trench, ND, RCBL Ms.327/1/103.
[458] RCBL, GCP, MSC, 5th May 1869.

It was timely—the Commons finished their debates on the 6th and 7th May. For a moment on the last night, a debate became more of an internal Church of Ireland discussion than a Committee of the Whole House. Anticipating difficulties from the overwhelming concentration of Anglicans in the North and East of the country, John Bagwell warned that '[w]hen this Bill was passed it was certain that the great Episcopal Church in Ireland would disintegrate and break up into a number of different bodies'. The Tory John Vance agreed and predicted that only the North would be able to sustain a disestablished Church. Richard Dowse, a Londonderry MP, and Leopold Agar-Ellis,[459] MP for Kilkenny (both Liberals), disagreed. They saw no reason why the Church should not be self-confident, and pledged their support in rebuilding it. Dowse was particularly confident because 'the Protestant Church was no longer "leavened with a sense of injustice"'.[460] Although the Whig and Liberal members of the Church felt optimistic, the templates for Church reconstruction had been already created—and created by infuriated Tories. In this mood, the Bill was sent to the Lords. If they granted it a second reading, the Bill would pass, albeit with amendments in the Church's favour.

Given the confrontation brewing in the Standing Committee, this would be a feeble consolation. In their debates the attitudes and influence were clear—the laity pushed for a Parliamentary confrontation, whilst the clergy urged restraint. Yet the laity's legal expertise and political clout were vital to the fight and trumped clerical moderation. More importantly, the laity on this Committee presumed, as with the previous one, to have a right to speak on all matters—especially flashpoints of conflict (like the balance of power between the clergy and laity) which had theological implications. On 6th May, their London Sub-Committee, including the Archbishops and Duke of Abercorn, itself decided to consider the Bill as it came out of the Commons. This purely Church committee, distinct from the Tories, indicated

[459] Heir to the Viscount Clifton.
[460] *Hansard,* HC Deb., 6th, 7th May 1869, vol. 196 cc265-35, cc390-426.

a thorough distrust of the Conservative Party, who missed the near-apocalyptic image disestablishment had for many in the Church of Ireland.

Alexander Irwin, worried about government-funded purchase for tenants of Glebe lands (buried in the 31st Clause of the Irish Church Bill) wrote: 'As I have 656 acres let to 70 tenants, all of them Roman Catholics & Ribbonmen & holding (most of them) under 5 acres each, nothing could be more ruinous to themselves & to the agricultural prospects of the country than to lend them money to buy the fee of their patches of land.' But there was substantial disagreement within the Committee as to how they could best influence the crucial Lords, and a comprehensive motion from Wexford Tory Robert Staples passed. He proposed they open the proposed deputation to Cairns to any 'friends' of whom the approved. It asked for carte blanche to inundate the House of Lords with the lobbying of all comers, blessed with whatever sanction or cachet this Committee could confer. Finally, they heard a letter from Robert Bent Knox. He refused to cooperate with a proposed Diocesan collection scheme as 'I carefully avoid doing so in all cases involving social or political considerations in which there may be a difference of opinion.'[461] This letter underlined the Committee's anomalous position. Officially, they were the Standing Committee of a voluntary Conference, who had taken great pains to prescribe their own limits and range earlier in April. Yet this Conference, and the elective mechanism used in convening it, had been called with the formal blessing of the Church of Ireland's highest leadership. This group included those willing to come to some sort of agreement with Gladstone in order to secure the best terms possible as well as die-hard political establishmentarians. Yet all were convinced that, in and of itself, disestablishment was nothing but a travesty and evil to be fought bitterly.

[461] RCBL, GCP, MSC, 7th May 1869.

Yet Cairns doubted they would get the numbers to defeat the bill unless by a tiny majority, which Cairns regarded as another kind of defeat.[462] Following a coterie, Tait reported that their strategy 'all depends on the decision which you…as a party adopt'.[463] Tait shrewdly acknowledged that the interests of the Conservative Party would be placed before those of the Church. This disregard for the ecclesiastical implications reinforced the necessity of the solely Church committee in London, paralleling the Tories' partisan efforts. The urgency was magnified by the Committee's learning from Trench, when they met on the 11th, of 'the probability that there would be a division in the House of Lords on the second reading of the Bill', as Courtown predicted. A long Standing Committee meeting on 13th May discussed the deputation. In the debate there were no obvious lines of factional or party division. James Byrne's motion to ask Cairns before sending a deputation—the direct subject of the debate—would probably kill the idea. The meeting divided, rather than hold a straight vote, and the result was 24 to 23 in favour of the motion, and thus for consulting Cairns before organising a deputation.[464] This drive for a deputation grew from the frustration at how the fate of their Church—and the rights of property and Protestant truth that accompanied it—depended on the machinations of the distant House of Lords. Their criteria for opposing the Irish Church Bill's second reading were not necessarily what was best for the Church.

Edward Pennefather reported to Courtown: 'On the whole things are wearing an unruly aspect….It was proposed when the vote was taken that the voters (sic) names shd. be printed with a view to future reckoning! This was not carried. But that it shd. have been proposed shews (sic) the temper of some of our body.' Pennefather was worried that Presbyterians and Methodists would be involved in

[462] Cairns to Disraeli, 1st May 1869, Bodl.Ms.Dep.Hughenden/91/1, fols.206-7.
[463] Tait to Disraeli, 8th May 1869, Bodl.Ms.Dep.Hughenden/144/4, fols.19-20.
[464] RCBL, GCP, MSC, 11th, 12th, 13th May 1869.

the deputation, but conceded that 'I am a little apprehensive about some of your leaders.' The meeting with Cairns took place the next day (14th May) in Sir Joseph Napier's home in St Stephen's Green. Cairns told those members who had managed to attend that the Lords were just as opposed to the principle of the Bill as they were, but did not need a deputation to 'coach' them. However, it was not for him to say what the Committee should or should not do.[465]

Some still held out the hope that they could prevent disestablishment, and tried to use collective Church action, not the political system, to do so. Both the Rev. C.S. Foot and Anthony Traill, a North Antrim landowner and TCD academic, asked the Archbishops to re-convene the Church Conference. The meeting proved full of confrontation and animosity; even the official, stilted, and detached tone customarily used in recording these minutes could not hide the tensions and battle-lines. Robert Staples and Lord James Butler proposed the original motion to send a deputation to London to lobby the House of Lords, disregarding all the counsel they had received from those actually involved at Westminster. The minutes record that at one stage the proposers of rival 'insulting' motions had to leave the room to settle things privately. Another senior clergyman—W.C. Plunket—was forced to apologise for an undisclosed breach, and the names recorded as speaking was far longer than any other normal enumeration of debates. Eventually, the original motion to inundate the Lords was carried after a division, a procedure only used for particularly antagonistic debates. The animosity was not over, however, and the issue of whether or not Ulster dissenters were being discretely enlisted to subvert a purely Anglican effort closed the meeting.[466] Trench complained that they were 'furiously anxious to have the conference…summoned at once that they might fight on a larger theatre, & call to account all who have differed with them'. He was, however, also worried about forcing a 'coup d'etat—&

[465] W. Pennefather to Courtown, 13th, 14th May 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/86.
[466] RCBL, GCP, MSC, 20th May 1869.

at once create that absolute breach with the Northern fanatics, which perhaps must arrive; but which, if it must, they should be the author of, & not we.'[467]

External pressure groups—the CPDA and LCA—decisively coloured the Committee of Laymen and the Church Conference which had created this Standing Committee. It was the culmination of efforts, both from within and outside the Church, to give the laity and junior clergy more of an influence in averting disestablishment. Somewhat unsurprisingly, this process revealed the range of suspicions and conflicts within the Church—and Pennefather specifically tarred the Protestant Defence Association members as the confrontationalists.[468] Sending a legion of supporters to brow-beat a House of Lords which included their natural allies—Bishops, Tory peers, the judiciary—was desperate. Even Abercorn worried about their 'militant declarations'.[469] On 29th May, the formal Standing Committee presentation reminded the peers that disestablishment undermined both the Constitution and the rights of property, and the Church's inability to maintain itself financially. The Protestant Defence Association speakers specifically linked disenfranchised Anglicans to a potential new nationalist bloc.[470]

But Trench already had the indication that Salisbury's greatest concern was to avoid a collision between the two Houses, and thus a constitutional crisis. The Archbishop clearly sympathised with the clergy's chief worry: after disestablishment they might be governed by the laity, whose intemperate political anger could squander a useful financial settlement. Clerical discomfort about commutation certainly justified the fear of lay control. This hardly produced confidence that the Church's future governance would be straightforward and pacific. On 3rd June the Junior Clerical Society heard the Rev. Aiken Irvine discuss 'Disestablishment, its

[467] Trench to Cooke Trench, 21st May 1869, RCBL Ms.327/1/110.
[468] W.Pennefather to Courtown, [18th May 1869], TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/93.
[469] Abercorn to Tait, 25th May 1869, LPL Ms.Tait.87, fols.116-7.
[470] *The House of Lords and the Irish Church Bill. Report of the Proceedings of the Deputations from Ireland to Secure the Rejection of the Bill on the Second Reading* (London, 1869).

relative disadvantages and advantages.'[471] There is no record of what was said, but W.P Walsh, who had been part of the Archbishop's Committee and, as minister of a trustee Church, was already somewhat behoven to his parochial laity, attended. The younger ministers discussed pragmatic ways of altering their roles, confronting changes to their careers the senior clerics would not have anticipated. As with the earlier meeting of this society, lay governance was interpreted differently across ecclesiastical generations.

Even Hedges Eyre Chatterton, one of the strongest advocates of lay governance, and the original architect of the elective system in the Church, felt that '[f]rom what I have seen of the working of our standing committee, I doubt that they would be a very safe body to undertake the organizations of our Church system.' Chatterton took Traill's line that the entire Conference should be recalled, but only for 'setting the mode in which the new Representative Body should be chosen, and then to dissolve'. Whatever difficulties they had had, personally, Chatterton refused to abandon elections. He told Courtown: 'I know that persons who have the ear of the Abp. of Dublin are strongly opposed to anything like a Representative system & think that purely ecclesiastical Synods or Convocations should be convened, who might as a favour invite Lay Cooperation. But you know that we Laymen never will submit to that.'[472] This was the atmosphere as the Irish Church tried to simultaneously avert and manage its own disestablishment—a host of cliques and factions awkwardly brought together by measures which were partly those of a behind-closed-doors cabal, and partly the public meetings and associations of Victorian civil society.

Its future rested on the Lords, the English Bench, and the Queen. Even Queen Victoria advocated a second reading. With Gladstone's consent her office asked Tait to be the intermediary between Gladstone and the Lords, and although

[471] RCBL Ms.142/1.
[472] Chatterton to Courtown, 5th June 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/96.

she was 'apprehensive' about the Bill she accepted that the Commons majority had assembled specifically for it. Victoria took her coronation oath seriously, but had to bow to the new Constitutional order. There was no point in a fresh election, and to reject the bill would 'bring the two houses into collision' and might 'prolong a dangerous agitation on the subject'.[473] Tait himself also favoured this course, and asked Disraeli to lean on the peers still opposing a second reading. He was banking on a rumour that the Whig Lord Granville would 'introduce the measure in a conciliatory speech so as to give ground for believing that amendments materially altering the bill will be respectfully considered.'[474] Ideally, the Lords' Tory majority would have made it the natural safeguard of the old constitution, and thus the principle of the State Church.

The House of Lords was, however, evolving a new function and relevance. It would not be an equal partner of the Commons, but a safeguard against the Commons' overstepping its mandate—a 'referendal theory'. Particularly urged by Salisbury, in this model the Lords would monitor the Commons to ensure they acted in accordance with the will of the country. It enabled a vigorous political life in the increasingly moribund chamber, checking the trend since 1832 that the Lords would degenerate into a cipher for the Commons. Accordingly, in 1868 the Lords capitalised on Disraeli's tactical decision to leave them to reject Gladstone's Suspensory Bill. It sailed through the Commons; Disraeli only confronted it with procedural obfuscation and weak language. The Lords rejected it in a way that made clear they looked to the country for a verdict on disestablishment.

When the election gave Gladstone a Commons majority of over one hundred, Disraeli resigned before Parliament met, acknowledging that the democratic mandate came from the newly-expanded electorate, not the House of Commons. So

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[473] Tait to Gladstone, Gladstone to Tait, 3rd June, Lord Grey to Tait, 4th June 1869, LPL Ms.Tait.87, fols.118-123.
[474] Tait to Disraeli, 8th June 1869, Bodl.Ms.Dep.Hughenden/144/4, fols.21-4.

when the Irish Church Bill reached the Lords, they had placed themselves in the position of having to either contradict the promises granted before the 1868 election, and with it the Lords' renewed relevance, or contravene a party shibboleth.[475] The decision was debated on 8th May 1869 at a Lambeth Palace meeting under Tait's aegis, and in a more party-political mode on 4th June at the Duke of Marlborough's house. During this process, Disraeli, Derby, and Cairns were ineffectual, whilst Salisbury was in the ascendant—and he urged accepting a second reading on the Irish Church Bill as the necessarily disagreeable beginning of a new phase in the life of the Lords.

The meeting on 4th June had between 130 and 150 present. Cairns announced the official policy of rejection. Salisbury followed for the other side. As the Bishop of Gloucester described it: 'In a word, Cairns spoke on the interests of party; Salisbury on the interest of the House of Lords. Minor Orange speakers who spoke wildly and illogically and were heard with great impatience followed…I may as well add that the hue of the meeting was distinctly blue and not orange. It was a party & Conservative rally.'[476] Trench and William Alexander were present at the meeting. They saw how the two wings of the Conservative party subsumed the question of their community's future into one of the Tory Party and House of Lords; how all discussion of the Irish Church itself was ignored or sneeringly dismissed. Many of the peers at that evening had been to the second round of meetings with the Irish deputations earlier in the day, where Robert Hamilton of Belfast reiterated the idea that the Act of Union was a treaty of equals that no one side could arbitrarily break, and other members made emotive pleas for the life of Anglicanism in the South and west of Ireland.[477] Also, on the same day Dublin's Metropolitan

[475] Corinne C. Weston, 'Salisbury and the Lords, 1868-1895', *The Historical Journal*, vol.25, no.1 (March, 1982), pp.103-129.
[476] C.J. Ellicott to Tait, 5th June 1869, LPL Ms.Tait.87, fols.129-30, emphasis original; *IT*, 8th June 1869.
[477] *The House of Lords and the Irish Church Bill*; *IT*, 7th June 1869.

Hall hosted a massed Orange demonstration which defied the Party Processions Act to display emblems everywhere. The meeting declared disestablishment undermined the Union and Constitution, and demanded the Lords throw out the Bill.[478]

However, Tait tried to create a consensus between the various leaders. Despite Cairns discomfort, Tait still hoped Granville would introduce the Bill in a way that allowed constructive amendments. He had the Queen's support, and tried to bring the two Conservative factions together on this point after securing Granville's acquiescence.[479] In contrast, on the eve of the crucial Lords' debate, the seeming whole of the Irish Anglican conservative political establishment and episcopate held a formal lunch in Willis' Rooms, a reception for the deputations from the Church Conference and Irish Presbyterians. They toasted 'Church and State', and, in speeches mostly from the Bishops, used it to expand on the undermined Constitution and the loss of British security in Ireland.[480]

Granville introduced the second reading of the Bill in the Lords on 14th June. He dismissed the argument that Irish secularisation would inaugurate the same in England. He could not 'conceive anything more suicidal to the best interests of the English Church' than that claim, because he could not see how the Irish circumstance applied to 'a Church which stands on so different a footing.' Lord Harrowby, moving the official Tory opposition, weakly began by attacking the Liberals, and patronisingly suggested the Irish Church would collapse 'when the support of civil authority is withdrawn from Protestantism, when the Protestant clergyman is driven away, when the Protestant gentry are half driven away, as they will be, by feeling that they are humiliated in the sight of their neighbours'. The Lay and Clerical Association's trying to fight disestablishment by creating a more comprehensive and inclusive governing structure refuted the idea of clergymen

[478] *IT*, 4th June 1869.
[479] Cairns to Tait, 6th June, Tait to Queen Victoria, 6th, 7th June 1869, LPL Ms.Tait.87, fols.131-2,136-9.
[480] *IT*, 10th June 1869.

being driven away, the flow of Irish Tories into the resilient, active Protestant Defence Association hardly revealed a humiliated Protestant gentry, and the willingness of key lawyers, judges and bishops to risk potential treason in convening an elected Convention mocked the idea that the Irish Church was dependent on British civil authority.

Some of the most direct sympathy with the Irish Church came, oddly, from Lord Carnarvon. In a majestic speech he recognised 'some merit in the freedom from the control of the State which this Bill gives the Church in Ireland—that freedom from the control of the State which long kept her in a kind of slavery, which for so many generations made her the cesspool of official patronage'. He also complimented the Irish Anglican laity (a rarity). But ultimately, disestablishment was 'the definitive judgment of the country' and the Lords were thus bound to accept it, and pass the second reading. The closing speech of the night was from William Alexander, who declared the Irish Church's nominal friends seemed as dangerous as their enemies. The Bill was 'intensely grinding and penurious' and 'fails constitutionally'. The imminent Land Bill would destroy the Irish Protestant middle-class on whom a voluntary Church would depend.

Trench followed Earl Grey the next night. His speech was a passionate defence of the Church's tactics of not negotiating, comparing this to 'the garrison of a hard-pressed city invited…to assist at a conference by which they were to be put to the sword'. They would have 'discredited' themselves to the Irish laity—but now it would be remembered that 'we did not concede to humiliation'. It was the fault of the (British) state for creating an under-performing establishment, and he included the denial of self-government in his litany of state burdens on the Church. Ireland would be no more safe or settled: the Catholics would still be unsatisfied, but, crucially, the now-alienated Protestants would join this: 'The olive branch…is

disdainfully returned to your hands, but returned dripping blood.'[481] He was clearly speaking to the Irish laity through the press, more than the House of Lords.

The most famous speech came from Magee. As the bill developed through the Commons he had actually become more radical in his opposition, and less in favour of compromise. He argued that '[r]evolutions commence with sacrilege and go on to communism; or…revolutions begin with the Church and go on to the land.' He destroyed many of the arguments against the Church, and, despite his new English see, did so by attacking English policy, past and present. He spoke of the 'disgusting' Penal Laws as enacted to defend the Crown's rule, not the Church. Furthermore, the fact that the Church was endowed with Irish land, and most landowners were Protestant, was because the British crown confiscated land held by Celtic Irishmen, and re-granted it. If this was wrong, surely the whole process was wrong, and every current descendant of the ancient owner of a pre-conquest estate should be restored at the expense of all contemporary Irish landowners.

Earlier, politicians taught the Irish 'that murder and outrage are a necessary stimulant to the consciences of English statesmen.' Now Irish Protestant views towards England were merging with the peasants. The Bill 'has sunk deep into their hearts a bitter and exasperated sense of wrong which centuries will not efface.' The Bill 'repeals the Union by turning every Unionist into a Repealer without turning a single Repealer into a Unionist.' Much of Magee's speech was redolent of older waves of Irish Protestant patriot nationalism—his oration was a flicker of the same sentiments of 1782 and the *Dublin University Magazine* generation, such as the claim that

> England confiscated the property of Ireland at the bidding of a Pope….and now…the last device for regulating Irish affairs, to be found in the repertory of English statesmen, is another confiscation….in those days England confiscated the property of the disloyal and rewarded the loyal, in these days she proceeds to mend matters by confiscating the property of the loyal to reward the disloyal.

[481] *Hansard*, HL Deb., 14th, 15th June 1869, vol.196 cc1637-740, 1794-896.

Magee's words actually came directly from J.C. MacDonnell's speech at the Church Convention in March, incorporating Church agitation further with Parliamentary debate. This, and an appeal from Derby, did nothing.

On 18th June 1869 Salisbury and Carnarvon decisively led a splinter group to support the second reading by a majority of 33: 32 Tory peers, and Connop Thirlwall, bishop of St David's. Significant numbers of English bishops, including Tait, abstained.[482] The ultimate decision on the fate of the Irish Church was made on constitutional interpretation, not the details of the Church of Ireland's position, or indeed any real regard toward its wellbeing. The context of this remote parliamentary discussion was visceral civil unrest. These critical debates came just a few weeks before the Irish Protestant totem of 12th July. Lord Spencer carped that the Tories were now relying on the Orange Order and making use of their demonstrations, that there would be an 'outbreak' following the Bill's passage into law.[483]

The Standing Committee also, on 30th June, heard a motion from William Brooke that they should re-summon the Conference if the Bill passed. It was also independently negotiating with the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, despite the tensions over whether or not the Conference was the nucleus of the independent Church.[484] Furthermore, their debates were now being published with views to a wider readership, extending the debates to the whole Protestant body and mirroring the practice of publishing Parliamentary speeches.[485] Their deputation was a failure. Undeterred, the Standing Committee sent two men to London to fight for Church interests in the Lords' amendments: Hugh Mulrock Pilkington, and Thomas Lefroy. Pilkington sent an extremely detailed and long letter to Thomas Greene, the

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[482] *Hansard*, HL Deb., 17th, *18th June 1869, vol. 197 cc18-118, 162-307.*
[483] Spencer to O'Hagan, 12th June 1869, PRONI Ms.D2777/8/53.
[484] RCBL, GCP, MSC, 30th June 1869.
[485] W.C. Plunket, *Commutation Considered Specially with a View to Compensation for Diminished Security. A Paper Read at a Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Irish Church Conference, on Wednesday, June 23, 1869* (Dublin, 1869).

Standing Committee's Honorary Secretary, at least once, and sometimes twice, a day. He was constantly busy during the negotiations and discussion on amendments which followed the Bill's second reading in the Lords, trying to get various individuals to adopt the changes advanced by the Standing Committee. Yet, despite this intense activity, some of Pilkington's strongest themes were irrelevance and dejection, as none of the amendments proposed by the Standing Committee made it into the Bill. His most commonly used adjective was 'hopeless'.[486] Tait orchestrated the Lords' amendments, and does not appear to have consulted Irish opinion in this extensive and complex process.[487]

On 1st July Pilkington added a new note of worry to his litany of truncated meetings and being ignored: 'There seems to be a fixed intention of asking for as little as possible. The Conservative leaders dread a collision with the Commons. If I am not mistaken it will be forced before the Bill passes through the Committee that the Conservative party in the House of Peers will be broken up.' The next day, amidst constant defeats on amendments, Lords Courtown and Bandon, Archbishop Trench, C.B. Bernard, bishop of Tuam, Thomas Lefroy, and Hugh Pilkington had a meeting on 'the Constitution of the Church Body.' Lefroy and Pilkington discussed this with Trench again the next day.[488] The one area in which they had any substantive control was one in which Westminster had no interest—the details of their own self-government.

By extension, the Standing Committee itself proved useful not as a simple font of condemnation, but instead as a constructive means of influencing the future of the Church. The Standing Committee, although unable to influence the details of the Bill's amendments in their favour, had at least initiated the process of amendments. In this sense, it functioned as a method of governance, and one which

[486] H.M. Pilkington to Greene, 24th, 25th, 26th (two letters), 29th June, 1st (two letters), 2nd, 3rd July 1869, RCBL, GCP; also notes in MSC.
[487] LPL Ms.Tait.87,fols.144-5,150-154,158-162,164-171.
[488] Pilkington to Greene, 1st, 2nd, 3rd July 1869, RCBL, GCP.

brought the laity and clergy together. Self-government came from trying to mediate Parliament. On 9th July they debated Brooke's motion to re-summon the Church Conference.[489] A few weeks later Trench wrote that '[w]hether we throw the Bill or pass it, all in Ireland seems as dark as can be'.[490] Amendments were going against them, and their only recourse was to volatile political language: Bishop Bernard reminded the house of the Act of Union, and Lord Leitrim promised 'a great re-action' if the country abandoned Irish Protestantism. Yet the final amendments, against the Church's interests, passed.[491]

Archbishop Tait tried to console Beresford and Trench, writing that '[t]he blow which has fallen has been very severe, and looking back I know not what more could have been done by us either in Ireland or in England to mitigate it.' He stressed the need to maintain links across the two Churches.[492] Clearly, this either ignored or failed to accept the Irish feeling that the English bench facilitated disestablishment, worried about inspiring the powerful antiestablishment alliance against the Church of England. It also showed how Tait, and the English Church, was mostly concerned with endowments, whilst the Irish Church took disestablishment itself equally seriously. One Irish clergyman warned Tait 'the Irish Church Bill just passed through the treachery of the Conservative Peers & Prelates in the House of Lords'. Accordingly, 'Her Majesty will lose the loyalty & affection of at least a million of her Irish Protestant subjects….The result of her Majesty giving her assent to the Bill must be, in my opinion & that of many others, a civil war. And far better will it be for brave men to fall fighting nobly for a righteous cause than to

[489] RCBL, GCP, MSC, 9th July 1869.
[490] Trench to Cooke Trench, 20th July 1869, RCBL Ms.327/1/115.
[491] *Hansard*, HL Deb., 22nd July 1869, vol. 198 cc406-47.
[492] Tait to Beresford, 24th July 1869, CUL Ms.Add.9407/2/27; Copy Tait to Trench, Beresford to Tait, 24th, 29th July 1869, LPL Ms.Tait/87, fols.176-7,180-1.

live dishonoured as well as betrayed.'[493] Although this hyperbolic threat was far-fetched, the comprehensive Irish anger at its base was not.

The Irish Church Bill became law on 26th July 1869. According to Owen Chadwick, many English Anglicans felt a quiet sense of relief and acceptance, knowing that, ultimately, the Church of England was more secure.[494] That same day Edward Pennefather wrote to Courtown, saying there had been no hope once the second reading passed: 'I was not prepared for the cool way in which Lord Cairns threw you all over, or the way in which Ld. Salisbury & Ld. Carnarvon ate the brave "words" they had used in committee.'[495] Anthony Traill fumed that '[w]e have been grossly betrayed by Lord Cairns & his party, which in fact I foresaw, from that day's interview with him, at Sir J Napier's. Our Church Committee has been completely ignored'.[496] The Irish Establishment, for so long defended as a bulwark and symbol of the Constitution, expressing the triumph of truth over numbers and confrontation, was sacrificed to accommodate a constitutional change which accepted that majoritarian politics now ruled. Its architect was the Conservative Party.

The Church's efforts were shaped by a battle between rival mentalities—clerically moderate vs. politically confrontationalist—almost as much as that against Parliament. They were, in many cases, as angry with each other as they were with Gladstone. Moreover, they fought this battle through a potent combination of voluntary societies, the Protestant Defence Association and the Lay and Clerical Association, continuing long-standing political expressions. Those precipitated their creating a representative structure, which, through the Standing Committee, in turn monitored and moderated the Church's response to Parliament. It was an independent Irish body, acting as an intermediary between the Imperial

[493] J.G. Cotton to Tait, 24th July 1869, LPL Ms.Tait/87,fols.174-5.
[494] Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church,* vol.II, p.432.
[495] E. Pennefather to Courtown, 26th July 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/100.
[496] Traill to Greene, 29th July 1869, RCBL, GCP.

Parliament and the Irish Protestant community. The Standing Committee internalised the Parliamentary process and language, refracting governmental imagery into their representative, consultative structures. It endowed the nascent Church government with far wider political and cultural symbolism, which only increased in the Church's reconstruction.

Chapter Three
The Reconstruction of the Church of Ireland
1869-1870

The reconstruction of the Church was a process of socially and politically conservative men stumbling into radicalism. The actual shape of voluntary Irish Anglicanism was strikingly inclusive for both Victorian politics and the Victorian Church. The failed parliamentary campaign created significant tensions and uncertainties about the nascent Church's future; the reconstruction inherited them. Irish Anglicanism's religious future had been suspended, bound in a long, painful Westminster hurly-burly. Charles D'Arcy, archbishop of Armagh from 1920 to 1938 and ten years old at the time of disestablishment, recalled his father reading the Parliamentary debates each night to the worried, gathered family.[497] The experience of disestablishment through a bitter party battle politicised a generations, shaping and re-defining its understanding of their Church.

The Irish Church's reconstruction took place within a complex web of meanings. In Jack White's terms, it transformed a religious institution into a religious community.[498] Insecure in numbers, and rocked from a position of privilege and exclusivity, disestablishment was the death-blow to Irish Anglicanism's hitherto-accepted place in Irish public life. As Jacqueline Hill argued, the Anglican monopoly on civic office in the eighteenth-century formed the central plank of Protestantism's public identity. Disestablishment was the ultimate end to the nineteenth-century process of destroying Irish civic life's Anglican exclusivity.[499] Essentially, the Church of Ireland had a central position within Irish public life by dint of being the Establishment. When this was removed, the Church's physical,

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[497] C.F. D'Arcy, *The Adventures of a Bishop: A Phase of Irish Life. A Personal and Historical Narrative* (London, 1934).
[498] Jack White, *Minority Report: The Protestant Community in the Irish Republic* (Dublin, 1979).
[499] Jacqueline Hill, 'The Church of Ireland Laity and the Public Sphere, 1740-1869', in Raymond Gillespie and W.G. Neely (eds.), *The Laity and the Church of Ireland, 1000-2000: All Sorts and Conditions* (Dublin, 2002).

social presence took a new shape: elections, conducted at public meetings, to send delegates to national meetings.

As the politics of disestablishment touched fundamental aspects of the United Kingdom constitution, it bound the renewal and revision of Irish Anglican self-definition within the uncertain and unsettling flux of mid-Victorian political turbulence. The reconstruction did not come from a blank slate—it grew from the politicised structure already created. Irish churchmen were not the only ones to see a structural comparison between church and imperial governance.[500] However, Irish antidisestablishmentarianism was unique in gathering together voters and non-voters alike into a radical mass-movement that critically examined their community's relationship to the wider United Kingdom polity. Then, retaining the same narrow and coherent corps of leaders, when the Church was disestablished and disendowed, that same structure became the nucleus of the Church's self-government. The Irish Church campaign unleashed political imagery that evolved into a governing structure.

[500] George Trevor, *Diocesan Synods in Relation to Parliament & Congress* (York/London, 1867).

I

The Aftermath of the Irish Church Act

July 1869—October 1869

The antagonism between the various factions involved in the Parliamentary fight meant the final antidisestablishmentarian committee—the Standing Committee of the Church Conference—could barely function. The representative structure facilitated confrontations over geographic, economic, political, and theological differences. It was not a moderate template for the future Church. Despite these limitations, on 27th July 1869 (the day after the Irish Church Act became law) the Protestant Defence Association sent out a circular to all the delegates of the Church Conference soliciting signatures for a requisition to the Archbishops to re-summon the Church Conference.[501] Although their original purpose was exclusively Parliamentary, the CPDA now sought to control the Church's reconstruction. Inevitably, this would further politicise the process, and transform it into a 'contentious movement.'[502] Trench confessed this 'wd. be the immediate signal for a declaration on the part of a considerable body of our Clergy that they denied its authority, & wd. abide none of its decisions....I often fear that we shall find ourselves on the rocks & among the quick sands even before we have left harbour.'[503] Re-summoning the Conference had dangerous potential. The debates surrounding its creation in March turned on the dubious wisdom of calling an anti-governmental assembly in Dublin. With disestablishment a bitter reality, and the confrontational laity's enmity extended wider, there was even more potential danger in Protestant assemblies.

The Standing Committee reconvened on 30th July 1869. An elderly Co. Down rural dean, Henry Murphy, was in Dublin that day, and noted in his diary '[t]here is

[501] TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/101.
[502] Charles Tilly, *Democracy and Contention in Europe, 1650-2000.*
[503] Trench to Courtown, 31st July 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/104.

considerable agitation here upon the formation of a "Goverg. Church Body". Heard much wh. wd. lead me to fear none will be formed, at least of a permanent character.'[504] The Committee discussed using their own initiative to re-summon the rest of the Conference, empowering it to construct the new Representative Church Body. Beyond the immediate politics, this would outflank the centuries-old Episcopal structure and force an ecclesiological crisis—possibly even a schism. If this happened, there was a genuine possibility that they could have split into mutually antagonistic Churches, one lay-reconstructed and the other episcopally-reconstructed. Eventually, they decided on an awkward compromise of asking the Archbishops to recall the Conference.[505] This did not by-pass the episcopate, but maintained that the laity's elected representatives should be the basis of reorganisation. It did flout Trench's wish to work through the solely-clerical Convocation, simply 'accompanied by Lay action'.[506] Furthermore, their agreeing even to form a Representative Church Body (RCB) was something of a moderate decision—angry suggestions that it was degrading to follow any detail of Gladstone's plans coursed through the Anglican rumour-mill. In August William Bence-Jones published a pamphlet reminding the Irish laity of the legal necessity to form the RCB in order to receive their churches and money. He conceded that lay governance was necessary.[507] This was a timely, sober riposte to those laymen who were so angry they wanted to decline anything tainted by Gladstonian policy—even at the cost of sacrificing the financial settlement.

Similarly, R.B. Knox blasted these sentiments in a pamphlet remarkable given the rawness of disestablishment. In keeping with some other Whig and Liberal Anglicans, Knox accepted disestablishment because it would reduce the Irish Catholic opposition to the Church. Central to the Church of Ireland's claim was its

[504] PRONI Ms.D1337/4.
[505] RCBL, GCP, MSC, 30th July 1869.
[506] Courtown to Trench, 28th July 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/99.
[507] William Bence-Jones, *The Future of the Irish Church* (Dublin, 1869).

existence as the true Church of the Irish people by its unique Patrician descent within overarching apostolic succession. This national self-equation had previously justified its position, endowment, and territory. However, Knox made a point of referring to his Church as simply 'the Episcopal Church in Ireland'. It was merely one Christian denomination not the only unique and true vestige of St. Patrick's mission. Whilst this was a remarkable theological statement for a Church of Ireland prelate, from it Knox was able to construct a timely and solid political argument. Disestablishment released them from 'offensive and irritating supremacy.' More Irish Churchmen now could become engaged in their communion's spiritual life. Certainly all could find a new commonality—Tories were livid at the State for its betrayal, and Liberals had never approved of the State-Church connection in the first place. Now, all could unite within a newly liberated Church. Disestablishment

> brings *freedom*....the Irish Church paid a high price for State favour....She allowed Parliament to arrange her creed, prescribe her devotions, appoint her bishops, curb, control, manipulate, and modify her according to the ever-shifting whims of political parties....She had no self-government, and no discipline. The House of Commons, composed of Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Romanists, Socinians, Jews, and men of no religious profession whatever, managed her affairs like an ordinary branch of the Civil Service.

Now the Church would be spared the taint of anti-British ire from Catholics.[508]

However, those agitating to re-summon the Conference were confrontationalists seeking a public weapon. The Conference had been raised solely to condemn disestablishment, not facilitate pan-political cooperation. A recalled Conference of defeated establishmentarians would have exacerbated all existing tensions, political and ecclesiological. Accordingly, Trench was certain they would lose the clergy if the Conference was re-summoned. The Irish Bench met to discuss this on 3rd August, and gave the 'Church Conference people a courteous, but

[508] Robert Knox, *Ireland Under the New Church Act. Plain Truths and Stern Facts for Earnest Men* (Dublin/London/Edinburgh/Belfast, 1869).

decided answer…that we will not reassemble the body.'[509] A surviving draft of a private letter Beresford wrote refusing to call the Conference was headed 'Protestant Defence Assn.'[510] The Primate himself specifically confronted the CPDA to defuse their politics. This makes clear just which clique Trench obliquely called the 'Church Conference people': the most political and antagonistic section of the laity. Trench confessed to Tait his worry at how much 'anger' seemed to be animating the reconstruction.[511]

Whatever Church government emerged would have to confront Prayer Book Revision. The assertive evangelical wing made clear their desire to alter portions of the Book of Common Prayer; the only unresolved question was the extent of the proposed change. This coloured all Irish discussion of lay involvement, but also English attitudes to the Irish Church. Just three days after the decision on the Conference, a more straightforward ritual of Protestant politics reminded the community that the looming decisions were not solely concerned with a nascent Church administration, but the mood and future of nearly 700,000 people. The Apprentice Boys' demonstrations and celebrations of the Relief of Derry that year carried a strong theme of independence—the Church was beset by enemies all around her. The Apprentice Boys made a point of defying the government by firing guns in resistance to not merely Roman Catholics, but 'the forces of a Government that has proved itself hostile to their principles and religion.' The Protestant Defence Association had one of the most prominent places in the order of the procession, and marched under their own flag.[512] Even decorous political organising grounded itself in the Church. The Hon. David Plunket, eager to replace Anthony Lefroy as MP for Dublin University, consulted hundreds of voters and 'established canvassing

[509] Trench to Cooke Trench, 2nd, 6th August 1869, RCBL Ms.327/1/117,118; *DE*, 11th, 12th August 1869.
[510] CUL Ms.Add.9407/7/15.
[511] Trench to Tait, 9th August 1869, LPL Ms.Tait.87, fols.190-1.
[512] *BNL*, 14th August 1869.

"centres" all over the country and in every diocese'. He was convinced of a significant change in the Church of Ireland's political temper.[513]

The language surrounding an Antrim by-election, fought that August, exemplified the mood of political possibility. The official Conservative candidate and representative of the enormous Hertford landed interest, H. de G. Seymour, proposed 'independent support to the interest of true Protestants', remaining free from any 'minister of the day'.[514] In the first electoral test after disestablishment, the Tory candidate promised to stay aloof from (untrustworthy) English entanglements. Even though he was himself an absentee Englishman, he still acknowledged a shift in the local mood.[515] This grew from, and recognised, the disgust with which most Irish Tories then viewed both Disraeli and Gladstone. One squire advanced an early indication of the possible political fusions. Marriott Robert Dalway, MP for Carrickfergus, a member of the Orange Order and a Protestant Defence Association activist, backed Sir Robert Shafto Adair in the Antrim by-election. Although a committed North Antrim Churchman, for the Rev. Stephen Gwynn, Treasurer of Connor, Adair was 'ultra Liberal'.[516] This endorsement raised the *News-Letter*'s hackles,[517] and later forced an Orange revolt against Dalway,[518] but it revealed a chance of coalescence. As discussed in Chapter One, three years earlier Adair urged stronger internal Church governance, coupled with revived political action.[519] Now it seemed he had that chance.

Samuel Pounden complained: 'Last March people hardly knew what they were asked to do. In many parishes "the squire" or the rich man was chosen

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513 David Plunket to Edward Gibson, 12th, 23rd, 29th August 1869, Parliamentary Archive (PA) Ms.ASH/B/119/7-9.
514 *BNL*, 9th August 1869.
515 B.M. Walker, *Ulster Politics: The Formative Years, 1868-86* (Belfast, 1989), pp.74-8.
516 RCBL Ms.440/1/24.
517 *BNL*, 17th August 1869.
518 Frank Wright, *Two Lands on One Soil: Ulster Politics Before Home Rule* (Dublin, 1996), pp.351, 409-11.
519 Robert Shafto Adair, *Ireland and Her Servile War*.

irrespective of his fitness, solely in compliment to his position or wealth.' Pounden was eager any new round of elections produce a dedicated, committed body.[520] Even more so, two days after the *Pall Mall Gazette* derided the Irish reorganisation,[521] an overture from a leading Tory Churchman to the Duke of Leinster made clear how this process could bring together political opponents. Leinster was the chief Irish Whig; one of his younger sons (Lord Otho FitzGerald) even held minor office under Gladstone. However, Church reconstruction could transcend party affiliation, and forge a new common ground—but do so specifically on the principle of suffocating the most demotic aspects of Protestant politicking.

George Hamilton, who, as a former MP for Dublin University, described himself as 'having been for so many years a quasi Representative in Parliament of the Church in Ireland', suggested to Leinster that both sides try to bury their traditional political stances on the Church. Intriguingly, Hamilton suggested the model for this was Acts, chapter IV—which documented the lay Apostle's triumph over the civil powers, and their sharing property. This was clearly a potent image for the Irish Church: religious truth not only surpassing a self-serving government, but providing the model for self-finance. But Hamilton tied this self-governance into upper-caste collusion. He felt the delegates to any future body should be 'men of the highest rank, property, & personal influence', which would ensure that the new Church administration 'would be free from even a tinge of party or political bias—therefore, when we speak of the Church in Ireland, we should know it only in its religious aspect—it is therefore all important that any movement on the part of the Laity should be divested of any feature which could give it a political or party character.'[522] It was in the episcopate's interest for the RCB to be formed simply and

[520] Pounden to Courtown, 17th August 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/109.
[521] *PMG*, 17th August 1869.
[522] Hamilton to Leinster, 19th August 1869, PRONI Ms. D3078/3/50/4; Acts IV, 1-31.

quietly, as this would assuage fears, inspire confidence, and produce a stable government.

However, those with the most experience of practical Church management tended to be the laymen involved in the trustee chapel movement—the hotbed of evangelicalism, and thus, in many cases, skepticism towards the episcopate. The lay reconstruction of an Episcopal church could become the lay construction of a fairly new Church, if the more zealous evangelical laity had their way. Part of Bence-Jones' *The Future of the Irish Church* warned against evangelicals' taking the reconstruction to this dangerous route. He urged against the election of bishops, as this would elevate local causes over national needs, although he agreed that they should refuse Crown appointments, if more people like Gladstone could be elected in the future.[523] One pamphlet of the time furiously urged a course of extreme Low Churchmanship, in which a Church Government would redraw the 33 medieval dioceses to appoint 32 'Bishops or Overseers' (one per county), elect rectors, initiate mandatory scripture classes for adults, compile a new catechism, and ban 'all images, idols, pictures and *material* crosses'. The splenetic urged the reconstruction of the Church through a series of public meetings of 'exhortation' and 'hosanna',[524] not the legalistic and moderate course advocated by the Bishops so far.

The Archbishops called their Provincial Synods on 18th August 1869, preparing for a clerical National Synod in September. However, the clergy accepted, from the start, that they would have to work with the laity in reorganising the Church; the question was whether or not the laity had an absolute right to take part. One reading of the issue showed how highly constitutional the thinking could be: the comment of *Saunders' Church Paper* was that '[t]he state, which represented and acted for the laity, having withdrawn from all connection with the Church, it became a matter of necessity to devise means to re-introduce the lay element, in a

[523] William Bence-Jones, *The Future of the Irish Church.*
[524] Anon., *A Guide to Reform in the Irish Church for 1871* (Dublin, ND), emphasis original.

manner which should be in consonance with the principles of and rules which had heretofore prevailed in her ecclesiastical constitution.'[525] The idea that Parliament was the Lay Synod of the Church was a foundation of High Church thought.[526] Its use in the evangelical Church of Ireland showed substantial political energy.

R.B. Knox's August visitation warned '[n]ow that the Church is separated from the State, to introduce the political element into its future constitution would be a most fatal mistake.' He preferred to focus on how, 'emancipated from State control', the Church would win 'fresh spiritual victories' and emerge stronger. In this Knox counted on 'the affections of our faithful laity'.[527] However, lay-clerical tensions could not have been helped by William Fitzgerald's publicised August visitation, which admonished the laity who organised without bishops. He reminded them that, legally, the Archbishops did not need to include them in the Synods, but chose to do so. At the same time, the Bench met behind closed doors in the Bilton Hotel to deliberate on their course of action.[528]

To return to Jack White's terms, the 'religious community' met in the Molesworth Hall, Molesworth St, Dublin. On 23rd August, the politicians and lawyers the Hon. David Plunket and Thomas Lefroy proposed a meeting on the 31st to settle the issue of Lay Representation. John Barlow was the proposed chairman—a stalwart of the Archbishop's Consulting Committee and its Committee of Laymen, but also the Protestant Defence Association. Symbolically, though, the meeting on the 31st would be held under the banner of the Dukes of Leinster and Abercorn, representing the two political parties, as well as the South and North, respectively. After the failure of their attempt to revive the Conference, the PDA had begun to

[525] *Saunders' Church Paper*, 18th August 1869.
[526] G.F.A Best, *Temporal Pillars: Queen Anne's Bounty, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and the Church of England* (Cambridge, 1964), p.60.
[527] *IT*, 20th August 1869.
[528] *Saunders' Church Paper*, 18th August 1869.

hold its own meetings to influence—or outflank—the reconstruction process.[529] Lord Meath seconded G.A. Hamilton's urging the previously-unconnected Leinster to accept a leadership role, because

> if sensible & moderate men in the country, and those in the foremost positions, do not take the initiative, the firey spirits & traffickers in notoriety will place themselves in the van….It is to avoid such a misfortune and with the object of showing that no political spirits will be tolerated in the formation of the proceedings of the reformed Episcopal Church of Ireland that you & Abercorn…have been pointed out as the proper persons to summon this projected meeting.[530]

Abercorn secured archiepiscopal cooperation; Trench cannily understood they could not be seen to decline the offers from this supposedly autonomous, spontaneous lay meeting.[531] Similarly, Lefroy deplored the CPDA's attempt 'to keep alive the political feelings which must inevitably mar our work of reorganization'.[532] Lefroy and Plunket were publically adamant that the planned meeting 'should be free from any colour of party or political consideration.'[533]

In this light, the appeal to the Dukes of Leinster and Abercorn was not in any way a radical inauguration of the process, as D.H. Akenson supposed.[534] It was a counter-reaction to the decidedly confrontational trajectory, potentially emerging as a political movement. Appealing to the two Irish dukes ensured a Whig-Tory alliance would bring the weight of social conservatism against the demotic elements in the Church. The eventual method used to combat disestablishment—mass elections—had political implications. Now the magnates were trying to prevent the reorganisation of the Church from snowballing into a Protestant political movement. Meath proposed the process for new elections, based on the Church

[529] *BNL*, 9th, 17th, 23rd August, 1869.
[530] Meath to Leinster, 23rd August 1869, PRONI Ms.D3078/3/50/5.
[531] Trench to Beresford, 27th August 1869, CUL Ms.Add.9407/3/79.
[532] Lefroy to Courtown, 27th August 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/116.
[533] *BNL*, 28th August 1869.
[534] D.H. Akenson, *Church of Ireland*, pp.276-9.

Conference system, and the Bishops agreed to it before circulation.[535] Although the elite were trying to manage the reconstruction process to diffuse any radicalism, out of necessity they used the potentially radical templates created earlier.

This Lay Convention was held without any overt, formal official sanction. However, John Norwood opened the meeting by stating they were not present to make detailed plans, but to request that the Archbishops summon an official meeting which would properly decide the mechanics of lay representation; Courtown proposed the central motion. Lord James Butler, an evangelical firebrand, opposed this. He railed there was no point summoning people from all over Ireland to a meeting which most thought would actually organise lay representation, and then surprise everyone by ceding authority back to the Archbishops, who had not 'justified their claim to be looked up to in the present crisis'. He fumed 'there were too many secret meetings' making decisions in advance, and demanded that the Dukes, not Archbishops, head the laity's reorganisation. They ultimately passed the original motion, but softened the language from asking the next meeting to 'consider' (instead of 'determine') the eventual result. Butler threatened to go to the press with his objections anyway. The *Belfast News-Letter* did not run extensive details of this stormy meeting, but the *Freeman's Journal* happily reported Protestant disunity and confusion.[536]

The next day Courtown complained of 'wirepullers' to de Vesci, arguing they intended to perpetuate the perennial Dublin dominance. He felt that the crucial ideas would be arranged 'before hand by a set of people who are accustomed to managing public meetings. Would it not be well if some of us (a few) country folk were to meet quietly some day next week and agree on certain some few good

[535]Meath to Leinster, 31st August 1869, PRONI Ms.D3078/3/50/7; Meath to Courtown, 4th September 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/126.
[536] *BNL*, 1st September 1869; *FJ*, 1st September 1869. Akenson thought the Butler-group proposed replacing the Archbishops as the actual heads of the Church with the Dukes, not simply who should lend the authority to the Laity's part of reconstruction.

principles…and so come prepared to meet any manouevre of the Dublin clique?'[537] Courtown's fear of 'wirepullers' hijacking an independent, deliberating body and turning it into a contest between 'sectional' factions came straight from aristocratic discomfort after 1867.[538] Lord Templetown reported to Courtown, after consultations with Belfast leaders as well as de Vesci: 'I highly approve of the means you suggest for holding our own against the Dublin people'. He promised reinforcements in packing whatever meeting would take place.[539]

Similarly, a copy of Trench's circular to his own clergy made its way to Leinster (who as a layman had no business with it); this letter presented the convenient fiction that the Archbishops invited the laity to organise,[540] rather than the more awkward reality that a few politicians worked across the aisle to concede authority back to the Archbishops. The process of collusion between clerics and magnates, marked on the national level, continued on local ones. In the same vein as the negotiations between the Archbishops and nobility, the Rev. Stephen Gwynn met secretly with the local gentry before their parochial elections,[541] and this was far from unusual. Importantly, this was a pan-island cooperation of magnates in face of lower-class agitation.

One of the central issues of difference was the disparities of population between the different Dioceses. Representing each equally would give the less populous Southern and Western Dioceses more weight than the densely Anglican Ulster and Dublin dioceses. However, representation based on simple population would give Ulster a veto over the rest of Ireland. This was complicated by the fact that all the decisions, so far, had been made in Dublin, often by Dublin-residents. Even the Standing Committee of the Church Conference, which had an equal

[537] Courtown to de Vesci, 1st September 1869, NLI Ms.39005/1.
[538] J.P. Parry, *Liberal Government*, p.222.
[539] Templetown to Courtown, 3rd September 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/125.
[540] 7th September 1869, PRONI Ms.D3078/3/50/11.
[541] RCBL Ms.440/1/24.

number of representatives for each Diocese, was Dublin-centric: Sir Arthur Guinness and Sir Richard Orpen, both Dubliners, represented Tuam and Limerick respectively.[542] Thomas Lefroy represented Kilmore, owning nearly 17,000 acres in Leitrim, but was also part of the Dublin political world. Trench acknowledged 'it will be absolutely necessary to recognize the far larger Church population which is in some dioceses than in others', but worried about the ramifications.[543] If the sparsely-populated dioceses were outvoted, he worried they might disappear. Clearly this matter transcended local pride in voting weight. The Archbishop wrote the day after Down, Connor, and Dromore held their Synod.

They organised before anyone else, cannily setting precedents and avoiding having to follow yet more Dublin-based decisions. After communion in St. Anne's, they moved over to Clarence Place, where the Synod was held in the hall usually used for Protestant charities and public associations. Henry Murphy recorded 400 people in formal attendance, with the galleries open to others.[544] The Synod passed a motion declaring that lay representation ought to be based on population, getting Belfast's stance forward at the start of the debate. Another motion, supported by Lord Templetown, declared that the coming General Convention should be held in Armagh, not Dublin, in deference to the predominance of Ulster's population. This drew a harsh reaction from Isaac Murphy and Robert Hamilton, two men with broader sympathies, who protested 'it would seem as if they wanted to give up the South and West, and confine their energies to the North, [and] nothing would be more perilous to the Church.' The motion was withdrawn, but the newspapers still carried the debate, so the point was made to the rest of Ireland.[545]

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[542] They were landowners in those districts.
[543] Trench to Courtown, 8th September 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/129, emphasis original.
[544] PRONI Ms.D1337/4.
[545] *DE*, 8th September 1869; RCBL Ms.440/1/24.

Cleary this animosity expressed longstanding tensions. However, the campaigning Church associations created by the antidisestablishment movement gave them a new vehicle. So Thomas Lefroy used his weight within the Protestant Defence Association to squash their nascent politicisation of Church reconstruction, and urged Courtown to do the same. By 11th September 1869 Lefroy persuaded the PDA to suspend its activities. In a compromise, he agreed that ten members could re-animate the society if they felt it necessary.[546] Although the moderates gained a temporary victory, the possibility remained that the PDA would, if dissatisfied with the course of the reconstruction, re-assemble to either hijack or outflank the process the moderates were so carefully trying to control.

That same day the wholly-clerical Diocesan Synod of Cashel resolved that although the Synods were the true, ancient form of Church government 'they are not suitable to the present state of the Church, inasmuch as they totally exclude the Lay element'. In contrast, in the neighboring diocese of Killaloe the Nenagh, Co. Tipperary parish elections showed how confrontational the laity's attitude could be: three men were nominated, and 'were asked whether they would *insist* in a fuller representation of the laity in the future government of the Church.' One said he would not; two said they would, and they were the two elected.[547] This animosity gained a further dimension; it was not merely an aggressive spirit. Procedurally, the Killaloe synod conducted itself on the model of the House of Commons.[548] This anger and aggression, initially directed at Parliament, carried into a wider anti-elite vein through internalised Parliamentary models.

In contrast, the National Synod, Jack White's 'religious institution', met in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. The ecclesiastical formalities were observed to the letter, as had been anticipated and proposed. William Reeves comprehensively

[546] Lefroy to Courtown, 8th, 11th September 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/130,133.
[547] *DE*, 11th, 14th September 1869, emphasis not original.
[548] *Clare Journal, and Ennis Advertiser*, 12th September 1869.

researched the detailed history of Irish Convocation, and the issue had a wider life in the pamphlet press.[549] Essentially, this was an attempt to assert that nothing important had actually been changed or challenged by the Irish Church Act. The Irish Convocation had met before. Theologically, it was immaterial that the last occasion was under Queen Anne. This meeting was a strong assertion of ecclesiastical continuity. But it was located in the Liberties, one of Dublin's worst slums. Every ranking Anglican cleric in Ireland would have had to walk through an impoverished neighborhood—but one with an admittedly longstanding Protestant ethos, as the old home of Dublin's Hugenot weavers.[550] The physical metaphor of St. Patrick's must have been striking for those engaged in renewing their Church: the cavernous Cathedral open, cleared of screens and clutter, stunningly restored—a new purpose in the midst of squalor.

The Synod of Armagh and Tuam met on 10th September 1869, used the forms of prayer employed in 1704, established standing orders and accepted Dublin's invitation to meet in joint synod. This met on 14th September (after the Dublin and Cashel Synod accepted Armagh's acceptance). The Bishops delivered a declaration to the clergy declaring their 'protests against that act of the Legislature whereby, to the great detriment of the Commonwealth, a national profession of the religion of Christ has been repudiated in Ireland, and the connexion [sic] between the National Church and the State has been dissolved.' They defined disestablishment as the simple separation of Church and State, but not the abandonment of the Church's established role as national religion. This aspect of its ecclesiology was unaffected by a measure reduced to base confiscation.

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[549] TCD Ms.1062; James Wayland Joyce, *The Crisis in the Church of Ireland. A Letter to the Lord Bishop of Derry on the Constitution of Diocesan and Provincial Synods, with the Ancient ForMs of Proceeding* (Dublin/London/Oxford/Cambridge, 1869).

[550] A Dublin ballad of the time referred to Orangemen living in the Liberties, not simply Ulster. DCLA, Street-Ballad collection, Joyce Book II, 'The Orangeman's Daughter'.

Alexander Irwin argued this meeting was, in fact, a restored national assembly, 'such as was held in the days of old, before this meeting of Bishops and clergy had anything to do with the meeting of Parliament or the levying of taxes.' The High Church William Lee then argued that in light of 'the altered state of public opinion' they could not exclude the laity from any new plan. But within this, they had to avoid becoming 'a mere modern association, having no claim to represent the once Established Church'. The Bishops had also predictably proposed a tiered system of Diocesan Synods, culminating in the National Synod (the same system, essentially, as that proposed for the elections to the March Church Conference).[551] The numbers of clergymen eligible to vote was designed so the Synod could be 'framed as to secure the greatest amount of public confidence and support'. The Synod closed on 16th September, with the entire body together saying the *Te Deum.*[552] William Lee's words were prophetic, however. He wanted tokenistic lay inclusion to diffuse their attempts at substantive governance. Peter Nockles characterised the efforts of the Irish High Church to maintain the presence in a true catholic church, not a mere sect.[553] Now, Lee alluded to the structure percolating under the surface during the antidisestablishment campaign.

Although the cooperation between the senior clergy and moderate laity continued, the threat of a populist challenge remained. As the reconstruction of the Church was also the re-definition of Anglican identity and purpose, these elections and meetings, on all levels, were imbued with a political resonance far beyond the hum-drum of dry vestry chambers, parochial boards, and diocesan councils. The deepest conflicts within the Church in the crucial time between the passage of the

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[551] And, ironically, by the French Estates-General.
[552] *The National Synod of the Church of Ireland* (Dublin, 1869); *DE*, 14th September 1869. The *Te Deum* was a prayer of thanksgiving traditionally said to mark new events, at the outset of important moments.
[553] Peter Nockles, 'Church or Protestant Sect? The Church of Ireland, High Churchmanship, and the Oxford Movement, 1822-1869', *The Historical Journal*, vol.41, no.2 (June, 1998), pp.457-93.

Irish Church Act and its reorganisation were between those who embraced these political aspects, and those who fought against them. This was radicalism versus conservatism—innovation and turbulence against security, or, the vision of a socially-engaged Church, bristling with vitriol and non-theological agendas, against the vision of a Church whose life revolved around the unchanged liturgy, and precious little else.

Soon after the relative success of the Synod W.C. Magee summarised that the dangers facing the Church as 'Lay tyranny', prayer book revision, and an imminent schism between the North and South.[554] Trench confessed to Beresford 'Matters look now about as ugly as they can look'. Accordingly, the Archbishops were determined that separate voting by orders be 'fundamental' to the future Church governance, to stymie militant lay control.[555] This was a proposed system whereby the laity, clergy and Bench would vote separately, and the acquiescence of each order would be needed for a measure to pass. It was regarded as a clerical, and especially Episcopal, safeguard against lay encroachment. They were reacting, primarily, to the series of tense diocesan synods. These local meetings were convened both to establish their future rules, and elect delegates to the national gatherings. This subjected the Church to the politicking and confrontations of Reform-era elections, infusing the confluence of local symbolism and fledgling democracy into the local Church administration.

At the Cork synod, William Bence-Jones and H.E. Chatterton proposed voting by orders. It only passed when Chatterton phrased the ecclesiastical procedure in Parliamentary terms, elaborating '[p]ublic opinion, when it became strong enough, would always be sufficient to assure assent in the Upper House'.[556] He implied a measure sought by the Bishops to obviate public agitation could be

[554] Magee to MacDonnell, 23rd September 1869, *Life of Magee*, pp.236-7.
[555] Trench to Beresford, 25th September 1869, CUL Ms.Add.9407/3/80.
[556] *DE*, 23rd September 1869.

used for anti-episcopal public clamour. It added a different weight to public politics, themselves being redefined: at a meeting in Nenagh, Tipperary, Lord Rosse (who voted for the Irish Church Act in the House of Lords), suggested, with obvious shades of Gladstone in 1864, that voting mechanisms were the new definition of a 'test for Church membership'.[557] The Ardagh synod showed how deeply political these sentiments were. In Longford, John Darley, archdeacon of Ardagh, opened with a speech describing the crisis of their Church and

> the many heavy blows and frequent discouragements it has received from a British Parliament ever since it was connected with the Church of England in the year 1172. That Parliament has now done its worst—cruelly, harshly, relentlessly, ungratefully,—but, disestablished and totally disendowed as we are, we can thank God and take courage. We are still the Church of Ireland[.][558]

Essentially, the logic of ecclesiastical independence allowed a vision of a more socially-comprehensive, renewed Church. All political orientations had a stake in this now the Church was freed from the treacherous and disingenuous British connection. Similarly, at the Ardfert and Aghadoe synod in Kerry, the pro-disestablishment Liberal MP for that county, H.A. Herbert of Muckross House, assured the meeting of his commitment to rebuilding the Church, a position also urged by the Tory Lord Clancarty.[559] The rest of the Synods met across the end of September and early October 1869, displaying a panorama of tensions and stormy politics. Even in Belfast, H.H. McNeile of Belfast told Hugh Cairns of a series of public meetings in their native city, under the Duke of Abercorn's aegis,

> the ostensible subject being "The Strengthening of the Protestant party". But as abuse of the "Church Plunder Act" is to form one of the features, if puzzles me to see how such a meeting is to result in a more harmonious working together of those who opposed, and those who supported that Act, in the reconstruction of the Church, which both have equally at heart now.

[557] (Limerick) *Evening Mail and Packet*, 23rd September 1869.
[558] *DE*, 24th, 30th September 1869.
[559] *DE*, 6th October 1869.

He supposed the true goal was advancing the Parliamentary candidature of Abercorn's brother, Lord Claud Hamilton.[560]

Perhaps motivated by the confrontations at many diocesan synods, Courtown's next move was a stunning piece of reactionary positioning. In early October, anticipating the decisive Lay Conference, he sent a circular letter to major landowners: Lords Rosse, Enniskillen, Bandon, de Vesci, O'Neill, Templetown, Sir Frederick Heygate MP, and Dennis Browne. Courtown was worried that the radicals were going to push motions on voting by orders and whether or not the Bishops would have a veto or separate sitting. His reaction was to solicit magnates' views in preparation for a private meeting with Trench and Beresford.[561] This panel does not seem to have been chosen at random. Its members represented a spectrum of socially conservative orientations, mixed with varied experiences in political management. But the geographic spread was ultimately revealing. They represented, fundamentally, dioceses beyond the Dublin-Down axis: Killaloe, Clogher, Cork, Ossory, Connor, Connor again, Raphoe, and Leighlin. On the whole, they were in favour of voting by orders, as it would negate the lay influence gained by having membership weighted against the clergy. They also wanted to protect the preeminence of the Bishops as much as possible, although there were differences of opinion on the details. Ultimately, all recognised the importance of preserving separate lay and clerical spheres of power: the laity would control the finances, and the clergy doctrine. Templetown even used the British Constitution as the appropriate model, in that the House of Commons (the laity, in the Church metaphor) had control of the taxation.[562]

Encouraging democratic, anti-authoritarian governance, especially in the Church, was unsettling. The magnates prioritised stability and eradicating

[560] H.H. McNeile to Cairns, 5th October 1869, NA Ms.PRO30/51/15/22.
[561] Draft, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/145; Trench to Cooke Trench, 4th October 1869, RCBL Ms.327/1/121.
[562] TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/146-54.

potential radicalism. This does not mean, however, that these principles could not take radical expressions. That same month, John Madden, a member of the Monaghan gentry, tried to use his power as a Justice of the Peace to stop a Fenian Amnesty meeting in Dublin—on the grounds that it contravened the Party Processions Act.[563] Madden's effort was symbolically powerful, yet practically futile. However, it spoke of a commitment on the part of Irish Protestants to maintain their standards and role in Ireland, and the inadequacy of British governance in the face of Catholic power. These kind of interventions underscored the independent focus of certain elements in the laity.

Armed with the pro-episcopal support garnered from other magnates, Lords de Vesci, Meath and Courtown organised 'a confidential meeting at the Kildare St. Club' with Trench, on the eve of the decisive Standing Committee meeting. They planned to discuss the touchstone issues of voting by orders, and the proportion of lay to clerical delegates.[564] Its tone was clear—de Vesci felt that 'a few practical men can do much at a Private Meeting.' Ultimately, their goal was to diffuse the vitriol and corrosive energy animating many laymen. De Vesci continued 'I hear such wild opinions from some of the Lay members that I apprehend much difficulty in forming a Church body.'[565] Indeed, although the Duke of Leinster applauded the Archbishops' stances so far, he still charged his eldest son, Lord Kildare, to inform this private meeting that unless the laity had equal power with the clergy (swiftly settling the brewing conflict), Leinster would withdraw his support, patronage, and money.[566] There were inimical conceptions of the Church colliding—the radical, campaigning mentality of the obstreperous laity, and the conservative search for stability from the pro-episcopal magnates, transcending Whig-Tory rivalries.

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563 PRONI Ms.D3465/J/11/13, copy of sworn affidavit.
564 Trench to de Vesci, 4th October 1869, NLI Ms.32007/3; Courtown to de Vesci, 5th October 1869, NLI Ms.32007/1.
565 De Vesci to Courtown, 7th October 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/152; Copy of same, NLI Ms.32007/1.
566 Copy Leinster to Kildare, 9th October 1869, PRONI Ms.D3078/3/50/15.

These concerns spanned Ireland. On 28th September TCD academic and north Antrim landowner Anthony Traill wrote to Thomas Greene, coordinating in Dublin. Trail wanted early knowledge of Dublin's 'programme' for the coming public meeting, intending to inform the Belfast leadership in advance and prevent any further conflict. He explained '[a]s unity of action is most important, & I am a sort of connecting link between North & South, I want to know how you stand in Dublin, before our meeting of Lay Delegates in Belfast on the 8th Oct.…I hope some order may come out of the present chaos'. Greene forwarded this on to influential Dubliner Tankerville Chamberlain, explaining that Traill's overture 'may be of great use in bringing them into an entente cordiale with us'.[567] With this backdrop, the Standing Committee finally met on 9th October in the Molesworth Hall.

There, Lord James Butler again tried to by-pass an episcopally-sanctioned meeting by recalling the Church Conference. As a result, the Committee decisively split between the moderates and confrontationalists.[568] They reassembled in the patrician atmosphere of the Kildare Street Club whilst 'the violent section of the Committee' repaired to the Protestant Defence Association headquarters in Dawson Street, 'preparing strong anti-clerical resolutions.'[569] The two blocs moved only a few hundred yards, decamping to streets parallel to each other, with Molesworth Street running between them. It was a fitting reminder of the claustrophobia of their political-cum-associational Dublin. The main body of the Lay Conference met on 12th October 1869, with this organised, long-standing animosity as the context.

They would have to create an anomalous new structure—voluntary Anglicanism. The best precedents came from North America, but these were

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[567] Traill to Greene, 28th September, Greene to Chamberlain, 6th October 1869, RCBL, GCP.
[568] The moderate bloc included Lords Courtown, Kildare, and Meath, Hedges Eyre Chatterton, William Brooke, Thomas Cooke Trench, Thomas Lefroy and Ion Trant Hamilton. They were, respectively, one Tory peer and two Liberal peers, a group of key lawyers and clerical supporters from the Archbishops' Committee, and two moderate, and by now disaffected, PDA organisers, one of whom (Hamilton) was a sitting Tory MP.
[569] Courtown to de Vesci, 9th October 1869, NLI Ms.32007/1.

worrying. The day before the Conference William Lee wrote to Courtown '[t]he history of the American Church—the offspring of a revolution, & founded with reference to the character of the young Republic, did not seem to me to present any model such as we ought to will to imitate.' He detailed how the earliest Church governance was a Convention (he took pains to differentiate it from a Synod) held in 1781, but Episcopalianism was not accepted until another Convention in 1784. One aspect of the constitutional settlement between the Bishops and Conventions 'was a very serious change in the Prayer Book. I do not think, & I trust your Lordship will agree with me, that this is a precedent we should follow.'[570] The actual revolution to which Lee referred is unclear, however.

The Church of England in the Colonies provided the backbone of the loyalism during the American Revolution. After Independence, the oaths of allegiance to the British Crown required of the Anglican clergy became illegal for American citizens. The first new American bishop, Samuel Seabury of Connecticut, was consecrated by Scottish Non-Jurors in Aberdeen, legally establishing an independent Church in communion with Canterbury. Thus William Lee could have alluded to the Jacobite inheritance of the American Episcopal Church, rather than the American Revolution. Indeed, the influential English High Churchman A.J.B. Beresford Hope specifically suggested that Prayer Book revision would chime with a Jacobite conflict in the early American Church, and so was 'the offspring of civil strife'.[571] Either way, the most unsettling aspects of early American Episcopalianism dovetailed with Irish Anglicanism in the 1860s—following revolution and upheaval, a settlement between conventions and the episcopate produced Prayer Book revision.

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[570] W. Lee to Courtown, 11th October 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/162.
[571] A.J.B. Beresford Hope, *The Irish Church and its Formularies* (London, 1870).

On the eve of the Lay Conference, the Rev. Edward Hamilton, rector of Desertmartin,[572] published a letter directly urging that the electoral mechanisms prevent dissensions (probably to stifle the chances of upheaval). Yet the same issue carried an account of the election in Newtownmountkennedy, Co. Wicklow, where large numbers of non-voters—including women—attended the meeting. In the actual election only one candidate was proposed; the formal aspect was nominal. The real object was to gather, as a community, and affirm their sense of pride and purpose. The incumbent, opened with a long series of resolutions on broad principles, such as:

> the Protestants of Ireland cannot, and as a community should not, either forget or forgive the gross breach of national morality committed against them....the stability of the Union is placed in jeopardy by the subversion of one of its fundamental provisions; that we cannot justly be held to its obligations when deprived of its privileges; that England, as one of the contracting parties, has proved false to her pledges; and that by the violent abrogation of guaranteed unity and equality, Irish Protestants have been treated as aliens from the Imperial Commonwealth.[573]

Indeed, the Corkonian Edward Dowden, a powerful Trinity academic and influential literary critic who moved easily in Dublin's liberal and intellectual worlds, published an article in that month's *Contemporary Review* which built on these principles.

Following on from the seeming blur between the British parties, his idea of 'true Conservatism' was to incorporate the good legacies of historically-conditioned thought into a forward-thinking politics, opposing the Liberals' slavishness to the present and the Tories' slavishness to the past. In an article which drew on much serious theology, Dowden suggested a subtle Irish political point as well: 'If any oath, or act of union, or treaty, or precedent, whether of yesterday or of a century hence...hinders the best life of the nation, let us forswear that oath, renounce that act or treaty, disown that precedent, and be sure that in

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572 On the Londonderry side of the southern Londonderry-Antrim border.
573 *BNL*, 12th October 1869

so doing we are true Conservatives.'[574] Writing in the flagship magazine of liberal, intellectual Anglicanism, Dowden suggested both the fusion of all political orientations around a more religious and historical viewpoint, and in so doing alluded to altering the Act of Union to better encourage that mysterious quality of public spirit. Others of the same world approved.[575]

In contrast, the great organ of British Conservatism, the *Quarterly Review*, pronounced its judgment on disestablishment that month as well—but was as far from Dowden's subtle conciliation as possible. Previously, A.P. Stanley defended the Establishment to a clerical audience.[576] Now he felt the eventual settlement a 'compromise' which still respected much of the Church's interests, despite the extraordinary loss of money. But by legally mandating lay involvement in the Synod, 'Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli, Mr. Bright and Mr. Miall have drawn up the first Canon of the "Free" Irish Church.' Furthermore, because the Irish Church could return the ability to nominate its Bishops back to the Crown, and because the Act secured the possession of the ancient church buildings, he concluded the State's influence was not totally removed. He argued that 'They have only to remain as they are—the Irish branch of the English Church—and they will retain most of the advantages which are possessed by the Church in the dependencies of the Empire, and many of those possessed by the Established Church in England itself.' The greatest testament to their strength would be building on 'three centuries of close union with England'.[577] This could not be further from the analysis central to most Irish churchmen. In their eyes, despite legal niceties, they were utterly robbed and denied. The consolation was not remaining a miserable appendage of the

[574] Edward Dowden, 'True Conservatism—What It Is', *Contemporary Review*, vol.1, no.12 (October, 1869), pp.267-81.
[575] TCD Ms.10047/39/10-11.
[576] A.P. Stanley, *An Address on the Connection of Church and State Delivered at Sion College on February 15, 1868* (London, 1868).
[577] [A.P. Stanley], 'The Reconstruction of the Irish Church', *Quarterly Review*, vol.127, no.254 (October, 1869), pp.493-514.

English Church, but resuming their true existence as the independent Church of Ireland: united to England only from 1801. The Lay Conference would showcase that disposition.

II
Lay Organisation and its Discontents
October 1869—December 1869

The Lay Conference opened on Tuesday, 12th October 1869, in the Antient Concert Rooms, Dublin. It would decide the mechanics of their representation in the General Convention, which would determine the future Church's governing structure. Outside the urban dioceses of Dublin, and Down and Connor (Belfast), the landed elite dominated its membership. For example, even the delegation from the united archdiocese of Armagh and Clogher had a large landed influence. The diocese stretched from a slice of south county Londonderry, through central Tyrone, and down through counties Armagh and Louth. Clogher ran through most of South Tyrone, Fermanagh, and Monaghan. Despite taking in the towns of Armagh, Dungannon, Clones, Enniskillen, Drogheda, and Dundalk, in counties where a rural Anglican middle-class still flourished, the great landed families maintained their disproportionate influence.

50 percent of County Armagh's delegates, 33 percent of Tyrone's, and one quarter of Louth's delegates (or their families) were listed in the Victorian landed bible, *Bateman's*. Furthermore, their landholdings spanned the country. The dioceses' magnate representatives held land far beyond the diocesan boundaries: in Kildare, Limerick, Dublin, Cavan, Wicklow, Meath, Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Longford, Down, Mayo, Londonderry, Queen's County (Laois), King's County (Offaly), Galway, Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Bedfordshire, and Warwickshire.[578] They were not wholly absentee landowners; through this cross-country network of landholding just the delegates from Central and South Ulster (with Louth) would have had some knowledge of the concerns and tenor of

[578] John Bateman, *The Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland* (London, 1883). This is admittedly an inexact and rough guide for 1869, but does indicate continuity amongst families as well as individuals.

numerous counties.[579] There was also a highly political presence in the Conference, including 18 sitting members of the House of Commons as well as numerous former MPs and failed candidates. There were 53 peers or sons of peers, numerous Baronets and Knights, and nearly everybody else was either a Justice of the Peace or a Deputy-Lieutenant, with a large number of doctors and lawyers.

Importantly, this elite dominance did not mean that the men in the Antient Concert Rooms were ignorant of working-class demands. For example, although his dynastic links were to the great Ormond connection in Kilkenny, Lord James Butler lived in North Dublin, in Drumcondra Castle. Butler would have at least significant acquaintance with the mind of working-class Dublin: he was involved in contentious Protestant charity work in the area, jostling with Catholic authorities.[580] Similarly, Richard Gamble, a Q.C. and Protestant Defence Association propagandist, had family connections with the city-centre, impoverished parish of St. Nicholas Without,[581] a notorious bastion of evangelical, confrontational churchmanship.

Even beyond the personal connections of a few men, all the delegates had been elected at public meetings where the franchise was adult male suffrage. The definition of the right to the vote was not property holding, but theology. The meetings which produced a highly elitist Lay Conference had been attended by the poor, and the poor, middle-class and wealthy alike voted the elite into the Antient Concert Rooms. In addition to voting, they vented vitriolic anger, and Protestant newspapers around the country reported these incendiary meetings in detail. The social makeup of the Lay Conference did not mean it was oblivious to working-class demands. On the controversial issues—such as the future authority of Bishops, the voting mechanisms and thus balance of power between lay and ordained members,

[579] The Duke of Manchester, a CPDA supporter, was also a delegate from Armagh, where he owned over 12,000 acres.
[580] TCD Ms.10304/1048/4.
[581] RCBL Ms.P/210/5/3.

and the potential of theological revision—class lines were not relevant. Rich and poor evangelicals aligned themselves together, against all High Churchmen.

The members constantly used Parliamentary and political metaphors. They reconstructed their Church in the shadow of the Second Reform Act; grappling with the politics of lay inclusion mirrored the crisis of Reform, in much the same way as the Church's earlier wrangles over the elected Church Conference in March dovetailed with concerns of providing models for separatism. The potential analogies, resonances, and nuances bound in Church reconstruction were not lost on the men gathered in the Antient Concert Rooms. Beresford's opening address asked them to sink their politics and create a safely conservative Church. Abercorn spoke after the Primate, describing how they were meeting because the State 'abnegated the function which it has hitherto performed towards the Church'. He urged the vote by orders as a way of checking democracy, preventing their own version of the Commons from overpowering their version of the Lords (a blatant allusion to the Parliamentary situation which allowed disestablishment to pass). He continued that, more generally, '[i]t bears analogy, too, to our form of government, composed of the three heads of King, Lords, and Commons.' Abercorn closed with a pointed fillip to the laity, suggesting the clergy would always attend the General Synod more. Voting by orders was a lay safeguard as well, to prevent the professionally religious from dominating.

Lay populists echoed this idea of voting by orders as a lay safeguard against the clergy. John C. Bloomfield of Clogher, who, by his own description 'represented a very strong constituency of the middle classes in the county Fermanagh', had previously 'deprecated' voting by orders, but supported it following Abercorn's speech. Thomas Connolly, a Donegal MP, argued 'there was more of the germ of true Protestantism in it than the hon. gentlemen had been generally led to suppose. It was not the mechanism of Church government, but the question whether the laity

or the clergy should be predominant in the future of the Church'. The motion passed, securing Episcopal cooperation and probably preventing a schism.

Immediately after this significant compromise, the meeting bickered about the ratio of clergy to laity, which soon drew on wider, political-structural discussions. Bloomfield even argued that more clergy would mitigate the influence of urban Anglicanism, and defend the rural members. It was also the model of American and Colonial Churches—a point made earlier by Abercorn as well. But Sir J. M. Stewart replied in terms again redolent of the Reform debates, arguing that 'in America there was no aristocracy; there was only one class—the middle class; and to have the Irish Church properly represented they should be able to give the middle class the power of sending representatives'. If the numbers were restricted, only the wealthy would be elected. By this point the meeting had thinned considerably, and there were calls for an adjournment till the next day, which infuriated the 'country' members, many of whom had already traveled two days to be there.

The next day, conflicts of locality trumped wider political nuances. William Verner, a Secretary appointed at the 30th August meeting, explained they had not written motions in advance so 'that the gentlemen from the north, south, east and west did not think than any people in Dublin were trying to direct them'. However, some Northern representatives claimed the disparities in diocesan population gave thinly-populated regions an undue influence, and after a conflict Courtown proposed another committee to deliberate behind closed doors. As with the earlier Committee of Laymen, he was the chair. When they rejoined the meeting, he announced that in a spirit of 'concession' they decided to sink the North vs. South issue, and merely deal with population. They divided dioceses into groups, bracketing Armagh, Dublin, and Down together, as they had over 100,000 members. Derry, Kilmore, Cork and Ossory, with less than 100,000 but more than

20,000, were in the next group, and then the five remaining, with fewer than 20,000, were Tuam, Meath, Killaloe, Limerick, and Cashel.[582] In another case of a conservative Liberal taking disestablishment as an opportunity for a more socially-integrated Church, the Earl of Leitrim argued the Church needed extension in the South and West. They required more churches there, and diminishing the involvement of the Southern laity would impede this.

On the final day, the debates returned to a topic with significant import for national politics—the franchise. Initially, the only requirement for suffrage was a declaration of being an Anglican over 21 and resident in the relevant parish—a strong affirmation of local power. This also bypassed the sacramental test used earlier, relieving those evangelicals who had difficulty with making the Eucharist central to the emerging definition of churchmanship. Robert Hamilton of Belfast proposed an amendment: the motion initially read 'That…no test should be required of the electors in any parish district, or congregation, except a declaration…that he is a member of the Church of Ireland, and that he is of twenty-one years age.' Hamilton proposed changing 'he' to 'they', deliberately enfranchising women. As he explained, '[t]hey wished to give every class in the community its proper place (hear); and…were there any members of the Church of Ireland…more interested in the welfare of the Church, harder workers for it, or more devoted to its interests in every part of the land than the women of Ireland?'[583]

This had actually been suggested before the Convention, in an anonymous public letter to a Dublin paper, which suggested that, as the Church would be financed by subscription, the charities so important to the Church's social life showed how much women contributed. It suggested giving votes to 'unmarried

[582] The representation assigned was Down 71, Armagh 72, Dublin 59; Derry 36, Kilmore 34, Cork 38, Ossory 36; Tuam 19, Meath 23, Killaloe 19, Limerick 19, and Cashel 20, making a total of 446.

[583] *Report of Proceedings of a Conference of Lay Delegates, Held at the Antient Concert RooMs, Dublin, on the 12th, 13th, and 14th October, 1869* (Dublin, 1869).

women of full age',[584] acknowledging the practical and political elements women saw in charity work.[585] It also clearly tied into the wider ideas of the parliamentary franchise, in specifying unmarried women—those who could legally own property. In the Convention, Hamilton continued this theme, arguing it was 'an exceeding hardship, that one moment they should name a qualification as to members of the Church, and the next moment wipe out the ladies, and say that they were not members of the Church (laughter).' Hamilton saw this vote as more than a voice in Church government, it was the new badge of belonging, in the same way as Gladstone rephrased the vote as coming within the pale of the constitution in 1864, and it was exactly tied to the growing Irish agitation for the franchise.[586]

Henry Bruen, MP for County Carlow, grasped the bigger issues at stake and argued that Hamilton's resolution 'raised a very important question—that of female suffrage in the Church'. Accordingly, the Conference came firmly against Hamilton's plans. Hamilton withdrew his motion, but declared 'the course they were taking now went to prove that the old times for [women] were better than the present. It was never considered a sin or a shame for a lady to vote for a churchwarden. What earthly difference there could be in giving them power as electors of delegates he could not see. In the history of their Church there had not been any inconvenience because that privilege had been their right.' R.C. Gunn Cunningham and Dennis Kelly, both Dubliners, re-proposed Hamilton's motion with the gendered language changed back to specifically male, and it passed, deliberately disenfranchising women. Although the meeting was eager to accommodate the middle-class in to the Church franchise, women were a step too

[584] *DE*, 10th September 1869.
[585] Maria Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Cambridge, 1995).
[586] Carmel Quinlan, '"Onward Hand in Hand": The Nineteenth-Century Irish Campaign for Votes for Women', in Louise Ryan and Margaret Ward (eds.), *Irish Women and the Vote: Becoming Citizens* (Dublin, 2007).

far.[587] This Conference had a thoroughly governmental patina. Again, determining the mechanism of lay administration had wide ramifications. Lord Dunboyne presented the Conference with an open letter detailing suggestions. In addition to numerous Westminster analogies, he appended a trail of constitutional addenda which clearly laid out the Church's new charter: the now-broken Fifth Article of the Act of Union, the relevant excerpt of the Coronation Oath, and an extract from the preamble to the Irish Church Act.[588]

Afterwards, the ever-pessimistic William Bence-Jones wrote to A.C. Tait that only the 'popularity' of Abercorn and William Brooke managed to persuade the meeting to pass the crucial motion on voting by orders. He complained that the 'Northerners were ready to vote to abolish Bishops bodily. Everything else done was a blunder & all is in a muddle. The ignorance…is beyond belief.' However, even through this grim view he recognised how the practical issues of financially maintaining the Church transcended traditional political and class divides.[589] Organisationally, though, the results of the Lay Conference were fairly moderate. Although the radical wing secured a major victory by enshrining double lay representation to clerical, the moderate success in securing voting by orders negated this to a symbolic victory. The saving compromise came from Courtown's Select Committee, which proportioned diocesan representation in a way that recognised Ulster's numerical superiority without giving the North a de facto veto.

From 16th October 1869, the Honorary Secretaries appointed by the Lay Conference began meeting, charged with regulating the lay elections to the General Convention. Although self-effacing and modest, in practice these five men—two Dublin businessmen, one Dublin lawyer, one Dublin banker and member of the

[587] *Report of Proceedings of a Conference of Lay Delegates*; *DE*, 13th, 14th, 15th October 1869.
[588] NLI Ms.3378.
[589] Bence-Jones to Tait, 21st October 1869, LPL Ms.Tait/87, fols.201-2.

Wicklow gentry, and an Armagh Tory MP[590]—made decisions for the entire community. Eventually, Bishops, incumbents, and lay organisers across the country appealed to them for advice and guidance on these crucial elections. As was becoming typical, this Dublin-based, Dublin-centric committee did not try to establish itself as a ruling board or governing panel, but was forced into that role by the Church's internal dynamics. This small group was pushed into an important leadership position by the rest of the Church. In moderating the critical elections they adjudicated disputes between laity and clergy, including deciding under whose authority these elections took place. On 19th October they issued a circular to the bishops outlining the electoral procedures, and produced a draft of the Conference's official report. Between the 19th and 23rd most of the Bishops responded to their suggestions. But they were also fielding letters from dissatisfied laymen of all opinions. Accordingly, some conflict with the archbishops became inevitable, given Trench and Beresford's resentment of any suggestion that the laity had an automatic right to be included. Eventually they interceded to prevent anybody from trying 'to impugn the legality of our proceedings for the re-constitution of our Church'. Similarly, Samuel Butcher, bishop of Meath, asked them to intervene in a conflict between himself and the Protestant Defence Association.[591]

Robert Staples confronted the class conflicts engulfing the Church in the crucial two-month interval between the Lay Conference and the General Convention. He argued that 'all classes' ought to be engaged

> in the actual working and direction of all Church matters; and I fear that intermingling of all classes cannot be brought about with the present limited representation, and it is also of great moment that a step in this direction

[590] Tankerville Chamberlain and John Norwood, Thomas Greene, William Digges La Touche, and Edward Verner, respectively.
[591] RCBL, GCP, Minutes and Correspondence of the Honorary Secretaries of the Lay Conference (MCHLC), 18th–23rd, 25th—30th October 1869.

> should begin from above and not result from a demand by those who may think themselves excluded.[592]

This could just as easily referred to the difficulties of the Reform debacles. He could have been speaking about the governing elite's attempts to incorporate the increasingly articulate and politically-conscious working class into the wider polity as the political landscape changed underneath them. The Church faced the same structural difficulties in enfranchising an excluded 'residuum'. But the deeply constitutional nature of the disestablishment conflict, and its continuing reverberations in the progression of conferences and synods spawned by the Anglican defeat, endowed these spats with a highly political weight. Church debates had been inextricably part of wider cultural debates before disestablishment. They remained so afterwards, but had a substantially different power, range, and meaning. As the Church stumbled into a new phase of life, demotic elements of the laity tried to control the process, and in order to maintain power senior clergy relied on somewhat haphazard groups of other Dublin-based laymen lacking established ecclesiological authority. This, in turn, engendered resentment within the lay community over the personal backgrounds and origins of the men who found themselves elevated within the Church. By early November the Honorary Secretaries' accidental ascendancy was clear.[593]

However, the elections gave rise to considerable confrontation within the local communities. The potentially democratic nature of the new synods provided a venue for further politicisation and confrontation. The pressing issue was now the ratio of lay to clerical delegates in diocesan synods. Local meetings misinterpreted the resolution of the Conference on the matter, which affirmed a ratio of two to one, lay to clerical (at least on the national level). This issue encapsulated two central areas of controversy: the future theology and immediate politics. Many evangelicals

[592] Staples to Courtown, 25th October 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/177.
[593] RCBL, GCP, MCHLC, 1st—3rd November 1869.

interpreted lay preponderance as confirmation of their theological status, and High Churchmen felt even voting by orders might not be a safeguard. In late October J.T. Ball advised Trench that, under the Irish Church Act, the laity did have a legal right to church governance, and Trench feared for the theological implications.[594]

There were also simmering class tensions. The ultra-Liberal Lord Fitzwilliam backed a plan of Courtown's for establishing constituencies within dioceses, widening participation and safeguarding local interests. Fitzwilliam, who voted for the second reading of the Irish Church Act in the Lords, came from the sliver of Wicklow within the diocese of Ferns, and tried to prevent Wexford men and interests dominating the diocesan government.[595] His politics, and (to typical landlords) indulgence towards his tenants also made something of an outsider, as the Wexford clique were Tory organisers. As the Irish Church prepared for the elections, its internal divisions ossified. Securing a stable financial future for the Church inevitably impinged on delicate socio-economic concerns. These were conflicts between the middle and working-class, determined Anglicans and the magnate clique trusted by the Bench, who in turn mistrusted the motives of much of the Anglican laity.

Courtown told de Vesci that 'I also hear that there is far greater excitement in Ross about the Election to the Diocesan Synod than there was at the Borough Elections.'[596] Before 1832 the parliamentary borough of New Ross, Co. Wexford, elected only Tories; after the Reform Act it elected Liberals, Repealers, or Home Rulers (except in 1852 and 1856). The 1871 census recorded that nearly all of the town's Anglican community were artisans or 'general labourers'—143 men fell in that last category, making them by far the largest segment of the Protestant population. However, even after 1867 the constituency only had a total of 249

[594] Lee, Trench to Courtown, 27th October 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/179,180.
[595] Fitzwilliam to de Vesci, 10th, 20th October, Courtown to de Vesci, 27th October 1869, NLI Ms.39005/1; Fitzwilliam to Courtown, 26th October 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/178.
[596] Courtown to de Vesci, 27th October 1869, NLI Ms.39005/1.

electors for over 5,000 people (over half of whom were male).[597] This town on the Kilkenny-Wexford border still had an un-enfranchised Protestant working-class. Samuel Glenfield's study of this area depicts a Protestant 'core' in South Wicklow and North Wexford, with a hinterland fading to the midlands supported by isolated towns, such as New Ross.[598] If popular politics were a perpetually-negotiated relationship between leaders and led,[599] the magnate leadership planning diocesan synods gifted this community with a venue for political expressions. Already galvanised around the constitutional ideals involved in fighting disestablishment, this community—most of whom had no chance of voting in a Westminster election—could now vote in a more immediate context.

Indeed, de Vesci argued to Courtown that, on a diocesan level, the lay delegation's being double the clerical 'would widen the basis of Representation and enable more of the Middle Class becoming Delegates & thusly give them a greater interest in the Government of the Church'. However, in a fusion of theology and political ideology which encapsulated so much of these men's concerns, he worried that 'introducing the middle class element into the government of the Church might be carried too far…as it is a sort of Democracy, wh. wd. be most dangerous as tending to upset the principle of Episcopacy wh. I consider as most essential for the vitality of our Church.' There were personal concerns within his general anti-democratic stance. He told Courtown that 'I hear that you & I are not popular among the violent party: they think us too clerical. I am going to a Landlord meeting in Dublin tomorrow: I hope you will be there.'[600] Lord Monck even complained of Episcopal influence in the elections, arguing it created a political

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[597] *Parliamentary Papers 1872*, LXVII (1), *Census of Ireland 1871—Part 1, Vol.1—Province of Leinster*, pp.46, 50, 320.
[598] Samuel Farren Glenfield, 'The Protestant Population of South-East Leinster 1834-1981' (University of Dublin M.Litt. thesis, 1990).
[599] Jon Lawrence, *Speaking for the People: Party, Language, and Popular Politics in England 1867-1914* (Cambridge, 1998).
[600] De Vesci to Courtown, 28th October 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/181.

culture uncomfortably close to the Roman Catholic priests they disparaged. He reiterated the principle of the laity's inheriting the state's old control of the Church.[601] Yet Monck was another Wicklow Anglican who voted for Disestablishment in the Lords, and, as Governor-General, oversaw the Confederation of Canada.[602] He also became an early Home Ruler.

The theological conflict of episcopacy against evangelicalism, and the cultural-geographic conflict of North against South, seemed to resolve into wide ideological and class conflicts as well. This process involved considerable localist pride and delicate politics, as 'informal' cultures vied with national concerns. Much of these tensions exploded into an embarrassing dispute in late October. Belfast's Robert Hamilton opposed a suggestion of Anthony Traill's proposal to remove delegates from the Southern dioceses and give them to the Northern so the voting strengths better reflected population. Hamilton proposed Northern dioceses should elect delegates suggested by Southerners, in practice replacing the representation lost through Traill's scheme. Aside from flouting the much-respected Traill, it provided yet another venue for local conflicts.

Robert Staples of Leighlin immediately jumped at this as a way of influencing the General Convention by controlling which men from his diocese were elected by the North in a way he could not do in the normal local elections. He asked Lords Carrick and Courtown to put their influence behind Hamilton's plan. This was part of a wider process of preventing the Church from being controlled by the wealthy alone. He explained that rigging these elections 'will be our greatest safeguard against what I fear is our greatest danger in the future, that, of falling into the position of the Episcopal Church of Scotland, which only consists of the upper class, all between them having long since merged into every form of

[601] W.H.S. Monck, *The Irish Church and the Order of Bishops* (Dublin, 1869).
[602] Which successfully balanced the Catholic, Francophone and Protestant, Anglophone areas of Canada through a federal model. It was as much a religious as constitutional settlement.

Presbyterianism, all shades of Protestant Dissent.'[603] Yet his tactic was to ask the magnates to bias things towards the class who so often resented the magnates in the first place.

Indeed, de Vesci told Courtown that the Carlow meeting backed the plan of expanding lay representation on a diocesan level 'on the ground of taking in a large body of the Middle class into the Synods'. He also sent Robert Hamilton his choice of local Southerners to parachute into Northern delegations.[604] Unsurprisingly, Traill was furious, and hit back through the press. He published a letter to Hamilton in the *Belfast News-Letter*, asking why they would sacrifice their representation to the South, when the representation within Ulster was already unfair. There were no delegates from 'the entire district between Larne and Ballycastle'[605]—the rural Antrim coast, where (unremarkably) his land and influence lay. This urban-rural tension was not unique to Ulster. Kildare, with a small Church population, was episcopally united to Dublin and requested equal voting rights with that diocese. When Trench refused, the Kildare organisers agitated for a separate Synod, and the Honourary Secretaries became involved.[606] Midlands farmers had no interest in being saddled with Dublin's turbulent politics.

Thus the Traill-Hamilton controversy was not merely a local spat. Every confrontation and difficulty created inadvertent precedents. In the midst of this palaver Trench confided to Courtown his private worry that the Convention would try to establish the Church's prescriptive theological definition, not merely its governing structure.[607] The composition of the Convention, the nature and views of its delegates, would be decisive. Carefully balancing the diocesan delegations

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[603] Staples to Courtown, 31st October 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/184, emphasis original.
[604] De Vesci to Courtown, 2nd November 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/185.
[605] *BNL*, 8th, 9th November, 1869.
[606] Trench to Cooke Trench, 22nd September, 7th October, 1st November 1869, RCBL Ms.327/1/120,122,124; RCBL, GCP, MCHSLC, 1st November 1869; *DE*, 1st November 1869. There were several articles devoted to this topic in the one issue.
[607] Trench to Courtown, 8th November 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/187.

reflected the need to prevent domination by networks of patronage or regional differences, socio-economic or ideological blocs. Bishop J.T. O'Brien worried about the large size of the Conference as a precedent itself, writing that 'delegates taken from a lower class, might attend Diocesan meetings, but could not be expected to attend in Dublin from any considerable Distance. So that the effect as regarded that class would reach but little beyond Dublin & its neighborhood.'[608] This returned to the old problem of the social composition of the Dublin antidisestablishmentarian committees.

The Dublin Anglican working-class were particularly organised and confrontational, part of a large, vibrant community.[609] Exacerbated by Trench's theological sympathy with Tractarianism, anti-ritualist tensions were marked in that diocese. As Sir Joseph Napier complained to Beresford, Trench 'has been moping about our Puritanical tendencies. He does not understand us at all & although a kind hearted & sincere man, he is not in sympathy with Irish Protestants of the old school.'[610] The antidisestablishmentarian battle left a legacy of infuriated, politicised laity, accustomed to pursuing ecclesiastical issues through campaigning associations. With some justification, the moderates feared this legacy would cannibilise the Church. On 5th November 1869 the Bishops met and responded to the decisions of the Lay Conference. They declared their willingness to work with the laity—to many on the Bench an act of magnanimity, to most of the laity an expected and necessary decision. However, the Bishops formally announced their right to sit as a separate order in the General Synod. Some laity saw this as a challenge, and an attempt to assert autocracy through the Bench.[611]

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608 J.T. O'Brien to Courtown, 9th November 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/192.
609 John Crawford, *The Church of Ireland in Victorian Dublin* (Dublin, 2005).
610 Napier to Beresford, ND, CUL Ms.Add.9407/5/100.
611 *PMG*, 6th November 1869; *Times*, 8th November 1869; *BNL*, 9th November 1869; Trench to Cooke Trench, 8th, 16th November 1869, RCBL Ms.327/1/125,128.

Although for the High Church it was a vital safeguard, preserving their identity as an episcopal Church, it was also a red flag to the evangelical bull.

Five days later, Down, Connor, and Dromore held their elections, and the Hamilton plan imploded in those dioceses, with only three Southerners elected.[612] Hamilton blamed it on the 'collective stupidity of that portion of Antrim in which Dr. Traill is known'. He complained that the Bishops were missing 'an opportunity to lead the whole church'.[613] Politically, two of the men elected, James Spaight and Lord Bandon (Limerick and Cork, respectively), were experienced Tory politicians, and had been prominent in the overtly hostile cliques within the antidisestablishmentarian movement. Their election was, in a sense, an affirmation of political motives in the Church's reconstruction—Ulster, the Irish Tory heartland, elected important Tory Southerners, showing which sort of Churchmen they backed.

This was overt politicking, when far more subtle political challenges were also being shaped. Robert Staples was more concerned that politicised lay-organising would capitalise on this vacuum. In Ferns and Leighlin, local resentment at a united diocesan synod's being held in Kilkenny (Ossory) turned into an anti-episcopal challenge when the usual course of circular letters were sent round the dioceses, and the local rectors backed them.[614] Even Richard Nugent, forming a committee for the Sustentation Fund, was explicit about recruiting patrons from both political parties, and hoped to extend the position: 'This aspect also I sincerely hope our Church Synod will inviolably maintain. I mean, please God, to insist strongly upon it in the Synod, and that Churchmen should be elected

[612] *BNL*, 11th November 1869.
[613] R. Hamilton to Courtown, 11th November 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/200, emphasis original.
[614] Various circulars, J.C. Pounden to Courtown, 12th, 17th November 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/202-6,208,9.

for their piety and not their party.'[615] Mired in another round letters, circulars, and local resolutions, Clayton Browne of Browne's Hill, Carlow, alluded to a 'Landlord's Committee', eager to be certain they had 'done their duty'. This was independent of any diocesan structure or effort; the landlords' role was a separate issue from diocesan leadership. It was another circuit of power, another subcutaneous clique within the Church. Lord Fitzwilliam, with considerable English estates and interests, was concerned to produce 'unity of opinion at Church meetings'.[616] This was, in essence, code for a lack of controversy.

Ultimately, the mechanics of representation were so contested because their tone would imbue the Church for generations—whether through the semi-feudal, rural parochialism of the South-East, with its magnate-led localism, or industrial Belfast's stormy mass-meetings. The seemingly-staid issue of choosing the procedures used in diocesan elections was controversial in that different systems either embraced and accepted competition, or worked to stifle it. This was understandable, given the histrionics of some delegates. Bernard Nevill of New Ross declared that 'we should not send any representative to the General Synod who would not pledge himself to resist the Bishops in their attempts to separate themselves from the rest of the Clergy....I feel sure if we allow them to have the power of putting a stop to everything they do not approve of we shall soon drift into Popery.'[617] Trench confirmed that 'in Dublin I am afraid that the Gentry have abstained to a great degree from taking share in the Elections, & have let these mainly in middle class hands.'[618] The broad root here was the different traditions in the meaning of voting.

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[615] Nugent to Lord Carnarvon, 12th November 1869, BL Adds.Ms.60280, fols.105-6.
[616] C. Browne, Fitzwilliam to Courtown, 20th, 21st November 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/210,212.
[617] B. Nevill to Courtown, 25th November 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/229.
[618] Trench to Cooke Trench 10th November 1869, RCBL Ms.327/1/126.

Dublin shopkeepers would most probably have been able to vote in Parliamentary and local contests. For them, elections were always matters of direct politics—hence the combative, partisan mentality they carried towards ecclesiastical management. This political consciousness permeated the Church's efforts at all levels, and remained after the passage of the Irish Church Act. It was still markedly present when the defeated Irish had to return to the same vestry rooms and once again elect delegates. But this time they returned representatives to a meeting that, unlike the Church Conference, would determine their future religious lives. The mood and flavour of those local meetings is exemplified by the gatherings in Abbeleix Parish, on 16th and 19th November 1869, in order to assess 'the altered circumstances of the Church, in consequence of the passing of the "Irish Church Act"' and elect delegates. However, they first heard a reading from Malachi, part of which ran '[r]eturn unto me, saith the Lord of hosts….Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse….And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruit of your ground….And all nations shall call you blessed; for ye shall be a delightsome land'. One rural Church of Ireland parish accommodated themselves to the new order of spiritual life through a biblical mandate of self-governance and self-finance.[619] In a county whose government blamed their Church as the source Fenian aggression and agrarian violence, this passage's themes of renewal through self-finance following unjust government perfectly captured a community experiencing a sense of renewal in the prospect of local, autonomous control.

Indeed, towards the end of November the *Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette* issued something approaching a manifesto for the independent Church administration. Reorganisation was, most of all, an opportunity for renewal. The

[619] RCBL Ms.P/450/5/1; Malachi III, 8-11.

most egregious challenges were the social and geographic imbalances, so it urged, in the elections, 'Let none be led astray by names, or dazzled by the éclat of social positions, or led passively along by mere ecclesiasticism.' It called for unity across theological, geographic, and political lines. With resonances of Richard Whateley's work in the 1830s (and oddly pre-figuring Gladstone's vision for Irish landlordism in the 1870s), it proffered a more socially-attuned Church, writing that

> [t]he Irish Church can no longer afford to have a house of worship standing by the gate-lodge of the rich man's demesne….We hope to see as one good result of Mr. Gladstone's measure the Protestant landlords gradually and quietly gathering around them a body of faithful and attached Protestant yeoman. The agrarian outrages now taking place…show them what they may expect from priest-led tenants. Let them gradually fill the at present half-empty churches of the south and west with congregations of Protestant farmers and their families, who will share with their landlords in the great work of supporting the Church.[620]

In this model, creating a more internally-unified Church would somehow stymie Ribbonism, which they assumed was priest-led. Refusing to see their Church as antagonising the dispossessed, the *Gazette* suggested that consolidating internal Anglican reforms would diminish Ireland's hostility and violence. Their Church finally lost the taint of the British connection—yet this did not end its mission as a national Church. On the contrary, an Anglican renaissance was an opportunity for the whole island. Yet this first required (missing) internal cooperation. The fledgling synods showcased anger and uncertainty more than social cohesion and potential political balms.

The Honorary Secretaries also had to moderate between Trench and Sir Edward Grogan, who tried to outflank the Archbishop and organise delegates without Episcopal sanction. These were contests over the authority of the synods—established, ancient ecclesiastical institutions—and the new, untried, power of the Lay Conference, as well as the warhorse issue of lay versus clerical power.[621]

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[620] *IEG*, 20th November 1869.
[621] RCBL, GCP, MCHSLC, 18th—20th November 1869.

Trench belligerently refused to bow to the immediate criticism, as this would concede crucial theological ground for future generations. Dublin became something of a test case in this issue when the Central Protestant Defence Association responded by trying to control the Dublin Synod.

Before it met, they convened a meeting in the Dublin Metropolitan Hall under the chairmanship of Lord James Butler. The *Daily Express* reported the attendance around 200; the *Freeman's Journal* gave 40, and emphasised both the 'angry' tone of the meeting and the lack of pro-clerical members. Nominally, it was for Dublin lay delegates. However, the meeting's committee included Northern politicians[622] next to Dubliners.[623] Lord Courtown, a Wexford man with no Dublin links, publicly condemned how the organising circulars had been sent to non-Dubliners. Clearly the CPDA were marshalling a pan-Ireland support to make the Dublin Synod a test case. Indeed, Butler began the meeting by declaring it appropriate for the CPDA to discuss the future government of Church in this way, in order to ensure a sufficiently 'Protestant' element.[624] They also declared that 'no order in the Church has the right to assume to itself exclusive privileges', a clear attack on the Bench.[625]

Indeed, it seemed as if the social conservatism which could have kept ecclesiastical radicalism in check was fracturing. The Earl of Rosse, one of the panel of magnates enlisted by Courtown to secure the Bishops' power in September, headed a meeting in his own town of Parsonstown (Birr) which joined the rest of the militant laity in condemning the Bishops for unilaterally declaring their intention to sit and vote separately from the rest of the General Convention.[626]

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[622] Anthony Traill, Sir John Marcus Stewart, and Edward Wingfield Verner.
[623] Sir Edward Grogan, Echlin Molyneux, Jasper R. Joly and Andrew Searle Hart of TCD, Tankerville Chamberlain, Joseph Kincaid, and Lord Kildare.
[624] *DE*, 25th, 30th November 1869; *FJ*, 30th November 1869.
[625] *BNL*, 1st December 1869.
[626] *DE*, 25th November 1869.

The Rev. Thomas Lucas Scott, a Derry curate, showed the wider political dimensions of these conflicts when he admonished the two sides, claiming that

> [t]he vast majority of our Irish Churchmen would…protest earnestly and strongly against the introduction of any rash innovations into the Constitution of our Empire. I am persuaded that they will support the same just principles in the organization of our Church, and that we shall not stultify ourselves by proclaiming that we are Radicals in matters ecclesiastical—Conservatives only in politics.[627]

He previously urged a revitalisation of the Church through greater lay involvement, seeing the precedent in their associational culture.[628] As the two blocs sparred and bickered in the build-up to the Dublin Diocesan Synod, the possible political, and even constitutional, portents in the Church's reconstruction showed the brewing local tensions as part of the wider context of the awkward political transitions of the 1860s.

These concerns came to a head in Dublin. The Dublin Diocesan Synod met in the Antient Concert Rooms on 31st November 1869. Trench's opening speech reminded them it was not their goal 'to stir any of the great questions', given Dublin's particular social and symbolic importance. Prominent activists, accustomed to the mechanics and customs of public meetings, used the routine appointments of Honorary Secretaries and Scrutineers to stake positions before the meeting. Sir Edward Grogan, Thomas Lefroy, Charles Fitzgerald, marquis of Kildare, and H.E. Chatterton nominated members of their factions for the posts. Immediately the expected localist struggle broke out as the three dioceses (Dublin, Glendalough, and Kildare) bickered over representation and separate voting.

W.F. Darley proposed dividing Dublin into four constituencies—North and South County, and North and South City—as this would give the middle-class more of a chance of being elected, and not have the 39 Dublin members be drawn solely

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[627] *DE*, 24th November 1869.
[628] Thomas Lucas Scott, *A Letter on the Best Method to Promote a Reform and Revival of the Church in Ireland* (Dublin, 1868).

from the social elite. It was a way of negating the 'hole-in-the-corner' meetings which preceded the Synod: 'nothing more than having a Protestant Inquisition among them.' Delegates traded pointed and defensive comments about the meetings in the Metropolitan Hall and Dawson Street, and when Sir Richard Orpen and Richard Gamble spoke against Darley's plan the gathering rejected it. Darley served as both Arthur Guinness' defence counsel against an attempt to unseat him as MP for Dublin on a petition, and as a magistrate in the Dublin Quarter Sessions. He understood Dublin politics, both its details and legal underpinnings. His proposal directly imported Reform-vintage politics into the ecclesiastical sphere.

The Synod finally got back to order and debated proper business—the details of clerical voting—with the actual discussion dominated by a few prominent clerics.[629] However, it was then interrupted by a war-horse of Dublin Protestant politics: the Rev. Tresham Dames Gregg, leader of the Dublin Protestant Operatives' Association, and a veteran of confrontational, constitutionalist Anglican struggles since the 1840s.[630] In the Rev. Henry Murphy's estimation 'he must be mad….Every time I meet him I am more convinced that he is demented.'[631] Despite being overruled when he tried to join the debate, he declared 'they were acting in a suicidal manner; that, if they had kept their peace, the Church Act would have been repealed'. He then handed a pre-penned notice to the gathered reporters, complaining of ill-treatment from a 'hostile minority' who attacked the Dublin working-class through him.[632] The *Freeman's Journal* provided extensive coverage, detailing the arguments between Gregg and Trench seemingly blow-by-blow, and

[629] W.C. Plunket, Achilles Daunt, H.H. Dickinson, and William Lee.
[630] Jacqueline Hill, 'The Protestant Response to Repeal: the Case of the Dublin Working Class', in F.S.L. Lyons and R.A.J. Hawkins (eds.), *Ireland Under the Union: Varieties of Tension, Essays in Honour of T.W. Moody* (Oxford, 1980); John Crawford, '"An Overriding Providence": The Life and Ministry of Tresham Dames Gregg (1800-1881)' in T.C. Barnard and W.G. Neely (eds.), *The Clergy of the Church of Ireland 1000-2000: Messengers, Watchmen, and Stewards* (Dublin, 2006).
[631] PRONI Ms.D1337/D.
[632] *BNL*, 1st December 1869.

illustrating Gregg's speech with crowd interjections of 'laughter', 'uproar', and calls to sit down.[633]

But this interruption was nothing compared to the serious confrontation between Trench, Butler and Grogan which exploded towards the end of the meeting, where the PDA organisers directly attacked the prelate's authority by trying to force the synod to adjourn. The synod broke into chaos, and, after shouting each other down, finally agreed to a formal division. Tellingly, on Lord Meath's and Trench's suggestion they deliberately mirrored the House of Commons as closely as possible. After two hours of 'uproar' over Butler's attack, the result was 159 in favour and 209 against him. The next day they gathered without Trench's sanction or a (formal) clerical presence. At one point the former Tory MP Judge R.R. Warren used the highly parliamentary language of 'strangers in the house'. The Synod concluded by agreeing 10 rules governing their future conduct. These included one contentious decision in point seven: 'That no order in the Church has a right to assume to itself exclusive privileges until such privileges shall have been conceded by the general body of the Church',[634] the controversial and aggressive resolution of the previous Protestant Defence Association meeting in the Metropolitan Hall. Even the *Times* noted the importance of this stormy gathering, showing how prominent individuals voted to the whole United Kingdom.[635]

The *Freeman* could not resist recording how this ended 'three hours of the most unseemly disturbances, and brought to a close the first general synod of the Disestablished Church.'[636] This was inaccurate, of course—the meeting was only the inaugural synod of Dublin, Kildare, and Glendalough, not the whole Church. But the symbolic importance of Dublin did mean that this storm, this battle between a

[633] *FJ*, 2nd December 1869.
[634] RCBL, GCP, rough notes taken during Synod; *DE*, 1st December, 1869; *PMG*, 1st, 2nd December 1869; *BNL*, 2nd December 1869.
[635] *Times*, 6th December 1869.
[636] *FJ*, 1st December 1869.

lay politician and the Archbishop (and the laity's victory) would resonate through the whole Church. The *Belfast News-Letter* did not ignore the importance of this contest, although it downplayed the animosity and disorder of the meeting.[637] The tone of that synod completely exceeded the norms of these meetings. The level of animosity was not new, but spilling over the tight rules and ritualised forms of these meetings was. Edward Tipping, a Louth layman, later recalled that Lord James Butler 'hardly ever spoke that he did not say something bitter that one wished had not been said. One could not help feeling there was much worldliness in the conflict, and that many of those who took part had little or no sentiment of religion.' Apparently, Butler regarded Trench 'as a Jesuit in disguise'.[638] His launching this scene at the Synod was a deliberate attempt to confront the Archbishop on the broader issues of power within the Church, with wider ramifications for Irish society.

Immediately after this crisis, about a dozen of its delegates met in the Molesworth Hall under Lord Meath. The vitriolic *Evening Mail* described them as the clique 'who opposed free discussion at the Synod'. They drew up a list of candidates for the General Convention, which also garnered the paper's fire. The *Evening Mail* was one of the most Tory, and later Unionist, papers in Ireland. However, it damned an electoral slate including Irish Conservative luminaries.[639] The paper ranted: 'We observe—certainly not with satisfaction—that names of the mercantile and middle class delegates…are excluded from the list. It is also worthy of note that not one person who opposed the Archbishop's attempt to prevent discussion is included in it.' It urged its readers to remain un-swayed.[640] De Vesci even noted how the Dublin

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[637] *BNL*, 1st, 2nd December 1869.
[638] PRONI Ms.D4160.
[639] Sir Frederick Shaw, Sir Joseph Napier, Ion Trant Hamilton, R.R. Warren, the Hon. David Plunket, George Maunsell, and Thomas Lefroy, in addition to Dublin lay stalwarts such as Charles H. Todd, William Brooke, John Barlow, Thomas Greene, and William Digges La Touche.
[640] *DEM*, 2nd December 1869.

opposition to Trench seemed to come from 'the shopkeepers or middle class', concluding that 'the great body of that class are anti Episcopal'.[641]

The contests in the days preceding the Synod indicated larger confrontations, both ideological and socio-economic. Now the Church reconstruction seemed to be spawning electoral slates, electioneering meetings, partisan newspapers, and all the other facets of Victorian popular politics. Shortly after the ugly Dublin Synod, Courtown drafted a defence of the Bench's voting separately from the rest of the Convention as a 'check on hasty legislation'. Courtown still backed a mixed lay-clerical administration, i.e., the RCB, responsible to the Convention 'in the same way that in the government of the Empire the Ministry is responsible to Parliament.'[642] The parliamentary language cast the Church reconstruction into a wider sphere.

Some quarters of the militant evangelical laity were threatening a putsch, demonstrating the dangers of a demanding, confident laity. With this backdrop, it was crucial that the moderates prevent even more antagonism at the flagship Convention, which Trench revealingly called 'our huge Parliament that is in prospect.'[643] Thomas Greene confidentially worried to Courtown he hoped 'the contingent to the General Convention from your Lordship's neighborhood and from other parts of Ireland will go far to temper the…Orange and democratic feeling that exists largely in the Diocese of Dublin, otherwise I am sure that it will be impossible to avoid a split in the Church.'[644] Greene used 'democracy' to describe the drive of a campaigning, ideological working-class: a force unleashed by both Reform and disestablishment. The *Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette* ominously announced: 'The Central Protestant Defence Association is to remain in existence, and to "consider the subject of commutation by the clergy of their incomes, and other modes of

[641] De Vesci to Courtown, 4th December 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/259.
[642] TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/248.
[643] Trench to Cooke Trench, 7th December 1869, RCBL Ms.327/1/134.
[644] Greene to Courtown, 22nd December 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/275.

providing funds for the support of the Church of Ireland for the future."'[645] The moderates clearly had cause to try to temper their brand of politics.

Yet this moderating elite also worked in markedly parliamentary terms. Beresford wrote of one member of the Clogher synod 'a worse legislator for a Christian purpose it would be difficult not only to find but to imagine.' Beyond his complaining of the politicised 'violence' in the Synod, he characterised it as electing a panel of 'legislators'.[646] These constant Parliamentary descriptions and allusions cast the emerging Church in Westminster's light, endowing what could have been a panel of functionaries with a semblance of domestic self-governance. The elite leadership met the grass-roots political action with parliamentary imagery; both sides agreed on a potent model, and differed only on the details. The culture and ideal of self-governance was live in the Church, preceding the political ideal of Home Rule. This tilted towards a kind of Anglican separatism—a trend encouraged by the theology and disposition of the committee preparing the Draft Constitution for the General Convention.

This body was composed of the 12 Bishops, with laymen and clerics from each diocese. With more than a whiff of Beresford arrogance the Primate confided that '[a] very large party want to deprive the Bishops' of the 'right' to veto decisions, but 'we will utterly refuse….We cannot consent to be forced to accept what we do not agree to & we claim the liberty we freely give to others.'[647] This noblesse oblige could not marry well with the disappointed and confrontational Anglican artisan class, massed behind 'the serried ranks of Bible-thumping midlands colonels'.[648] This Committee—created by public elections—went behind closed doors to prepare the

[645] *IEG*, 21st December 1869.
[646] Beresford to Belmore, 24th December 1869, PRONI Ms. D3007/N/24.
[647] Beresford to Belmore, 24th December 1869, PRONI Ms. D3007/N/24.
[648] R.B. McDowell and David A. Webb, *Trinity College Dublin: An Academic History 1592-1952* (Cambridge, 1982).

model for the independent Church against the backdrop of wider assaults on Anglican privilege.

In December 1869, the Provost of Trinity, Humphrey Lloyd, confided to Lord Cairns his worry that disestablishment would make inevitable opening Trinity fellowships to Roman Catholics, and thus a wider policy of mixed education England would refuse for herself.[649] More broadly, Pius IX convened the First Vatican Council on 8th December, seeking a strong Papal response to Europe's perceived growing materialism and liberalism.[650] Using the red ink he reserved only for the most important events, the ever-gloomy Henry Murphy commented 'This is the beginning of the "Time of the End" of which "Daniel" speaks', reflecting on a series of visions in which a new power devours old countries.[651] Murphy's millenarianism was certainly not shared by all. But the fear of a growing anti-intellectual Papal power, to which the Liberal Party were now aligning itself by supporting Irish Catholic claims, was hardly a fringe view.

In this context is unsurprising that a Trinity College clique mooted purchasing the old organ of patriotic Irish Toryism, the *Dublin University Magazine*, to, as Edward Dowden described, 'change its politics to moderate Liberal.' The initial impulse came from John Kells Ingram, in his Young Ireland youth author of a nationalist anthem ('The Memory of the Dead', better known from the opening 'Who fears to speak of '98'). Influential within Trinity, Ingram later became a prominent positivist. He and R.K. Tyrrell joined with Dowden, J.P. Mahaffy and R.P. Graves (brother of the Bishop of Limerick) in planning this purchase, which quickly changed into a plan of launching a wholly new paper. Recognising the

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649 Lloyd to Cairns, 31st December 1869, NA Ms.PRO30/51/16/2.
650 Christopher Clark, 'The New Catholicism and the European Culture Wars', Wolfram Kaiser, '"Clericalism—That is our Enemy!": European Anticlericalism and the Culture Wars', in Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser (eds.), *Culture Wars: Secular-Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, 2003).
651 PRONI Ms.D1337/4; Daniel VII-VIII.

extraordinary political moment, the loosening of normal political boundaries, Dowden described to his ordained brother how

> the politics & religious spirit will be Liberal, but not radical, in favour of extending equal advantages to all classes in the country…an Irish magazine: not in crowding its pages with articles on Irish subjects, but as representing cultivated Irish opinion & feeling, &, while criticising sharply all that professes to be for the good of Ireland & is not, desirous to uphold the honour of us & our institutions.[652]

This was written in the wake of Gladstone's self-imposed mission to 'pacify' Ireland by destroying Protestant institutions and exclusivity. It is not difficult to see the origins of their goal to defend Irish institutions from the efforts of those who falsely purported to be working for Ireland.

Similarly, the Liberals' ability to actually govern Ireland was undermined that winter by an imbroglio involving John Madden, the JP who tried to halt a Fenian march in Dublin. The Government re-appointed Madden High Sheriff of Leitrim in late November. He refused the post, and, with overtures of Alexander Irwin's earlier concerns about the ribbonism of the Church's tenants, explained he could not serve under a government

> who have conducted the affairs of my unhappy country in such a way that in less than a year we have been reduced from a state of comparative prosperity, to a condition when law, order, and the security for either life or property may be said to have practically ceased to exist, and the fabric of society seems threatened with dissolution.…When, too, I find myself, an Irish Protestant landlord, in common with the rest of my brother landlords, held up by members of the Government, to the hatred of our Roman Catholic neighbors, as oppressors of the poor, and exterminators of the people, enriching ourselves by the spoils wrung from a defenceless peasantry [sic]. When I consider these things, I can only say I solemnly protest being called upon to act as the chief guardian of the Peace in the County of Leitrim…this "honor" has not been of my seeking.

Chichester Fortescue responded that Madden would be stripped of his deputy-lieutenancy of Monaghan, as well as being High Sheriff of Leitrim, for using 'language of studied insult to the Government of the Queen'. The Lord Chancellor,

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[652] Edward Dowden to John Dowden, 4th, 7th December 1869, emphasis original, National Library of Scotland Ms.Dep.171/5.

Thomas O'Hagan, also deprived him of his commissions as a Justice of the Peace in Cavan, Leitrim, Fermanagh, and Monaghan. Madden belligerently responded that the Government used insulting language to 'every Protestant and landlord in Ireland since they have succeeded to office.' He would not serve as a JP anyway, as it was impossible for him to keep their peace. A privately-printed pamphlet showcased this correspondence, and also made much of Madden's earlier anti-Amnesty effort. It concluded '[p]lease to observe, that in neither case did the Protestant party succeed in making the Irish Executive exert themselves to cause the law to be respected', suggesting, at the very least, the consciousness of an independent Protestant political tendency.[653]

Lord Wodehouse placed his papers on this incident in the same file as Fenianism and agrarian outrages: whilst Madden was not destructive in those ways, he still challenged and undermined the course of Imperial governance in Ireland.[654] This affair provoked a signal outcry. Several hundred nobleman and JPs published a formal protest at the measure, pledging their support for Madden. In a published circular, they argued it was unconstitutional to dismiss a man for disagreeing with the current administration. Furthermore, since the Liberals had claimed that the Irish Church Act was necessary to end Fenianism, they anticipated a growth of agrarian crime designed to precipitate a Land Act. Nobody could enforce the peace in these circumstances. Signed by numerous notable and militant Church activists, four of the five honorary secretaries of this new movement were stalwarts of the confrontational wing of the Church laity—Lord James Butler, Sir John Marcus Stewart, Robert Staples, and John Ffolliot.[655]

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653 T.H. Burke to J. Madden, 25th November, Madden to Burke, 6th December, C.P. Fortescue to Madden, 21st December, C. Teeling to Madden, 22nd December, Madden to Fortescue, 24th Dececember 1869, PRONI Ms.D3465/J/11/14.

654 Bodl.Ms.Eng.c.4064,no.7.

655 PRONI Ms. D3465/J/11/15. The activists supporting Madden were, in addition to the Honary Secretaries, John Blunden, J.M. Stewart, Henry Bruen MP, Thomas Connolly MP, H.M. Pilkington, John Colley Pounden, Arthur MacMorrough Kavanagh, Robert Staples,

This showed that the very nature of Irish Protestant cooperation in British governance in Ireland was on trial. Madden pursued an extreme cause in refusing the Crown's commission, but managed to mobilise organised sympathy. Clearly much rested on the Draft Constitution, beyond simple administration. The reconstruction of the Church would serve as a showpiece of wider Anglican politics and defence, a reconfiguration of their constitutional position and vision. The performance and symbolism of the General Convention was crucial to this, and the draft constitution was crucial to the Convention itself. Although P.M.H. Bell dismissed the draft as unimportant because it was substantially amended by the Convention,[656] a detailed analysis of the debates of its Organising Committee provides a crucial window into the mind of the Church in trying to answer all claims—to reconstruct Irish Anglicanism in a deeply political context.

John Vance MP, John Verner, Edward Wingfield Verner MP, J.N. King-Harman, James Spaight, and Joseph Storey.

[656] P.M.H. Bell, *Disestablishment in Ireland and Wales*, p.167.

III

The General Convention

January 1870—April 1870

Trench complained of the Kildare synod 'I suppose one half of your Delegates are good men—but scarcely more—about the same, or a little more may be said for those of Glandelagh [sic].' Equally, 'I am afraid that the Dublin Elections, with a few relative exceptions, are as bad as they can be. All the most woeful men are returned'. He was convinced rectors would leave because of an evangelical attempt to establish 'Diocesan Church Courts, for the more prompt & easy worrying of the Clergy with ritualistic or Puseyite proclivities.' He was determined to resist this by enshrining Episcopal power in the draft constitution. The distrust between the two sides was so deep the Bench planned to meet two days before the rest of the Committee. Trench fretted that '[t]here seems to be hardly a hope that the Committee will even be able to provide a joint Report—or that even <u>two</u> Reports which express all the dissimilarity of our minds on points the most important.'[657] The Organising Committee had been elected from the diocesan synods; each supplied two clergymen and two laymen. This proved a deeply partisan experience. The Bench had automatic membership, and invited a large clutch of lawyers and judges to advise them, without voting power. However, many of those men were, in their own right, Church activists who had taken part in the controversies and squabbles of the preceding months: Sir Joseph Napier, Sir Frederick Shaw, Charles H. Todd, Thomas Lefroy, J.T. Ball, and R.R. Warren.

On the eve of this crucial gathering, a debate in *Saunders* reminded the Committee of their steep task in keeping together a community so scarred by antagonism and mistrust. On 16th December 1869 another body of the Dublin laity met in the Molesworth Hall. They again tried to outflank the episcopate—a group of

[657] Trench to Cooke Trench, 7th, 8th, 27th December 1869, RCBL Ms.327/1/134,135,138.

delegates formed themselves into yet another side committee, working independently of the established authorities. Accordingly, on 4th January 1870 Thomas Cooke Trench, the Archbishop's cousin, lashed out, claiming 'the proposed separate lay action appears to me to be the first step, and that a very forward one, towards a schism and the disruption of our ancient Church'. *Saunders* warned that Cooke Trench was not alone.[658] The same day Abercorn promised Courtown he would serve as a Lay Chairman or President of the General Convention, and use his cachet to prevent confrontations and conflicts; significantly, he consulted Dublin MP I.T. Hamilton on this matter.[659]

The Organising Committee first met on Wednesday, 5th January 1870. The next day they assigned membership of various sub-committees charged with drafting the different aspects of the Constitution.[660] The *Evening Mail* immediately attacked even this seemingly-mundane task, undermining the Committee from the outset. It claimed the more populist Church organisers were 'excluded from those sub-Committees in which there is likely to be opposition to the popular sense.' It finally complained that only one layman was on the working party drafting the crucial declaration of fundamental principles,[661] ignoring that it was John Ffolliott from the diocese of Elphin, one of the most strident evangelical leaders. Soon the various Church blocs used contacts with the press exactly like political factions, leaking and publishing against each other. The newspapers extended these contretemps through Ireland, and did so in the style of party organs.

From the start, the clash between a 'moderate' elite and populists undermined the Committee's work, and an eager press disseminated the conflicts. The internal discussions were showpieces of faction and ideology. The very existence of rough

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[658] *Saunders' Church Paper*, 4th January 1870.
[659] Abercorn to Courtown, 4th January 1870, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/288.
[660] RCBL, GCP, Minutes and Rough Minutes of the General Organising Committee (MGOC), 5th, 6th January 1870.
[661] *DEM*, 7th January 1870. C.P. Reichel later published an open letter explaining that the committees were self-selected.

minutes, alongside a leather-bound, beautifully composed formal minute book which carefully omitted the more controversial conflicts, indicates this Committee's members' consciousness of posterity, and of the precedents in their debates. The Constitution they were drafting was not the only legacy they would leave for the Church. Their whole exercise was, in fact, a performance. These minutes were remarkably circumspect. One of the few relatively sound indications of the proceedings' mood was the psalm with which a Bishop opened each day's sitting.

Whilst the Organising Committee sat in Dublin, the diocese of Down, Connor, and Dromore held yet another mixed lay and clerical synod—this one to determine their own new diocesan constitution. The battleground was, unsurprisingly, the de facto Bishops' veto. One minister described it as a question of 'whether or not we shall revolutionise the whole character and condition of our Church'. The individual diocesan bishop's power had always been preeminent, and 'we should remember that the eyes of Great Britain are upon us, and that, so surely as we attempt to revolutionise our Church in submission to the growing destructive tendencies of the age—(applause)—so surely as we attempt to do that, we bring utter destruction upon her (applause).' A layman responded that '[w]e only wish to dispense the power which has not hitherto been in the hands of this Church at all, but which has been vested in the Crown and Parliament….the power which the Crown has abdicated should be divided amongst all persons in the Church.'[662] There could not be a more basic clash—whether the ultimate rule in their community came from civil authority or divine power in the wake of the Second Reform Act. The vehicle for this conflict was the seeming minutiae of the administrative settlement being hashed out in public meetings across Ireland.

Similarly, Dublin delegates continued meeting in the Molesworth Hall, this time under the Marquess of Drogheda. Although it was a continuation of the

[662] *DE*, 11th January 1870.

controversial 16th December meeting, they now stated that they were not trying to undermine the Organising Committee. The *Freeman's Journal* described this gathering as the 'Conservative' element of the Dublin and Kildare delegation—and the group included Tory diocesan stalwarts Sir Edward Grogan, John Barlow, John Norwood, Richard Gamble, and Tankerville Chamberlain. However, it also included three men who would later become prominent Anglican members of the Home Government Association—the Rev. Joseph Allen Galbraith of TCD, Dublin Corporation member James Vokes Mackey, and George Woods Maunsell, the *Evening Mail*'s proprietor.[663]

In the Organising Committee, on 7th January, Lord Courtown and James Byrne, dean of Clonfert, proposed that the Bishops be able to vote and deliberate separately from the rest of the Convention. Conspicuously, not a single bishop took part in this debate. After several permutations, the eventual settlement was the defensive decision to give any order the right to withdraw for separate discussion. The Organising Committee addressed the touchstone issue of lay versus clerical power in diocesan synods on 14th January 1870. They eventually compromised letting each diocese decide for itself, after initially meeting with an equal ratio. In a similar vein of localist conservatism, they decided the RCB would be staffed through diocesan elections,[664] preserving it from a partisanship ironically expressed in Courtown's earlier vision of the RCB as a Cabinet to the General Convention's House of Commons. The *Pall Mall Gazette* reported that '[a] controversy is still raging as to whether the Bishops can properly claim to be a separate governing order'. It suggested the Low Church was 'disheartened' by losing key votes in the Down Diocesan Synod. The paper anticipated discord in the General Convention, or, as it described it, the 'Parliament of the Church'.[665]

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[663] *FJ*, 8th January 1870; *BNL*, 8th January 1870; *PMG*, 10th January 1870.
[664] RCBL, GCP, MGOC, 7th, 11th, 13th, 14th January 1870.
[665] *PMG*, 14th January 1870.

In contrast, a central, national touchstone of Anglican politics returned to live politics. The Hon. David Plunket, W.C. Plunket's brother, formally stood to replace Anthony Lefroy as MP for Dublin University. He felt that

> the present time is full of peril to the interests which we hold most dear. Legislation, breathing the spirit of destruction which marked the Irish Church Bill, is threatened in reference to other institutions. Measures having for their object the compulsory transfer of property in land from the owner to the occupier of the soil are openly advocated, and such suggestions are mainly based upon differences in religious belief which prevail between these two classes of the community.

84 of the 142 men on his electoral committee were ordained, and the laity included a strong coterie of antidisestablishmentarian activists.[666] G.A. Hamilton (who previously held the seat) concurred, arguing that 'the disestablishment & disendowment of the Church in Ireland by the House of Commons, and the acquiescence of the House of Lrds [sic] is such an act of injustice & wrong, must be taken as a conclusive decision with regard to all similar Institutions in Ireland.' He anticipated the Catholic hierarchy's attacking Trinity, and English collusion in the destruction of what was, for him, a centre of Irish culture and morality.[667]

In this atmosphere, on 19th January, William Fitzgerald opened the Committee meeting by reading the 80th psalm, which included:

> Lord God of Hosts,/how long wilt though be angry against the prayer of thy people?/Though feedest them with the bread of tears;/and givest them tears to drink in great measure./You makest us a strife unto our neighbours:/and our enemies laugh among themselves./Turn us again, O God of Hosts, and cause thy face to shine,/and we shall be saved./….Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts:/look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine;/And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself./It is burned with fire, it is cut down:/they perish at the rebuke of they countenance.[668]

This framed an important discussion: the nature of voting. Again pegging their own Church administration to the wider culture of government, some were 'of the

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[666] *DE*, 15th January 1870. The activists were Richard Gamble, Thomas Lefroy, William Digges La Touche, George Woods Maunsell, H.M. Pilkington, Anthony Traill, William Barlow Smythe and Sir Frederick Shaw.
[667] Hamilton to Lloyd, 14th January 1870, TCD Ms.3487, pp.43-6.
[668] Psalms, LXXX, 5-15.

opinion that it should be conducted in a manner as nearly approaching to that followed in Parliament as circumstances will admit of.'[669] The next day's debate was perhaps the most important day of their sittings, however: they discussed the declaration of fundamental principles.

Edward Stopford, archdeacon of Meath, and William Brooke began the meeting by securing the agreement of the relevant subcommittee to consider revising the Irish articles of 1615 for the General Convention—allowing the possibility of a drastic change in the Church. The new Preamble, developed under the chairmanship of John Gregg, the evangelical bishop of Cork, reiterated their position that the Church 'did for many centuries maintain its position in this land as an Independent National Church, and did afterwards become connected with the State'. This clearly re-asserted a purely Irish inheritance and minimised the blow of disestablishment. Its first proper heading affirmed the Bible and Creeds, the three orders of Bishops, Priests and Deacons, and disavowed 'all those innovations in doctrine and worship'. This was a shot at ritualists, who were—according to their enemies—introducing new, unscriptural, unsound elements into the liturgy. The second heading endorsed the Book of Articles of Religion agreed in 1634 (the 39 Articles),[670] the liturgy of Book of Common Prayer, and the Form of Ordination from 1662. Its third heading was: 'The Church of Ireland, deriving its authority from Christ…doth maintain its right, as a National Church, to provide for its self-government, without the intervention of any other power or authority whatsoever, civil or ecclesiastical.' Lastly, they decided to maintain communion with the Church of England.[671]

This final heading was not necessarily a matter of course. By maintaining Episcopalian polity and Anglican theology they would still be, de facto, an

[669] RCBL, GCP, MGOC, 19th January 1870.
[670] Here they described the foundational charter of the Church of England through the relevant Irish Synod, staking a subtle cultural-cum-legal claim.
[671] RCBL, GCP, MGOC, 20th January 1870.

autocephalous Anglican province. A specific declaration to this end was unnecessary. Articulating this simultaneously emphasised to the more radical Church of Ireland members that they did not intend to totally abandon England, yet reminded the Church of England of their independence and free ability to stand alone, if desired. This underscored the previous heading's claim of 'self-government'. A.J.B. Beresford Hope's line on this point emphasised the inability of the English High Church to understand the mind and mood of the Irish Church in the immediate aftermath of disestablishment. He urged their maintaining a close union between the two communions partly from 'that affinity of race, of language, of habits, of literature, and of religion, which allies the Church people of the two lands.' However, everyone in Ireland was aware that the Irish Church Act passed through the Lords partly because the Church of England's Archbishops abstained for the crucial vote, and Anglican Peers defected. Beresford Hope urged them to consider 'the common danger, which menaces both, from Celtic jealousy', and the need for Irish landowners to maintain the cultural links with England. For him, the Irish Church was entering a period of unsettlement and potential revolution; he recognised, from this, the wider issue behind Revision was ultimately the extent to which the Irish Church stayed in connection with England.[672]

Yet his arguments for security completely ran against the belligerent Irish mentality of the time, and the considerable efforts, or at least discussions, about reconstructing the Church in a way that would encourage involvement from across the social spectrum. One anonymous curate claimed that revision was a chance to remove the volume of prayers for aristocratic authorities, and solidify local adherence.[673] In laying out their theological inheritance, when describing the Book of Common Prayer and 39 Articles, they chose to emphasise their own synods

[672] A.J.B. Beresford Hope, *The Irish Church and its Formularies*.
[673] 'A Curate in the Irish Church', *Thoughts on Liturgical ReforMs; Suited to the Present Crisis* (Dublin, 1869).

rather than the religious settlement evolved in England during the Reformation. This established a legal line which was both clear and clearly Irish, stressing their own particularity and unique existence. Importantly, though, the 1634 Synod placed the 39 Articles alongside the decidedly Calvinist Irish Articles of Religion of 1615. The two codes were intended to be complementary standards of faith, yet the Irish Articles fell out of use over the centuries.

However, the underlying politics of that Convocation was an attempt by the English government to graft the Laudian programme onto the independent-minded, Calvinistic Irish Church.[674] William Reeves documented this in extraordinary detail,[675] and William Fitzgerald, who particularly informed that debate in the Committee, was a former professor of Ecclesiastical History; in reminding the community of the events in 1634 he was also reminding them of a wider theological inheritance. It was possibly a shot at evangelicals clamouring to re-Calvinise the Church. The historiographic sophistry in which these men revelled—tortuously tracing their apostolic succession back to St. Patrick, grounding contemporary discussion in the legalisms of seventeenth-century synods—was a way of rooting Protestantism in Ireland. Trench, Fitzgerald, Graves and others like them were academic and intellectual liberals. This was their way of presenting a spiritual yet intellectually credible alternative to Papal anti-modernism following the 1864 Syllabus of Errors. It was their (admittedly awkward) contribution to the pan-European 'culture wars' of the time. Their liberal Protestantism was a middle way between secularism and ultramontanism, and though very few people outside their Church would have grasped this, the byzantine inheritances stressed by this Constitution implicitly argued as much.

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[674] John McCafferty, "'God bless your free Church of Ireland": Wentworth, Laud, Bramhall and the Irish Convocation of 1634', in J.F. Merritt (ed.), *The Political World of Thomas Wentworth, earl of Strafford 1621-1641* (Cambridge, 1996); Jack P. Cunningham, 'John Bramhall's Other Island: A Laudian Solution to an Irish Problem', *Irish Historical Studies*, vol.36, no.141 (May, 2008), pp.1-15.
[675] TCD Ms.1062, pp.61-5.

Next, on 21st January, they debated the model of the General Synod. As originally proposed, it reflected two distinct sources: the first was the Westminster Parliament; the second was the ad hoc, improvised structure first created for the Church Congress in March, 1869, which had snowballed into the system used to create the panel now assembling a Church constitution. However, Hedges Eyre Chatterton (the judicial Vice-Chancellor) first developed that structure as a legal way of opposing Westminster. The proposed Synod, and its method of conducting business, was grounded in a detailed, complicated procedure—designed with an eye far more to Parliament and the legal circuits than ecclesiastical tradition.

It accepted the theologically and socially conservative principle of three orders of bishops, clergy, and laity, with the consent of all three required for a binding decision. However, in a compromise, there would only be two houses (a House of Bishops, and all the clergy and laity in the other), seated together in deliberation. This House of Representatives (which acknowledged population discrepancies between the dioceses) would contain 100 clergy and 150 laity, elected by diocesan synods. As far as authority ran, the Archbishops would empower their suffragan bishops to convene synods for elections, and delegates resigned through the Bishop. The Archbishops could convene a special General Synod, quorum was set at 1/3, and members of both Houses were necessary for any business.

The proposed procedure for establishing a new canon or statue for the Church seems to have been directly modelled on the British Parliament. Each new canon would be introduced as a bill: read first without debate, then set down for a debate on its principles, then debated in a committee of the House in which the Bill originated. If it passed it would be sent to the other House; if passed by both the Bill was accepted as a Canon. However, if it was amended in committee it would be debated by both Houses. All votes would be by division, unless three members of

any order requested a vote by orders.[676] This clearly followed the procedure in Parliament, mirroring the process of a first reading without debate, a second reading and a debate on general principles, a committee stage, and a third reading, or debate at a Bill's report stage.

William Reeves' research on convocation was both extraordinarily detailed and politically astute, and built on the years spent debating Irish Convocation's history with Sir George Grey.[677] But prelates refreshed this long-standing topic: M.G. Beresford composed his own working notes on the politically sensitive topic of the relationship between lower and upper houses in the ancient Synods.[678] William Thompson, archbishop of York, gave Cairns a large dossier of his own research on how the Irish Convocation ought to be revived, so Cairns could forward it to 'Irish dignitaries'.[679] The men framing this procedure knew the history and mechanics of the Irish Convocation thoroughly. They could have simply re-created the form of governance legally dormant since 1713.

The decision to model the new Church system on Westminster, not more obvious precedents, had to be deliberate. Given how stormy, antagonistic, and confrontational the build-up to the General Convention had been, there was every possibility the new Church government could be a maelstrom. The clumsy, awkward, overly-elaborate process for drafting new canons was probably proposed to stultify debate. However, the model used was the House of Commons. Again a collection of conservatives had accidentally gifted Ireland a practical model of independent self-governance. Once more, the Irish conservative attempt to check organised, political radicalism resulted in a nuanced, intellectually radical example

[676] RCBL, GCP, MGOC, 21st January 1870.
[677] TCD Ms.1042. Reeves' composed a volume of 700 pages of hand-written notes and transcriptions, then completed it with a series of presscuttings detailing the history of Synodical developments in the Irish Church in response to the threat of disestablishment through the 1860s.
[678] CUL Ms.Add.9407/8/17,18.
[679] Thompson to Cairns, 30th June 1869, NA Ms.PRO30/51/15/16.

of independence from Britain. Indeed, Courtown and the Viscount Crichton, a sitting MP, proposed establishing another group solely 'for the purpose of recommending a course of proceeding in accordance with Parliamentary Practice'. On the whole, the amendments proposed for this were, as ever, concerned mostly with authority. Studiously, the clergymen in the room abstained from taking stances on measures increasing their power; they left that to the pro-clerical laity, forestalling criticism of power-mongering from the anti-clerical evangelicals.

They met again on 22nd and 24th January 1870. William Fitzgerald opened the first day's work with the 85th psalm, its themes of renewal and triumph clearly apposite. They debated a proposal from Lords Dunsany and Courtown requiring subscription to Church funds before registering as a vestryman. It was withdrawn after a 'long discussion' in which bishops, politicians, judges and gentry all participated. Removing a financial test was a measure to keep the more humble Churchmen involved. These delicate discussions of the relationship between finance and power dominated the next day's work, which included debates about their internal courts. Again seeking lay-clerical balance, they decided that civil judges would staff the courts along with bishops (assuming, it seems, that their communion would always have a surfeit of Irish judgeships).[680]

Edward Stopford, an influential member of the Committee, wrote to his wife Anne in the midst of this, reporting that they worked solid nine-hour days, sitting till eleven p.m. He gave her vivid descriptions of the emotion in these internal contests, such as 'Plunket spoke to me last night, and I told him his game was dead & gone. He felt that today.' He wrote of committees being 'finally attacked', how groups 'rebelled' in the face of 'telling speeches'.[681] The men gathered for this awkward task had an undeniable faith, and a deep commitment to making their Church's new life work. The conflicts came from passion and pride more than

[680] RCBL, GCP, MGOC, 22nd, 24th January 1870.
[681] Stopford to Anne Stopford, 23rd January 1870, RCBL Ms.81/2/56.

anything else. But there were conflicts, and the atmosphere was one of negotiation, not merely deliberation.

Again, Parliamentary and political practice dominated another area that could have been free from that culture. On 25th January the Committee debated ecclesiastical appointments, and concluded three points: keeping the State uninvolved, allowing the laity to have a voice in the selection of ministers 'in conformity with the practice of the Primitive Christian Church before it was connected with or controlled by the State', and arranging elections to avoid 'a system of canvassing or…manifestations of party spirit'.[682] Again, these strictures reflected immediate concerns, not abstract fears. The redefined role of the state haunted all their discussions, and ecclesiastical factions and blocs had quite clearly emerged already. Accordingly, the themes dominating their deliberations resolved into these neat expressions of freedom from English control, the involvement of the laity, and the need to stifle contentious political action. One of the most pro-English and upper-caste members of the Committee, William Bence-Jones, told Tait the plans might 'satisfy the Protestant party, which is a great object.'[683] On the next day, their last, the discussion turned on other elements of Episcopal prerogative.

Trench finally opened with a psalm of praise. C.P. Reichel and John Wolfe, archdeacon of Clogher, proposed adding a passage to the declaration of fundamental principles, which ran: 'Notwithstanding the severance of the legislative union between this Church and its Sister Church, the Church of England, we hereby profess our earnest attachment to that Church, and our desire, as far as possible, to maintain fellowship with it, and the other Churches in communion herewith.' Theologically, this was innocuous and obvious, but grated against the political mood of the times. This fundamental declaration, basic to Anglican

[682] RCBL, GCP, MGOC, 25th January 1870.
[683] Bence-Jones to Tait, 25th January 1870, LPL Ms.Tait/87,fols.221-2.

ecclesiology, was actually rejected. They upheld Irish traditionalism, however. Chatterton proposed allowing any bishop to be elected Primate; the see they held would be elevated to primatial standing during the prelate's incumbency. Although the minutes do not record if this was mentioned in debates, this was exactly the system used in the Scottish Episcopal Church. However, the Committee unanimously rejected Chatterton's plans, affirming the preeminence of Armagh,[684] and thus their own ecclesiology with its deep meaning: Patrician descent and pre-Union autonomy. The Organising Committee closed by rejecting wider Anglican inheritance in favour of Irish Anglican purity.

The opening of the General Convention was set for 15th February. The day after the Organising Committee closed, an evangelical paper exhorted its readers:

> Let that day be memorable in the sign of God and man for your Solemn Protest against Idols, Pictures, Crosses, Saints' Days, and Creature Worship; and let your cry to Heaven be long, strong, and loud for Revision of the Book of Common Prayer, and Reform in the Irish Church. Do not, we entreat you, promise or give one fraction to the Sustentation Fund until a Decree shall have gone forth from the Convention ordering these purifications; and let the Decree be enforced on pain of suspension or expulsion. Give yourselves to prayer on the day previous, and Truth shall prevail. Beware of a Plot more dangerous and fatal than the Gunpowder one.[685]

More soberly, laymen in the diocese of Ferns petitioned Bishop O'Brien to launch a day of public prayers.[686] The *Times* still optimistically hoped that 'there will be less of democratic spirit and a greater regard shown for the maintenance of established authority and order in the proposed constitution than was expected from the early manifestations of lay opinion.'[687] The expectations of lay governance already altered the lay-clerical relationship, before the Convention met, and before the Church was legally disestablished. H.H. Dickinson proposed liturgical changes in his parish church of St. Anne's, Dublin, which split the congregation. The *Evening Mail* questioned his authority to do so, and promised the Convention would settle these

[684] RCBL, GCP, MGOC, 27th January 1870.
[685] *The Witness*, 28th January 1870.
[686] *BNL*, 29th January 1870.
[687] *Times*, 28th January 1870.

sorts of issues.[688] However, St. Anne's was a parish church, not a trustee chapel. Dickinson did have a right to summarily change the ritual practice, and the opposition indicated a serious shift in the laity's understanding of their role in the Church—a change the *Times* termed 'democratic'.

On 2nd February 1870 the Organising Committee sent the Draft Constitution to all the delegates, in preparation for the Convention. However, it was also published in full by key newspapers and was available for purchase, at the cost of one shilling.[689] Clearly this document, produced with an eye to political and cultural shifts, stood for much beyond an initial point of discussion at the Convention. It was a broad declaration of principles reaching the wider Anglican community through print media. It was extensively summarised in numerous British papers; the *Birmingham Daily Post* even compared the proposed structure to the federal American constitution, likening the relationship between Diocesan Synods and the General Convention to that between the State Legislatures and the Federal Government.[690] It carried patina of a proto-state, a counterpoise to the state within a state of the Roman Catholic Church.[691] Its culture of self-government stemmed from a change in the constitutional mentality of the time, and it prefigured a deeper, federalist, shift.

Although nearly every paper commended the Constitution, the *Freeman* warned, against the *Times*' optimism, '[i]t is clear, from the tone adopted by the Democratic Party in the Diocesan Synods, that the Constitution will be attacked.'[692] The episcopate's powers of secret separate voting rankled. It is key that, despite their profoundly different stances, both the *Freeman* and the *Times* characterised

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[688] *DEM*, 29th January 1870.
[689] *DE*, 2nd February 1870; *BNL*, 2nd, 3rd February 1870.
[690] *PMG*, 2nd, 3rd February 1870; *Times*, 3rd February 1870; *Glasgow Herald*, 4th February 1870; *Liverpool Mercury*, 4th February 1870; [Cardiff] *Western Mail*, 4th February 1870; *Birmingham Daily Post*, 4th February 1870.
[691] Emmet Larkin, *The Consolidation of the Catholic Church in Ireland, 1860-1870* (Chapel Hill, 1987).
[692] *FJ*, 4th February 1870.

the bloc who resented Episcopal power as the 'democratic' faction. Chatterton confided to Courtown that 'I fear we shall have hot work at first'. In a familiar tactic, Trench organised another private meeting of moderates, anticipating a turbulent Convention. A Tipperary layman approached Courtown with his concerns, after talking to the evangelical Lord Carrick—also a member of the Organising Committee. He complained about the Bishops: 'Secret Voting also seems against the spirit of the age, it is a privilege they never enjoyed in the House of Lords, & is at variance with the position which the Laity ought to hold in a Church mainly supported by themselves'.[693] This again connected Church governance to wider political culture—opposition to the secret ballot was a specific principle for Tories and fundamental to a wider socially-conservative mentality. The image of the Episcopate as a new Church House of Lords was accordingly telling.

On 8th February the *Belfast News-Letter* published the correspondence of laymen horrified by the Draft Constitution. Robert Temple, from the Orange bastion of Loughall, Co. Armagh, wrote that 'there is the utmost dissatisfaction…Such a constitution would give to the Episcopate powers that they have no claim to, and…will cause such disgust and suspicion on the part of the laity'. He went on to disparage the Constitution's suggestion of only 100 clerical and 150 lay delegates, arguing that it would produce 'an almost exclusively aristocratic convention, the very thing of all others to be deprecated'. However, he reserved his greatest fire for the separate voting of the order of Bishops, damning it in terms only possible after 1867: 'I maintain to give seven men who are not a representative body…the power of resisting the combined will of the majority of the laity and clergy is contrary to common sense….why should they have a separate House? We want no House of Lords in our new constitution'. Another letter from Edward Waller, an Armagh lay delegate, blasted the Constitution, writing that 'the spirit of Episcopal rule pervades

[693] Chatterton, P. Connellan to Courtown, 4th, 5th February 1869, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/294,290 emphasis original.

every part of it'. John Murray, the delegate for Moira, also questioned the manner of elections to the 'Legislative Assembly' in markedly Parliamentary terms.[694]

Similarly, a petition from 171 Dubliners told the Convention that the laity could never hold their own against two separate clerical orders. Furthermore, 'the appointment of Bishops has always hitherto been vested in the Crown, now represented by the laity; and that the large powers conferred on the Bishops by the new Constitution render it of the utmost importance that the laity should posses their legitimate influence in the Episcopal elections.' Even if simple jealousy and distrust animated these claims, they were still expressed constitutionally—lay control was the recognition of diffused State authority. Several Wexford parishes echoed these arguments in a similar petition, supported by vestrymen and churchwardens. The backbone of this petition was a web of related families who listed humble occupations such as 'farmer' and 'grocer'.[695] The lack of aristocratic local leadership ensured that Church governance was, on the ground, confined to the middle-class: shopkeepers and strong farmers. Rural agitation came from those about to be eclipsed after the generations of local rule.

On the same day, a group of delegates again formed another independent meeting to oppose the Draft Constitution. They argued the Convention was too near the Parliamentary session and assizes to allow most laymen to attend for long enough, that it nullified the model of lay representation to which they agreed at the Lay Conference, that in backing voting by orders they intended two, not three (and thus a de facto Episcopal veto), and that 'the just influence of the laity' was ignored in the Draft Constitution's patronage system.[696] Indeed, the *Evening Mail*'s leader accused the Bishops of having 'struck the first blow and carried half the battle' by rigging the Organising Committee with 'half Romanised Lords' and 'led lawyers'.

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[694] *BNL*, 8th February 1870.
[695] RCBL, GCP, loose petitions; Mss.P/870/5/1; P/872/5/1.
[696] *Times*, 9th February 1870; *Glasgow Herald*, 12th February 1870.

The break-away meeting produced an 'Amended Draft' in advance of the Convention, which proposed reducing the Bishops' authority, expanding the size of the General Synod, and altering the patronage to the control of elected diocesan boards.[697]

The *Pall Mall Gazette* reported, on the eve of the Convention, that 'a half-dozen "private," or semi-public, gatherings are to occur to-night, at which the friends and the enemies of the prerogative of the bishops are to muster their respective forces. All sorts of rumours are afloat, and all manner of amendments to the Draft Constitution—printed and written—are handed about.'[698] Indeed, one such meeting deliberately assembled a panel of delegates from ten different dioceses. These meetings ranged from small parish vestries to a large gathering in the Antient Concert Rooms which included Lords Rosse and Leitrim, Lord James Butler, Lord George Hill, William Brooke, Richard Gamble, and John Ffolliott, joined by influential clergymen: H.H. Dickinson, W.C. Plunket, and Edward Stopford. Here, Brooke took the Chair and condemned the Draft as giving the Bench 'a *quasi* monarchical power'.[699]

As always, the political portents were never distant from these debates. One layman in the Antient Concert Rooms, Paul Dane, blasted both the Conservative Party, and the 'Puseyite' and 'radical' elements on the Committee, as collectively saddling them with the miserable situation.[700] The *Belfast News-Letter* defended episcopacy as part of a broader front of defending their true Irish Church, which had been 'plundered…in the face of English blunderings'.[701] Similarly, an anonymous pamphlet damned the English government and Church, hoping to inspire an autonomous, strong, and independent Irish communion. In order to

[697] *DEM*, 10th February 1870.
[698] *PMG*, 15th February 1870.
[699] *Saunders' Church Paper*, 14th February 1870.
[700] *FJ*, 15th February 1870.
[701] *BNL*, 12th February 1870.

convert 'our beloved Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen' they needed to remember that 'the greatest hindrance…has been the presenting [of] Gospel truth to the Celtic mind through the instrumentality of the Church of *England*, the people having ever regarded England in the light of a conqueror, the cruel oppressor of their country, and the chief source of all her woes.' Accordingly, it was best for the Church of Ireland to have nothing to do with the Church of England or the British State.[702] The English seemed only to care about the Irish Church when it touched their own material interests anyway.[703]

The Convention opened on 15th February 1870, following this course of ad hoc, antagonistic public meetings. The first day's work continued in this same vein of showpiece politics. After prayers from Trench, a speech from Beresford charged them 'not…to create, but to restore'. After the appointments of assessors and Honorary Secretaries,[704] the first motion of the day recorded, for both themselves and posterity, their opposition to the Irish Church Act, in fairly strident terms. However, several present pressed the proposers to withdraw the motion, claiming it was inappropriately political for the solemn occasion. H.A. Herbert, a Kerry Liberal MP and James Spaight, a Limerick Tory organiser, proposed they use the Parliamentary practice of reserving seats at prayer time. Although the Convention refused this rather insignificant custom, it demonstrated, yet again, how much these men looked to Westminster for their inspiration and ethos (and did so across political divides). Similarly, Lords Dunalley and Courtown, and Henry Bruen, MP for Co. Carlow, used allusions to the House of Commons in order to settle the details of mechanics and procedure. Even if directly political statements were

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[702] 'A Lay Representative', *A Royal Charter for the Church of Ireland. Shall it be Accepted?* (Dublin, 1870), emphasis original.
[703] For the longer term-ramifications of these mentalities see P.M.H. Bell, *Disestablishment in Ireland and Wales*, pp.205-8.
[704] Beresford appointed Liberal-Conservative legal minds J.T. Ball and Mountifort Longfield his assessors. R.S. Gregg and Edward Norman were the clerical Honorary Secretaries; Anthony Traill and Tankerville Chamberlain their lay counterparts.

thought in poor taste, structurally and culturally, the Commons was still their most potent model.

Magnates then proposed the standing orders: the Duke of Manchester, the Earls of Longford, Erne, Courtown, and Clancarty, and Sir William Osborne of Ballintaylor all spoke. Courtown stressed the temporary nature of the Convention, and the practical, financial need to work within the Irish Church Act, no matter how much they hated it. However, even this routine did not move smoothly—activists proposed spoiling amendments. This group included James Spaight, the Hon. Cavendish Butler, the Rev. Joseph A. Galbraith, and John Madden. Spaight and Butler were committed Tories; Southerners elected for Northern dioceses under Robert Hamilton's controversial plan of October 1869. Madden and Galbraith were, at this point, Conservatives shifting to their own strain of nationalism, who would be among the most prominent early Home Rulers. Butler and Madden opposed Courtown's proposal of separate voting, which grouped the episcopate as an order in its own right.[705]

The debate over this point rumbled on for three days. Abercorn finally spoke to the bishops, and on the morning of 18th February promised to propose a compromise that afternoon. He consulted an unofficial coterie, whilst the whole Convention went into a brief hiatus during his coven.[706] With Courtown as the seconder, he suggested a defensive system which gave every order certain influence; the episcopate could block legislation only if they had seven bishops in dissenting agreement. J.C. MacDonnell proposed an amendment that if the bishops did block a measure, it could be overturned if two thirds voted for it. The debate on

[705] RCBL, GCP, Minutes of the General Convention (MGC), 15th February 1870; *BNL*, 16th February 1870.
[706] The group included C.P. Reichel, William Brooke, Horace Rochfort, Charles Uniacke Townsend, Lord Longford, Edward Pennefather, A.S. Harte, Lord James Butler, Mervyn Archdall, James Spaight, B.T. Hewitt, Richard Gamble, Sir Edward Grogan, J.A. Galbraith, George Salmon, W.C. Plunket, and John Madden, a range of occupations, dispositions, and orientations.

this was unsurprisingly intense—at one point the Low Church Lord Oranmore and Browne announced that 'he did not think it at all important whether they had an Episcopacy or not.' John Madden reminded the Convention of the idea that the laity had inherited Crown prerogative through disestablishment; even if the Bishops had a veto, the laity had more power as the inheritor of diffused royal authority. The Convention rejected MacDonnell's motion 379 to 212 (a majority of 167) in a Commons-style division, complete with tellers. As before, Lord James Butler demanded they send the divisional lists to the newspapers, although this failed.[707] They were clearly conscious of the public profile of their meeting, and indeed, their internal factions. These debates were not simply direct internal discussions, but showpiece performances of ideology.

Yet on 24th February two evangelical laymen, Ffolliott and Bloomfield, suggested a way to outflank any possibility of an Episcopal veto, allowing a return to the topic. The Convention treated their proposal with its most serious forms of voting, dividing and voting by orders. 43 clergymen and 72 laymen supported this, but 146 clergymen and 155 laymen rejected it. Abercorn proposed another compromise, suggesting they keep Ffolliott and Bloomfield's proposed system, but give the Episcopate a chance to veto a second time, by their own two-thirds majority. The Convention voted on this the next day, and passed it 362 to 81.[708] However, compromise on the mechanisms possibly entailed defeat on principles. During the course of this debate Edward Pennefather lobbied Courtown. Pennefather told him that he was 'in the wrong "lobby" on the Division….you are a Bishop's man', and 'we are in considerable Danger of losing our Episcopal character altogether'.[709] On the other side, James Spaight told Abercorn a month later that 'many of the extreme party found fault with me for accepting the compromise

[707] RCBL, GCP, MGC, 16th—18th February 1870; *BNL*, 19th February 1870.
[708] RCBL, GCP, MGC, 24th February 1870.
[709] W. Pennefather to Courtown, 23rd February, 2nd, 9th March 1870, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/296-8.

proposed by your Grace….It never would have been carried without the advantage of your Grace's influence with the Bishops and popularity among the laity'.[710] Again, the magnates prioritised a lack of controversy and a smooth operation, partly because Britain was watching.

The next day W.C. Plunket proposed the system for legislating new canons and statues; it was still directly modeled on Westminster, as in the Draft Constitution. This method passed, with slight tinkering amendments from two former Conservative MPs, Sir Edward Grogan and R.R. Warren. On 2nd March a sub-committee was deputed to draw up the new Charter. It was, unsurprisingly, staffed chiefly by Conservative lawyers and politicians. Indeed, the most common speakers during the course of the Convention's sitting were politicians or Church activists who had been most prominent during the antidisestablishmentarian struggles. They adjourned in early April 1870, having successfully established a framework for self-government.

The various technical issues of patronage and local governance were not drastically different from what the Organising Committee proposed,[711] and it is not the goal of this study to dwell too deeply on the administrative details. The only other significant change was dramatically expanding the numbers in the General Synod to 636, in line with the anti-elite proposals raised at the meetings that preceded the Convention, and agreed at the Lay Conference in October 1869. Most of the delegates actually drained away from the Convention when the controversy of the Bishops' veto was settled. The two most pressing issues remained finance and theological revision, which would be addressed when the Convention re-convened in October.

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[710] Spaight to Abercorn, 12th March 1869, PRONI Ms.D623/A/322/1.
[711] *The Statutes Passed in the General Convention of the Church of Ireland. 1870.* (Dublin, 1874).

In an explanatory pamphlet, George Salmon tried to elucidate the local tensions for a wider readership. But some of his allusions were highly revealing, such as '[t]he General Synod is to be the Parliament of the Church'. Indeed, he felt that '[i]n numbers, in the rank of its members, in the ability of its speakers, and in earnestness and honesty of purpose, it would favorably compare with any of those Parliaments before the Union, which Irishmen are so fond of looking back on.'[712] J.C. Beckett described this sense of pride in the Church's Irishness as 'ecclesiastical nationalism'. Now it was magnified by the obvious analogy between the General Synod and the old Irish Parliament, even down to the numerous families whose members sat in both bodies.[713] The crisis of disestablishment underscored these political dynamics within another elite, Protestant institution: Trinity College, Dublin.

Trinity was under again threat; Gladstone might adopt the radical MP Henry Fawcett's long campaign to abolish the Anglican exclusivity of its governance and elite scholarships. The University defended itself by declaring that in educating Protestants and Roman Catholics together they undermined Ireland's corrosive religious-political divide.[714] The *Daily Express* characterised this statement as TCD's wounding the Ultramontanes, who expected to 'plunder' Trinity 'as a matter of mere detail' following the 'overthrow' of the Church. It lauded the university as a civilising influence, upholding the culture of Ireland in the interests of both denominations.[715] A challenge to the Anglican character of an institution prompted a defence of Catholic-Protestant cooperation, from a stridently protestant paper. Internally, though, Trinity's political elite reexamined their role. The young bucks of the 'Hist' debated the Union, under the guise of debating 'Pitt's Irish Policy'. Discussed four times across 1869 and 1870, the body which had hitherto produced

[712] George Salmon, *The Irish Church Convention* (London, 1870).
[713] J.C. Beckett, *The Anglo-Irish Tradition* (London, 1976), p.72.
[714] TCD Ms.3487, 11(a)-12; *DE*, 17th February 1870; *FJ*, 17th February 1870.
[715] *DE*, 24th February 1870.

the stars of the Irish Tory world actually condemned the Union, and, in the middle of the Commons fight over the Irish Church Bill, voiced approval for Daniel O'Connell's political career.[716] The reconstruction of the Church formalised Irish Anglicanism new self-understanding, a renewed sense of autonomy and independence. It transformed the anger of disestablishment, channeling the resistance to the government into the creation of another quasi-government. This parallel would become even more marked during the Convention's second session, which engaged with the more contentious issues, in parallel to the emergence of the Home Government Association.

[716] TCD MUN/SOC/HIST, vols.31—33.

Chapter Four
The Home Government Association and Renewal
1870-1874

This chapter documents the earliest phase of the Home Rule movement. It sets this in a context of Irish Anglican renewal following the beginning of the life of the General Synod, and juxtaposes the energy and ideas of Prayer Book revision with the new political impulse of Irish federalism. This corrects the high-political narrative established by David Thornley, and in so doing explicates the highly-Anglican colour to the new bloc. The Home Government Association (HGA) is normally considered a landmark, the start of a new Irish political alliance. But, structurally, it was not a new phenomenon.

It was part of a wider culture of institutions and associations that extended parliamentary life through discussions and bridged the tight boundaries of Irish party politics. As explored in the previous chapter, the Church's General Convention increasingly resembled an Irish Parliament, in both its ethos and spirit. More generally, reconstructing the Church of Ireland and adjusting to a new political order entailed a broad realignment of Protestant politics. Significant discussion, in both public lectures and private correspondence, preceded the launch of the Home Government Association. These conversations shaped the ideas that formed the Association's platform, before any formal statements of purpose or programme.

This chapter relies on newspapers far more than the previous sections. No significant volume of manuscript sources is available to document the Home Government Association. Irish federalists only maintained official records from the launch of the Home Rule League in 1873. Although illustrative correspondence of certain members survives, there is nevertheless a paucity of non-printed material, particularly for 1872. However, this dearth is, in many ways, revealing—relying so heavily on newspapers reveals how the fledgling society projected itself, and

engaged in the public debate of intellectual Dublin. The HGA was, ultimately, a discussion society, not a political party. The printed representation and published criticism reveals the range of debates. It shows more complex and varied strains of thought than were previously credited to the Association.

I
Federalism and Repeal
March 1870—August 1870

In March 1870 Isaac Butt lectured on themes similar to both those later advanced by the Home Government Association, and the broader issues behind the Convention's debates about the Church's public role. Speaking in Coleraine, he was charged to avoid controversial topics—the audience would be politically mixed and split between Presbyterians and Anglicans. Because of this, his host suggested 'if the matter, or subject, of it be Irish so much the better'. Irish topics united different protestant strains, and cut through political differences.[717] Butt and the exiled Irish nationalist Charles Gavan Duffy compared notes on their federalist visions for Ireland and Australia two months before the first Irish federalist meeting.[718] It seems clear from the timing of this correspondence that the nebulous Australian model influenced Butt's thinking. Also that month, F.P. Dunne outlined a new strategy for the Repeal movement to W.J. O'Neill Daunt. Dunne, complaining of 'the selfish policy persisted in by British statesman (of all parties),' concluded that Repeal would benefit Britain as well as Ireland. He continued: 'I am also quite of the opinion…that the abolition of the Irish Church would probably [compel] the Protestants of Ireland to join in an effort, to restore our native legislative assembly.' This was created 'by the British Gov't when they abolished their Church.' These views were far from unusual the aftermath of the Irish Church Act; two Repealers grinning at a wave of fresh adherents did not itself evince a potentially revolutionary moment in Irish politics.

However, Dunne had unique insight. As mentioned earlier, his background and previous politics were impeccably Conservative. Furthermore, Dunne was an established activist in the Church of Ireland's reconstruction in Dublin. He was

[717] J.M. Farland to Isaac Butt, 7th March 1870, NLI Ms.8692/3.
[718] Charles Gavan Duffy to Butt, 5th March 1870, NLI Ms.10415/2.

particularly prominent in several critical meetings, including the tempestuous Dublin Synod in December 1869. Dunne understood the minds of the Church, the Tories, and, through his committee exploring the over-taxation of Ireland, the remaining O'Connellites. His prescience was telling. Dunne recognised that if a significant bloc from the Church of Ireland joined the remaining Repealers, it would entail a reformulation of the movement. There was a new 'sentiment of national feeling, working through out Ireland….Admitting all this it becomes another question, what are the chances of obtaining a majority of the People of Ireland to unite in demanding the right to govern themselves.[719] If Protestants rallied to the Repeal standard, the issue would be how a nationalist coalition could achieve the internal unity necessary to make this alliance work.

Dunne identified two areas that would become critical to the subsequent Federalist arguments—dispelling fears of Catholic ascendancy, and, as hinted at already, suggesting they eschew the corrupt cul-de-sacs of standard Irish politics. Gladstone's intention to reform Trinity might also force a Liberal-Conservative fusion around Protestant principles: David Plunket and J.T. Ball thought they might detach '40 extreme Liberals from Gladstone's party' and get them to vote with 'the whole Conservative phalanx' on the education question.[720] It seemed that party allegiances were once again loosened, politicians more mobile.

Even when two veteran Repealers did anticipate fresh recruits they acknowledged this potential new wave would change the movement. O'Neill Daunt also wrote to the former Young Irelander and Smith O'Brien lieutenant P.J. Smyth, suggesting Smyth and A.M. Sullivan consult Butt and Laurence Knox, the editor of the *Irish Times*; his strategy was essentially the one followed a few months later. O'Neill Daunt counselled that '[t]here should be a good meeting at the Rotundo (sic) with as many names of weight—especially Protestants—as could be obtained.' His

[719] Dunne to O'Neill Daunt, 11th March 1870, NLI Ms.8045/4.
[720] Plunket to Lloyd, 20th March 1870, TCD Ms.3487, pp.49-50.

suggestions about the tone of the new grouping were clear: 'Butt and Knox are men of discretion; the want of which quality has so often neutralised the services of very clear fellows. Your hot brained advocates, who labour under the great disadvantage of an irritable temper, might do us more harm than good.'[721] This placed any new clique beyond of the parameters of O'Connellite demotic agitation.

Straightforwardly political moves were distinct from the discussion at this stage—Laurence Knox stood as an independent at a Mallow by-election and lost by the same margin of his earlier defeat in the constituency as a Conservative.[722] John Madden also stood in a by-election, just weeks after the General Convention's first session closed. In 1868 he invaded Clones, Co. Monaghan at the head of an armed body to influence the 1868 election for the Conservatives.[723] Elected to the Lay Conference in August 1869, Madden was part of the deputation to the House of Lords, and saw the Conservative peers dismiss the Church's interests. Serving at the General Convention, he took part in their constructively, successfully managing their own affairs, without any British connection. In the by-election, Madden's idea of home government was the continuation of a Tory legacy stretching to 1782. As his election poster made clear, the Monaghan Tory grandee families 'were the men who fought against the Union and for HOME RULE!....now that the English Parliament has Repealed a portion of the Act of Union, I for one, solemly [sic] repudiate the shreds that have been left behind!'[724]

Yet other gentry proto-Home Rulers did not always share this highly Tory emphasis. Dunne advised O'Neill Daunt of a mooted meeting 'above all it will shew on what terms & for what real objects an union of all Irishmen professing love for their country can be formed…& that the objects sought are not those of a party or of

[721] O'Neill Daunt to P.J. Smyth, 8th April 1870, NLI Ms.8045/1.
[722] *IT*, 4th February 1870.
[723] Madden to E.P. Shirley, 28th November 1868, PRONI Ms.D3531/E/1.
[724] PRONI Ms.D3531/E/1.

Religious domination no mater by what creed'.[725] The divisions of Irish society made even well-disposed Englishmen distrust Federalism—the Irish Anglican Robert McDonnell, advancing the idea to a friend, heard many Englishmen would 'like to look at Irish problems from an Irish point of view—but then whose point of view shall we take—Mr. C Fortescue's, Dr. Ball's, Mr. G H Moore's, or Judge Longfield's not to mention more? If you would only be unanimous!....I for one would be glad to see the matter settled by an Irish Parliament…sitting in the old home in Dublin.' But the gentry would never accept it, so '[y]ou will come in time to see with me that one form of government can rescue Ireland—an honest & powerful despotism.'[726] Recruiting other Protestants did not merely endow the movement with social respectability and cachet. It dispelled the arrogant presumption that Irishmen of different backgrounds could not cooperate with each other and required an enlightened despotism (whose enlightenment they would certainly question). In this sense, beyond the movement's policy programme, whatever form the new bloc took would foreshadow Irish harmony in autonomy.

This made the model of a learned-cum-campaigning society critical, and McDonnell was well placed to understand its value in uniting Catholics and Protestants. He was a distinguished surgeon and amateur geologist engaged in the scientific and medical worlds where public meetings and open debate were central to advancing new ideas. McDonnell was a member of the Royal College of Surgeons and the Royal Irish Academy, and was in touch with leading practitioners across Europe. He understood how to make discussion societies work, and, as a public health commissioner, work so they complemented the government. These discussions were independent of the established nationalist-cum-Catholic machines—the organised campaigns for Fenian Amnesty and Tenant Right, and political priests. Under the Gladstonian Sir John Gray, the *Freeman's Journal* was

[725] Dunne to O'Neill Daunt, 8th April 1870, NLI Ms.8405/4.
[726] W.J. Fottrell to Robert McDonnell, 1st April [1870], NLI Ms.18490/3.

markedly sceptical of Tory nationalists, and the *Times* even reported that '[a] "National" feeling is springing up in quarters where its growth would have been impossible a few years ago', thanks to the *Freeman's* distaste for their new strain. One notable jolt came from a lecture delivered in Limerick by the Rev. George McCutchan, rector of Kenmare, Co. Kerry. Speaking on Henry Grattan, the talk was a condemnation of the British government in Ireland and demand for the restoration of the Irish Parliament. Although some of the meeting opposed McCutchan, most were reported as agreeing.[727]

British papers reported another Protestant clergyman's support for the new-style Repeal. The Ven. Frederic Falkiner Goold, archdeacon of Raphoe, and a member of the Lay and Clerical Association, endorsed McCutchan's Limerick speech (which he attended), announcing that 'the Repeal of the Union was the only measure calculated to rescue Irishmen from the bondage of an Anglo-Papal despotism, as degrading to Irish nationality as it is fatal to Irish morality'.[728] The idea that the Church of Ireland was a national force, countering the supra-national drive of ultramontanism, had a long life and was again prominent through antidisestablishment rhetoric. The sense was re-animated by the pressing need to create a new system of Church finance which included all of its members. A published circular on finance from the Archbishops' that April reminded Irish Anglicans '[a]s the Church of Ireland, we have pledged ourselves to a territorial occupation of the whole land'.[729] Clearly Goold's sense of nationality was not far off much other Anglican principles.

Echoing John Madden, when Edward King-Harman stood at a Longford by-election, he declared 'I desire that our Country should enjoy equal Rights and Privileges with England and Scotland, and should they not be granted fully, freely,

[727] *Times*, 11th April 1870.
[728] *PMG*, 19th April 1870.
[729] TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/307; NLI Ms.3378.

and promptly, I will unite in claiming the restoration of our Native Parliament.' According to another election flyer,

> [t]he present sad state of the country I attribute mainly to the fatal mismanagement of a Government….As an Irishman, I hope to see the day when Priest and People, and men of all religions and of different politics, will join heart and head, and as one Nation advance the good of Ireland, when we no longer allow our Country to be made the battle field of English Party, or the *corpus vile* [worthless body] upon which English theorists may try the experiments, which they would not dare to propose for their own country. Should such a state of things continue, I shall be reluctantly forced to the conclusion, that a local Parliament alone can be trusted to manage Irish affairs[.]

Both handbills were loaded with conspicuous references to his being not only a local landlord, but one with an apparently sound reputation.[730] At stump meetings King-Harman emphasised his family's Irish Parliamentary record; and, according to the *Times*' summary, Catholic and Liberal papers were suspicious of the candidate for his nakedly Ascendancy language.[731]

Butt's aim of creating a common forum was hardly novel—and it was deeply protestant. In April 1870 William Johnston of Ballykilbeg chaired the annual *conversazione* of the Ulster Protestant Discussion Forum, a principally Liberal Presbyterian organisation, suggesting '[w]e require discussion in Protestant Matters. Discussion is a Protestant thing.' He then prefaced a description of the work and business of the House of Commons with the idea that the young men present were using the Discussion Forum to prepare for Parliamentary life. Both Johnston and Thomas McClure, the Liberal MP for Belfast, discussed their past and upcoming votes in the House.[732] The forum brought Anglicans and Presbyterians together to debate the substance of government through a shared religious lens, beyond formal party structures.

The same month the Rev. John Hoare wrote to Robert McDonnell commenting on Lecky's famous criticism of the Union in *Leaders of Public Opinion in*

[730] PRONI Ms.D4168/D/6/2,3.
[731] *Times*, 18th, 19th April 1870.
[732] *BNL*, 21st April 1870.

Ireland, first published in 1861. Lecky himself had written to Hoare, agreeing that Ireland was misgoverned.[733] To McDonnell, Hoare wrote:

> What we really want to accomplish now is the severance of sectarian religion from politics. There are few things I feel more keenly than the consciousness that my fellow-countrymen, (with whom are all my feelings & sympathies as an Irishman) look upon me not as an Irishman at all, but as one of the hated Saxons, because I am a protestant,—and a parson. This was inevitable so long as our Church was the State Ch. Now, however, I think, some strong & decided measures sd. be taken to show that man can be both a Protestant & a Nationalist,—& I might add, that a Catholic can be an Imperialist.

He suggested 'a volume of short essays', by three protestant and three Catholic authors—suggesting Lecky and the economist J.E. Cairnes as two appropriately 'independent' protestant writers. He prioritised having both an Anglican and a Catholic clergyman, but accepted the difficulty of finding two clerics

> who wd. take the broad view of pointing out that the Sect to wh people belong depends on the accident of their birth; & ought therefore to rank below, & not above, their Nationality….And also, that one of the existing curses of our Country is, that the Spirit of Xtianity is forgotten and trampled out by the worship of the Dagon of Dogma: wh keeps the people separated fr[om] each other, & arranges them in two hostile confessions.

Hoare's elaborations on the relationship between religion and nationality were a combination of romantic nationalism, mined from the Springtime of the Peoples in 1848, and stock Irish protestant anti-Ultramontanism: a particularly urgent concern given the ongoing Vatican council:

> The policy of England in trying to absorb Irish nationality,—or rather to swallow it up;—appears to me to be similar to the effort of Roman Catholicism to absorb & minimise the nationality & individuality of the world. It is agt. this Roman idea, that the Liberal Bishops are fighting in Rome at this moment; it is agt. the similar idea that Irishmen are bound to [resist]. Th. Domestic family, th. National family, th. universal family, must preserve their individuality if they wd. advance in vigorous life.[734]

There was certainly vigorous national life in the Church of Ireland that April, although it was not of a strain liberal-minded rectors like Hoare would welcome. The Church convulsed in a pugilistic grass-roots campaign against Archbishop

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[733] W.E.H. Lecky to Hoare, 27th April 1870, NLI Ms.189400/5.
[734] Hoare to McDonnell, 7th, 11th April 1870, NLI Ms.18940/4, emphasis original.

Trench. On 2nd April 1870 L.F.S. Maberly (a Dublin parishioner) wrote to Trench to complain of a high-church confirmation manual[735] which reached one of his servants. Trench replied five days later, providing a detailed theological defence. The book seemed to endorse the doctrine of a real presence in the Eucharist, and condemned visiting Nonconformist chapels. Trench contextualised the passages flagged by Maberly, and repeated its condemnation of attending worship beyond the Anglican Church (taking a Laudian position, Trench equally opposed attending Catholic and Presbyterian services).[736]

With the Archbishop's consent Maberly published their correspondence,[737] and soon an evangelical campaign blazed against the already-suspect prelate. This movement carried the same overtures as the radicalism of the antidisestablishment campaign—it was a defence of the Church's distinctive Irish character, expressed through the accessible venues of local meetings and parish vestries. One letter on the topic lamented that after disestablishment those working to create the Church the Reformers intended were frustrated: 'In every possible way we were thwarted.' The elections were tilted against them, the High Church confounded the reconstruction by trying to lead them to Rome,

> and the course pursued by the Protestant middle classes were virtually excluded from all voice or vote in the matter.....A correspondence between his Grace the Archbishop of Dublin and Mr. Maberly leaves no resource but to make certain what the Protestant Church of Ireland is to be....meetings will be immediately organised; and, in freeing your altars from Romish invasion, and your homes from priestly intrusion, I know your motto will be—"No Surrender!"[738]

A meeting of over 70 of Trench's own clergy produced a memorial backing Maberly and condemning Trench, and the *Freeman's Journal* and *Pall Mall Gazette* picked up the story, telling their liberal readers in both islands this dispute could freeze

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735 G.M. Portal, *Short Prayers for Those Who Have But Little Time to Pray* (London, 1867).
736 J. Bromley, *The Man of Ten Talents: A Portrait of Richard Chenevix Trench 1807-1886* (London, 1959), pp.196-200.
737 *DE*, 19th April 1870.
738 *BNL*, 23rd April 1870.

contributions to the Church's stillborn Sustentation Fund.[739] The Dublin clergy accused Trench of endorsing doctrines they could not accept; he responded that he opposed the attempt to 'narrow the limits' of the Church.[740] Trench recognised the agitation's ecclesiological dimension at a crucial time for redefining Irish Protestantism. He stressed the importance of maintaining their 'walls of separation', even though, without the Establishment, speaking of Dissenters no longer had any meaning in Ireland.[741] As the debate flickered on, the anti-English tones of it became more straightforward: George Brush, one of the members of the General Convention, accused English clergymen of planning a ritualistic swoop on the Irish Church, only to be stopped by the Irish Church Act's creating lay control.[742] This context was important for attempts similar to Butt's, in creating a new, inclusive political culture—even the most demotic and pugnaciously protestant elements in the Church of Ireland were strikingly anti-English, and had a venue steeped in governmental imagery in which to explore it.

Throughout late April and June 1870 every Anglican parish in Ireland held its Easter Vestry, as had always happened. Now, however, they were required to formalise and solidify the self-government stipulated by the Irish Church Act. In some parishes this seamlessly flowed into political declarations: St. Nicholas' Without and Castlenock (both in Dublin) recorded long and hyperbolic condemnations of Trench, and support for his rebellious clergy. Kilpatrick, Co. Wexford, criticised Trench for implying that the Book of Common Prayer allowed 'Romish error', and declared they would 'condemn the Primate and other Bishops for remaining silent on the subject'. They would not 'enter into any plan of *general* sustentation, as they (the Bishops), constitute a large number of the Representative Body, which will have the power of spending the money placed under their control

739 *FJ*, 29th April 1870; *PMG*, 30th April 1870.
740 *FJ*, 3rd May 1870.
741 *BNL*, 5th May 1870.
742 *BNL*, 11th May 1870.

and applying it to foster and inculcate Romish doctrines and practices in the Church of Ireland.'[743] Other parishes were more subtle in the language, but more direct in their analysis of the social and ecclesiological ramifications. Genteel, suburban Rathfarnham in south Dublin merely requested that Trench reconvene the Diocesan Synod; Santry condemned Portal's book and required 'those in authority [to be] called on, at the present crisis, to strengthen the faith of the members of our Church by such conduct and advice, as will leave no person to guess at or misunderstand their principles and doctrines.'[744] Maberly's dislike of Portal's manual provided the Church with a conflict over authority, organisation, and theological identity.

In the midst of this, the highly conservative and Anglican *Daily Express* published a notice under the headline of 'How to Obtain Repeal of the Union'. The letter ran:

> The question on every tongue is, How can we obtain a repeal of the Union? Having canvassed the leading citizens on the subject, I advise the immediate formation of a Metropolitan Registration Society—so loyal in its organization that Orangemen may be numbered in its fold; so Protestant that it can embrace in its arms Churchmen, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Dissenters; and so truly liberal that all independent Catholics, without the least hesitation, can join its ranks. With such an organization we could, in a loyal and constitutional manner, return the candidates of our choice, and give a tone to public opinion which would influence every other constituency in Ireland.[745]

The author was William Ledger Erson, a Dublin dentist and chemist whose office was in Henry Street, in inner North Dublin. A Guardian of the North Dublin Poor Law Union, Erson was responsible for that body's motion against Gladstone's government in December 1869.[746] His letter for this new registration society was noted in England as well.[747]

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[743] RCBL Mss. P/210/5/3; P/352/5/3; P/870/5/1.
[744] RCBL Mss.P/533/5/1; P/241/5/1.
[745] *DE*, 4th May 1870.
[746] National Archives of Ireland, Ms.MFGS/49/101.
[747] *PMG*, 5th May 1870.

Although it did not specifically endorse Erson's idea of a new political organisation, the *Express* was certainly aligned to his views at this stage. It counseled that, despite English party bickering, 'there is yet a living and earnest National spirit…ever growing and full of promise in the future. The nature and the origin of this feeling are not as yet understood in England…..For our part we heartily sympathise with this newborn feeling…in the interests, not of Conservatism, Imperial or local, but of Ireland. No one can compare Ireland in 1870 with Ireland in 1868'. The *Express* lauded the phenomenon of Anglican clergy and gentry advocating Repeal: 'The cause of the feeling…is the growing conviction of the utter worthlessness of the system under which Ireland has heretofore been governed, not for her own sake, but in obedience to the exigencies of English party strife.' Britain confiscated the Irish Church's money, not for the Catholic population on the whole, but for the clerical vote-controllers and English Radicals. It felt that '[t]he real interests of Ireland are utterly neglected and invariably postponed to the interests of party.' In Parliament, measures for the improvement of Irish law, railways, and industry raised by private members were snuffed out in deference to the Government's programme, and the normally Tory paper included Disraeli in this column.[748]

The *Express*' criticisms were not a decisive break; Irish Anglican disaffection with their Church's being the plaything of both parties was long-standing. Here, the principle was expanded to include the general British governmental mentality towards Ireland. The *Express* did not crossing any aisles, it maintained a view of anti-British politics in the Church which stretched to 1833. William V.F. Vesey Fitzgerald, a young Kerry landlord, underscored the other important cultural influence for some nationally-minded Protestants in early Home Rule circles—European romantic nationalism, which stretched back to Thomas Davis in the

[748] *DE*, 14th May 1870.

1840s.[749] In May Vesey Fitzgerald wrote to Isaac Butt, upholding the new Italian State as a font of civil and religious liberty. Vesey Fitzgerald stressed twining the modern Italian focus with the power of public associations that previously dominated Irish politics,[750] harkening to the 1840s structurally as well as intellectually. Equally, the Rev. John Hoare wrote to Robert McDonnell from France that republicanism was being openly discussed and would explode soon—the effects, he was sure, would be resonate in Ireland.[751]

19th May 1870 several dozen men of wildly different political orientations met in the Bilton Hotel, planning to launch a federalist society. However, this meeting—subsequently considered a landmark—was not a sudden, new spark. It clearly followed months of discussion and debate amongst Irish protestants about their place in the Union. The Bilton was also the least likely place to launch a nationalist party: it was one of Dublin's grandest hotels. According to Lord Frederic Hamilton, the Duke of Abercorn's son, it was 'a fine old Georgian house in Sackville Street. Everything at the Bilton was old, solid, heavy, and eminently respectable.' He recalled most of the well-to-do choosing to stay there because it maintained anachronistic, eighteenth-century traditions that appealed to their Ascendancy sensibilities—the landlord's leading guests with candles through the hallways, despite the modern gaslight.[752] In addition to them nascent Home Rulers, some other guests in the Bilton that spring were the Duke of Abercorn and family, the Lords and Ladies Queensbury, Headfort, Enniskillen, Powis, Templetown, Longford, Bective, Leitrim, Erne, Louth, Bruce, Cole, Carrick, Beecher, and Hamilton.[753] The Irish Anglican bishops met behind closed doors there in August, 1869, to plan their

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[749] Matthew Kelly, 'Languages of Radicalism, Race, and Religion in Irish Nationalism: The French Affinity, 1848-1871', *Journal of British Studies* vol.49, no.4 (October, 2010), pp.801-25.
[750] W.V.F. Vesey Fitzgerald to Butt, 16th May 1870, NLI Ms.10415/2.
[751] Hoare to McDonnell, 20th May 1870, NLI Ms.184900/4.
[752] Lord Frederic Hamilton, *The Days Before Yesterday* (London, 1920).
[753] *BNL*, 4th, 16th, 31st March, 4th, 7th, 19th, 25th April 1870; *FJ*, 8th, 15th March, 9th, 18th, 27th April 1870.

response to lay organising. As far as the symbolism and politics of location, the ex-Fenians were clearly the outsiders, not the conservatives and gentry. The meeting formed a committee to organise an association dedicated to federalism, as espoused by Isaac Butt's *Home Government for Ireland*. The innate conservatism of his model of Imperial Federalism is well noted.[754]

F.P. Dunne wrote to O'Neill Daunt following the meeting; although sympathetic to the movement neither were directly involved. They were informed observers. Dunne wrote: 'I cordially join with you in the wish that every Irishman, retiring the creeds and abstract party feelings to which he is attatched (sic), should be on [one] subject at least unanimous and give his whole heart & soul to insist on the British Government doing us that justice' of self-government. This was all the more important considering 'that the union has been defaulted by the infraction of its articles by one of the contracting parties and that the Society might tomorrow issue votes for a Parliament to assemble in Dublin.' They could form an association that would 'set forth & explain the…injuries inflicted by the legislation brought on and confident of the numerical majority in the Imperial Parliament whose interest it is to truss and depress our mercantile energies.' It would also show England their beliefs: 'Mr. Gladstone says we must govern Ireland on Irish ideas. If so[,] can any so…interpret Irish ideas as the Irish themselves[?] Could any one give a stronger argument for Repeal[?]'[755]

Yet John Martin's frustration with the fussiness and procedural obsession displayed early on, and the effort put into formalising secretaryships and committee structures was well documented by Thornley. He essentially backed Martin, taking it to demonstrate the association's ineffectiveness.[756] However, this shows the culture of the nascent HGA perfectly, and is deeply revealing. The obsession with

[754] Alvin Jackson, *Home Rule*, p.28.
[755] Dunne to O'Neill Daunt, 30th May 1870, NLI Ms.8045/4.
[756] David Thornley, *Isaac Butt and Home Rule*, pp.106-8.

standing orders may have been anathema to radicals like Martin, but was a standard mode of political expression for anybody with experience of Westminster, discursive societies, or, most especially, the Church reconstruction.

Furthermore, the Maberly-Trench conflict had not yet died. After the round of parish declarations an Ireland-wide petition circulated. In contrast with the previous splenetic language, this was highly literate and addressed only the theological questions. J.C. Pounden defended it to Lord Courtown as making everyone certain of the Church's position—it was a unifying and cohesive force, addressing the very essence of Irish Anglicanism.[757] The warhorse of protestant agitation, the Protestant Defence Association, considered becoming involved; they were reined-in as the evangelical voice of the Church was already evident.[758] Trench, in England for the Queen's Birthday, even apparently advised the English bishops against fundraising on the Irish Church's behalf until the controversy was settled. William Thompson, archbishop of York, passed on a message to Archbishop Tait that 'if we give anything now it will not be quite clear to what we are giving. The feeling against England is very strong.'[759]

Other political minorities were also re-examining their place in Irish life. 'A Federalist' criticised the Whigs who denied that Federalism had no roots in Ireland (many original members of the Repeal Association were, apparently, Federalists),[760] and the *Express* came to thoroughly nationalist conclusions. It attacked the *Standard*'s view that Conservatism and Nationalism were incompatible: 'The very essence of the spirit of Irish Nationalism is its independence of party and devotion to the interests of Ireland alone.' It highlighted the importance of Protestants and Conservatives espousing nationalism, listing King-Harman, Goold, Robert

[757] Pounden to Courtown, 21st May 1870, TCD Ms.11183/P37/1/314.
[758] PRONI Ms.D4160/46.
[759] Thompson to Tait, ND [after 24th May, 1870], LPL Ms.Tait/87, fols.225-6.
[760] *FJ*, 25th May 1870.

Staples,[761] and J.A. Galbraith. Numerous Tories and Protestants supported Repeal, not only because they had been so badly treated by Government, but because Ireland 'is a nation, not a district of England.'[762] Also exploring Irish distinctiveness—and its formal, governmental existence—the Statistical Society heard a paper from the federalist Henry Dix Hutton addressing legal reform. Alongside other HGA members in Robert McDonnell and Alfred Webb, the audience included Frederick Falkiner, a prominent lawyer and Church of Ireland activist, and John Ribton Garstin, High Church Anglican historian and veteran of the Irish Church Society.[763]

The hesitant *Freeman* offered more moderate language when responding to the belief that commercial prosperity required self-government (an element in both HGA and some Statistical Society debates): 'there is nothing in this proposition either to alarm or to alienate any section or party either in this country or in England'. However, after harping on the English inability to understand Ireland's distinctiveness, it also emphasised the pro-Union aspect of Federalism—individuals 'anxious to secure a thorough, real, and lasting union between the two countries whose interest are bound indissolubly together' wanted 'to replace the present distrust and dissatisfaction' with a system grounded in 'a thoroughly good feeling, founded upon mutual respect and community of interests, between different parts of the Empire'. The requisite Catholic-Protestant fusion was only possible now, after disestablishment, although the *Freeman* was sceptical of some of the more party-ensconced Anglicans rallying to Home Rule.[764] The Protestant paper took a more straightforwardly nationalistic line; the Catholic paper emphasised the potential pro-Union security in the plan.

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[761] Staples was an active, prominent Wexford Church of Ireland organiser; there is no evidence other than this one source to place him in the ranks of Tory Repealers.
[762] *DE*, 21st, 25th May, 15th June 1870.
[763] *FJ*, 15th June 1870.
[764] *FJ*, 13th June 1870.

The Times' roundup of Irish papers stressed the same angles—the fusion of Conservatives and Repealers, but also the prominence of Joseph Galbraith.[765] This Church of Ireland hue was also noted by other newspapers (both Catholic and Protestant), which listed a pamphlet other than Butt's *Home Government for Ireland* as the new movement's book of office (and the *Freeman* was less than enthusiastic about the tract).[766] It more clearly explicated the deep-rooted Protestantism of early Home Rule. In June 1870 Robert McDonnell published *Irish Nationality in 1870* under the penname of 'A Protestant Celt'. His pamphlet emphasised the considerable overlap between the spirit behind Church reconstruction (democratising and revitalising the Church as part of its newly-independent life) and the Home Government Association (revitalising Ireland through a more democratic independent life).

For McDonnell, disestablishment removed the last shibboleth in Irish politics, but perpetuated the dynamic of England's imposing its domineering will on the Irish. It was also a wasted opportunity for effective, practical government, as the government simply whisked Irish money back to England. His remedy was a romantic national spirit: he wanted to see 'a vigorous, healthy, united, lay public opinion kindled in Ireland. It is this, and this only, that can reanimate the apparently lifeless body, and raise the spirit of Ireland from the state of degradation into which centuries of misrule have plunged it.' McDonnell described this principle as accommodating the two dominant impulses in Irish political life, the spirits of Pitt and Grattan (which, between the two of them, offered no distinctly Catholic symbol or totem).

He also stressed the importance of politics out of doors, noting the vibrancy of Fenian Amnesty and the Orange Order, now that its members were ranged against the British Government over the Party Processions Act. But more so,

[765] *Times*, 8th, 13th June 1870.
[766] *Standard*, 19th June 1870; *FJ*, 15th June 1870.

McDonnell emphasised a democratic spirit in Protestantism which encouraged a national sense, spurred by the Church's independence—a 'Green-Orangeism' with 'a large proportion of resentful indignation against England in its composition.' He explained that

> Irish Protestants have never been absolutely wanting in national feeling and sentiment…there is now apparently no reason why it should not take on healthy growth; and it seems certain from recent events, that a section of Orangemen no longer intend to remain in leading strings, guided by aristocratic leaders and wealthy landowners.

This questioning mentality and 'democratic' tendencies linked the two Irish extremes. Like many Protestant polemicists, McDonnell judged Catholic priestly domination as the most significant check to the Roman Catholic laity's popular mobilisation behind a national ideal. However, he extended the principle that anticlericalism was also necessary for Anglican nationalism. In this, disestablishment was crucial creating a new lay-controlled Church. For the Catholics, the anti-establishment solidarity between their priests and laity that created clerical control would now melt away. Protestant proselytism would equally disintegrate with no National Establishment to extend. Both sides would find commonality in not having to support entrenched, professional antagonism between their communions' clerics.

From disestablishment 'Irish Protestants are ceasing to occupy an anomalous position; they are beginning to assume what is to them their normal attitude; they are joining the party of progress, and the sordid and selfish motives which, as churchmen, bound them to England being removed, their democratic tendencies and national feelings are beginning to germinate.' For McDonnell 'a union of Protestant and Catholic…would be irresistible.' The Irish 'yearn for a public opinion purified from the blighting influence of priestcraft and proselytism, and soaring above the pettiness of faction, as the pure spirit of Christianity does above the contemptible narrowness of sect.' Ultimately, the English party system imprisoned

Irish concerns. By extension, unnatural factions retarded Ireland's economic and social development: 'Ministries may change, but Ireland is still governed in accordance with the prevailing ideas of the English middle classes.' Awkward alliances between the Orangemen and English aristocrats, and Irish Catholics and English dissenters grew accordingly. There was no inherent substance to these blocs. Federalism, removing Ireland from this Anglo-centric system, would unite the divisions in Irish society and politics.[767]

An early sense of the importance of these arguments, even to more straightforward Repealers, came from Augusta Goold. Her grandfather Thomas Goold was an anti-Union Irish MP and friend of Grattan, and her father, Frederick Goold, was the Church of Ireland Archdeacon of Raphoe, and member of the HGA, who came out for Repeal that April. Augusta Goold wrote to McDonnell saying the identity of the 'Protestant Celt' was much debated—her father thought it Galbraith, she thought Lecky (the Quaker Alfred Webb was also floated). She supported his belief in a new spirit, even if her analysis of this was far from federalist: she wanted 'a complete separation of Ireland from England'. But she agreed with MacDonnell on the power of nationality as a uniting force, undermining West Britonism.[768]

McDonnell had a far different reaction from John Elliott Cairnes, the eminent economist mentioned by John Hoare as a potential moderate nationalist author. Although living in England, Cairnes was born in Louth and made his name in Galway. His family owned a brewery in Drogheda, then run by his brother Thomas Plunkett Cairnes, a significant donor to the Church of Ireland and a committed lay activist. J.E. Cairnes responded to McDonnell that although he agreed with the broad aims of the pamphlet, 'the elements of a nation do not exist in Ireland'.[769] Although negative, this hardly damned the fundamental principle behind the

[767] 'A Protestant Celt' [Robert McDonnell], *Irish Nationality in 1870* (Dublin/London, 1870).
[768] Augusta Goold to McDonnell, 21st, 27th May [1870], NLI Ms.18490/4.
[769] J.E. Cairnes to McDonnell, 25th June 1870, NLI Ms.18490/2.

argument. Cairnes accepted McDonnell's vision for land legislation; he disputed that Ireland was ready for self-governance. The Home Government Association could disprove that by simultaneously providing the Irish public with a working knowledge of federalism and by showing Catholic-Protestant cooperation within their own organisation.

The central belief was in the morally regenerative power of controlling one's own destiny, and nationality as a balsam, not an expression of claims or rights. As expressed in works like McDonnell's pamphlet, it was clearly rooted in the Anglican mentality of a national church as a country's spiritual repository, and the experience of Protestant societies, such as the PDA and LCA, representing Irish interests in the absence of any English champion. The *Express* agreed that national spirit

> has been gaining strength in every country in Europe during the past half century. The political atmosphere is charged with it. Then came the *reductio ad absurdum* of Imperial legislation for Ireland—the spoliation of the Church, the severance of Church and State, the attack upon the chartered rights of property, public and private....Nothing could be more natural than that...thoughts should turn from the system which had so utterly failed, to that which had prevailed during the brightest period of Irish history.

It took an expectedly anti-Catholic line, but one which was simultaneously pro-national. It supported (undefined) self-government and the principles of nationality, but refused to countenance it whilst ultramontane priests governed Catholic politics. The idea was a battle between trans-national ultramontanism and Irish nationality. It lauded McDonnell's pamphlet as an example of truly national, anti-ultramontane writing.[770]

The chairmen of the first two Home Government Association meetings were protestants steeped in local government—Alderman James William Mackey and the Quaker former Lord Mayor of Dublin, Sir John Barrington. The clique formed themselves into an organised Committee in late June 1870, where the impeccably

[770] *DE*, 17th June 1870.

Tory Edward King-Harman presided. The *Express* again attacked them for the anti-national Fenian and ultramontane presence. Agitating for an Irish Parliament (which they described as an American model) was useless until the Buttites broke with ultramontanism. Until then, Irish nationalism would have no sympathy with wider European nationalisms. Ultramontanists hoped France would win the brewing war and break up protestant Germany; Ultramontanists supported the Pope against Italian unity and Italian nationalism: 'Irish Nationalism….may flaunt the Orange flag in Dublin, but does it sympathise with Orangeism elsewhere?', the paper asked. On the practical aspects of the Federalist programme—that local governance ensured effective governance—the *Express*' position was entirely congruent to the HGA's, complaining that Irish MPs ignored issues like the sanitisation of the Liffey to support English Catholic causes.[771]

Butt similarly tried to recruit two Dublin Tory parliamentary luminaries, men with particularly strong links to the organised powers of Dublin Anglicanism—the Hon. David Plunket and Arthur Guinness.[772] Guinness declined Butt's overture, and discounted a rumour that his brother, Edward Cecil Guinness, was planning to stand for Dublin as a nationalist of some stripe. Guinness argued, against Butt, for better Parliamentary work, [773] underscoring the non-Parliamentary aims of the HGA. They were trying to create the broadest of churches, and being attacked not for their actual programme (which was undefined) but through the public's confusion at their novelty. The general sense seemed to be bewilderment about the movement's actual goals.

A Catholic priest assured Butt that the Catholic Church's cultural and intellectual claims should not 'be an obstacle for that glorious protestant movement

[771] *DE*, 22nd June, 5th July 1870.
[772] Guinness' father paid for the restoration of St Patrick's Cathedral; Plunket's brother, the Hon. and Rev. W.C. Plunket, was Treasurer of the Cathedral and Guinness' brother-in-law.
[773] Guinness to Butt, 25th May 1870, NLI Ms.8693/4; Plunket to Butt, 11th July 1870, NLI Ms.8692/7.

to which you refer'.[774] Equally, 'A Liberal Catholic' published a series of questions to Butt in the *Irish Times*, underscoring the non-party, open-ended, romantic nature of the movement:

> This being the only association in which the Whig and Tory, Fenian and Loyalist, and everyone of every shade of political or religious opinion may meet upon the same platform, whether they may desire more or less than the Association profess, be it Federalism, Repeal, or Total Separation, we should gladly assist this patriotic union for the good of our country by every means in our power; aiding it heartily by word and deed. There is a feeling in every heart which leads it to independence….Let us recognize the *idea* of Home Rule, caring neither for the intentions or prejudices of parties, so long as they act with us, and we can afterwards readily settle the technicalities and minutiae connected with it. "Repeal" was once a party question, but no one can class this movement as such.[775]

As John Dunne, the Association's Secretary, explained to O'Neill Daunt when trying to recruit him as a nationalist *eminence grise*, '[i]t would be impossible to get together any large number of individuals holding hard and fast and identical opinions.' Most importantly, he confessed to the deliberate policy of recruiting Protestants, writing that '[m]any of the "Orange Party" have been communicated with and we have secured a reasonable adhesion from them. Mr. Johnson and Mr. Arthur H Foster will, in time, come in.' He also admitted the deliberate decision of distancing themselves from the normal strains of demotic Catholic nationalism, informing O'Neill Daunt that Patrick Lavelle was involved, but by mutual consent his name was never published, for fear of putting off recruits new to a nationalist movement.[776] Lavelle was a famously combative Catholic priest, who, as the parish priest of Partry, Co. Mayo, gained national notoriety when he launched a battle against the landowner and Church of Ireland Bishop of Tuam, Lord Plunket, claiming that Plunket forced his tenants to convert. Men of his ilk would certainly scare away any Orange nationalists.

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[774] 25th May 1870, NLI Ms.10415/2, this letter is a fragment.
[775] *IT*, 20th August 1870, emphasis original.
[776] John Dunne to O'Neill Daunt, 4th, 7th July 1870, NLI Ms.8045/4.

The 'Mr. Johnson' may have been William Johnston of Ballykilbeg, whose recruitment might seem dubious, even with the overtones of the opposition to the Party Processions Act. However, the Foster to whom Dunne referred was Arthur Hamilton Foster, a committed Ulster Orangeman—the Grand Master of Donegal. Two years earlier, when he predictably harangued Gladstone over disestablishment, he worried that a new, revived Repeal movement might follow the Irish Church Act. For Foster, the Prime Minister's ignoring Irish wishes and forcing disestablishment ensured the Union stopped being one of equality, and became one of tyranny:

> If the Union depends on a treaty or Act of Parliament, such a thing as a future "Repeal" is not inconsistent with the idea; but "Repeal" of an union of subjection can never be considered save as "a rebellion of the subjected against their masters." Think you, will Irishmen of any creed, party or sect, be cajoled, flattered or deceived into enslaving their country irrevocably to the English nation as masters? Is that what you call justice to Ireland?[777]

From a more practical strain of the Irish Conservative world, the jurist and economist Mountifort Longfield, a key member of the Archbishop's Consulting Committee, supported British-Irish federation, explaining '[a] certain amount of independence must be conceded to Ireland as the only mode of preventing a repeal of the union, and after a short time a total separation of the two countries. The state of things that existed before the union cannot be restored, for the House of Commons is all powerful & can neither be managed nor resisted.' Naturally, most of his concerns were about the division of legal authority and the purview of different areas of law, but he concluded: 'It would not be difficult to settle the details of such a plan with a tribunal such as exists in America'.[778]

Yet soon A.C. Tait issued a circular to the English bench, asking their views on raising funds to support the Church of Ireland's sustentation. Wilberforce actually suggested they not raise any money, because the Church of Ireland was a

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[777] Arthur H. Foster, *The Irish Church Question, A Letter to the Right Honourable William Ewart Gladstone, M.P.* (Dublin/London/Edinburgh, 1868).
[778] Mountifort Longfield to McDonnell, 12th July 1870, NLI Ms.18940/5.

landlord's Church. The decisive voice, however, was William Connor Magee's. He argued it was perilous to commit to fundraising with the prospect of comprehensive Prayer Book revision looming. Revision 'will in all probability lead to a schism in the Church of Ireland.' They would not be pledging themselves to support the current Church, but an unknown future institution, and they could 'find ourselves ere long in the awkward dilemma of having either to support what we disapproved of or to refuse what we had promised.' They should not contribute until they had a clear idea of the Irish laity's plans, and, more substantially, 'what the Irish Ch. is to be.' Similarly, J.T. Pelham, bishop of Norwich, felt they should not contribute any money 'until we have a clear statement, from authority, of the actual status of the Irish Church, in respect of its Constitution, its Legislature, its Executive, its Financial position.' William Thompson, archbishop of York, backed refraining from immediate fundraising because, following a conversation with Trench, he learned 'there is a party which desire to alter the constitution of the Church by amending the Prayer Book, and giving it a more Presbyterian character….if we give anything now it will not be quite clear to what we are giving. The feeling against England is very strong.'[779] This English diffidence would have been incendiary, if publicly known. Revision was ultimately a way of re-asserting control of their own communion after its recent rough handling, and within this reasserting its Irish identity.

Given this culture, it is not strange that the paper which best understood the Protestant Federalist argument was the Protestant *Daily Express*. Whilst the *Express* did not trust the Catholics, it also no longer trusted being governed by 'the Protestant majority of the United Kingdom' given Parliament's policy of governing Ireland 'by means of concessions to the Ultramontane priesthood.' They would not back Home Rule until the federalists secured the Parliamentary election of 'men

[779] LPL Ms.Tait.87, fols.225-6,239-67.

who will make the interests of Ireland their fist object, and refuse to sacrifice them, as is now done, to the exigencies of English party warfare.'[780] The *Express* was completely aligned with Butt, Galbraith, and the others on the need to free themselves from the English party system, and merely differed on the tactics of achieving it—whether through an association or through Parliament itself.

The *Express* actually argued they should change tactics and inspire a Parliamentary following. A by-election for Dublin City, fought between the Catholic Liberal Sir Dominic Corrigan and the Anglican Tory Federalist Edward King-Harman, demonstrated the uncertainty over the Association's creed and structure. Corrigan declared, at a meeting for his candidacy, that he supported the principle of self-government but felt there were 'more immediate practicable objects' to win from the administration. He was loath to get involved in the Home Rule then: 'moreover we must allow a little to elapse for the heart burnings and wounded feelings consequent on the disestablishment of the church to subside'. Corrigan further criticised the Buttite clique for working entirely behind closed doors, and for no two federalists having the same political vision. He concluded by repeating the idea that Irish MPs should merely be more effective in their Parliamentary work, strengthening the image of the Association as trying to detach Irish politics from Westminster. It seems most of Irish political opinion missed the subtleties of the movement, trying to imprison the federalists within the Liberal-Tory dichotomy they themselves tried to eschew. The Liberal A.M. Sullivan defended the Conservative HGA members who supported King-Harman in his contest for Dublin against Corrigan by repudiated the criticism they were defecting to the Liberals. He stressed, instead, that the Association was not itself formally involved in candidacies.[781]

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[780] *DE*, 31st August 1870.
[781] *FJ*, 9th, 18th, 20th August 1870.

The *Standard* reduced the electoral divisions to Dublin's commercial world supporting home government and King-Harman, whilst the ultramontanists supported the Government.[782] Yet Catholic Liberals attacked the HGA for being Orange—Corrigan purportedly called Joseph Galbraith 'the most unmitigated Orangeman in Ireland'. Galbraith defended himself as a Conservative, not an Orangeman, who had refused to vote for David Plunket as MP for Dublin University because Plunket 'declined to pledge himself to the question of home rule.'[783] However, a street ballad printed for the Dublin City election called on Liberals to support Corrigan against King-Harman—federalism was a piece of Conservative chicanery. It lauded Corrigan, declaring: 'All Tory ascendancy he will put to flight/And work late & early for Catholic rights/….So you Liberal electors be on the look out/For wolves in sheeps (sic) clothing are problong (sic) about/Under the pretension of asking Repeal/Their bigoted notions they want to conceal'.[784] Another satirical ballad, called 'The Orange Repealers', sarcastically cheered Orangemen paying Cullen homage and Freemasons' erecting Celtic crosses over croppies' graves. In addition to attacking King-Harman, it listed by name Laurence Knox, William Ledger Erson, and the evangelist Richard Weaver.[785]

In their own campaign, the Federalists took a non-religious line. Butt used an electoral meeting to urge Dubliners to 'form a body of united Irishmen of all creeds and classes, who would be willing to exorcise from their hearts the foul demon of religious dissension'.[786] However, the support was clear—at a debate between Corrigan and King-Harman the day before the election, King-Harman personally endorsed the protestant members of the 'Federal Association', and Corrigan was forced to sling Tory jibes after being argued into conceding support for

[782] *Standard,* 8th August 1870.
[783] *DE*, 12th August 1870.
[784] DCLA, Gilbert Scrapbook, No.23, 'A Song on the Expected Triumph of Sir Dominick Corrigan at the coming election over the Tories'.
[785] *FJ*, 15th August 1870.
[786] *Times*, 16th August 1870.

the principle of local government.[787] When Corrigan beat King-Harman on 18th August 1870, the Dublin surgeon, intellectual luminary, and Anglican HGA member Sir William Wilde attacked Conservatives for decisively defecting to the Liberals, despite their anger at disestablishment. County Dublin would soon no longer be a safe seat: it would imminently belong to 'the national party', as 'this idea of Federalism will spread as rapidly as an epidemic, and unite men of all creeds and parties into one great cause for the fatherland.' He again stressed that King-Harman was not an official candidate of the Association, but commended King-Harman's speeches as a way of publicising the federalist programme.[788]

[787] *Standard*, 18th August 1870.
[788] *FJ*, 22nd August 1870.

II

Culture Wars and the Home Government Association

August 1870—December 1870

However much the Association, Federalism, or a common national spirit might slowly move Catholics and Protestants together, the Franco-Prussian war was a far stronger, divisive force. Ireland's religious and political divides were more apparent, as Catholics supported France and Protestants Prussia. Beyond the denominational tribalism, however, Irishmen justified and explained wider, abstract political concerns through that enormous conflict. The war became a mirror reflecting broader stakes and cultural goals—the irresistible rise of industrial, self-confident (and federal) new nations, or a common Catholic cause. The conflict forced the recall of the French troops guarding the Vatican, the last impediment to Italian unification, so both the North German Confederation and Italy suggested the metaphor of ultramontanism shrinking before a new political mentality, four years after Prussia humiliated the Catholic Hapsburgs in the so-called Brothers' War of 1866.

France declared war on Prussia on 19th July 1870. Before the opposing armies had actually fought each other, the *Daily Express* summarised the paradox of Irish nationalism and the war: the self-declared nationalists were wholly behind France. However, one of her goals was to check the cohesion and unity of Germany, a clearly anti-national object.[789] Isaac Butt refused to discuss the war when speaking in Belfast,[790] no doubt knowing a declaration either way would be disastrous to Federalism's ability to unite the Irish across religious divides. Soon an enormous riot broke in Derry, when Catholics blocked a Protestant march. Throwing stones and firing shots at each other, this time the crowd included cries of

[789] *DE*, 23rd July 1870.
[790] *Times*, 25th July 1870.

support for France or Prussia alongside the standard cheers for the Pope or King William.[791] The Prussians defeated the French across first week of August, and Dubliners attacked Protestant newsagents, tearing down placards proclaiming the victories. The *Standard* speculated that the automatic, irreconcilable division of Ireland into Catholic-France and Protestant-Prussia blocs weakened the new movement expressed by King-Harman's candidacy. It also asked why no Catholics were discussing the Vatican Council and its pursuing the doctrine of infallibility.[792]

After a pro-France crowd smashed the windows in the Thurles branch of the Bank of Ireland and a mob in Strabane attacked a group returning from opening of a Protestant Hall in Omagh, the *Express* pleaded that the war did not affect them at all. 'Will the victories of France advance Nationalism, or Federalism, or Home Rule? Will the defeat of Prussia further the cause of Ultramontanism and the Pope?' Nationalism in Ireland was revealed as far from a desire to improve the country: 'It means nothing practical, nothing beneficial to the masses of the people. It provides place for noisy declaimers and for agitating spirits. It fosters and encourages sentimentalism, and gratifies its growth by Church Abolition Bills and land confiscation enactments'.[793] Accordingly, the Home Government Association's serving as a forum for discussing practical, beneficial issues undermined this expected line of criticism.

The Prussians besieged a French army in Metz after the battles of Mars-La-Tour and Gravelotte at the end of August. On 2nd September 1870 Napoleon III surrendered himself and his army at Sedan, an enormous humiliation. Protestants immediately demonstrated in Lurgan, cheering the news. The *Times* listed the marchers as between 10,000 and 12,000 and 20 drums; the *Standard* gave between 20 and 30,000 with 30 drums. They paraded behind an effigy of the Prussian Crown

[791] *FJ*, 1st August 1870; *DE*, 1st August 1870; *Standard*, 2nd August 1870.
[792] *Standard*, 15th August 1870.
[793] *DE*, 16th August 1870.

Prince Frederick (the future Frederick III) in military uniform. The protestant papers complained of Catholics attacking them with stones and then smashing protestant houses. In Dublin, mobs attacked the *Daily Express* and *Saunders' Church Paper* offices, tearing down placards with the news of Sedan, whilst Enniskillen suffered two days of rioting and stone-throwing from pro-France and pro-Prussian crowds.[794]

In the midst of this tumult, the Home Government Association formally launched itself at a public meeting at the Rotundo on 1st September; it happened to be the first day of the Battle of Sedan. The *Irish Times* reported the attendance as 'very large and respectable. The large room was crowded with men from every part of Ireland, of all religions and politics. Several patriotic young ladies occupied seats in the gallery',[795] which the *Freeman* also noted.[796] The speakers presented the twin themes of the Association's argument: Ireland's economic and social life would benefit from local government, which would simultaneously unite Catholics and Protestants. Various Dublin politicians and businessmen spoke, such as the Anglican James Mackey, a veteran of the Dublin Corporation, and George Maunsell, editor of the *Evening Mail*, a prominent Dublin Anglican who served on the Archbishops' Consulting Committee. But the preeminent voice was J.A. Galbraith's. He argued the European war showed that happiness and prosperity was the only real safeguard of empire. Galbraith claimed that nobody to whom he spoke denied that Home Rule, in itself, was a good thing; both Protestants and Catholics agreed. However, both sides had qualms about joining together. Crucially, he argued the Association could defeat those by deliberation.

The ultimate issue was effective governance, and the seventy years of the Union had seen nothing but bad government. 'They wanted to have established a real government for this country; and no government could be real unless it reposed

[794] *DE*, 6th, 7th, 8th September 1870; *Standard*, 8th September 1870, *Times*, 8th September 1870.
[795] *IT*, 2nd September 1870.
[796] *FJ*, 2nd September 1870.

upon the affections and love of the people.' Galbraith suggested that the restoration of the Irish Parliament would simultaneously revive the economy and create social harmony by ending endemic absenteeism. He also proposed the flagship motion that the new Association work for a domestic legislature in Dublin; the Catholic Rev. P.P. Quaid seconded it in a show of solidarity. But another quietly revealing contribution came from George McCutchan, rector of Kenmare. He commented on the culture of the meeting: 'No one could say that they had assembled merely to get up a new agitation…if the committee, who knew well the political society of Dublin, had chosen to fill that room with a vociferous audience, they would have found no difficulty in doing so. But their purpose was more earnest, and looked to the future more than to the past'.[797] They were clearly assembling an association dedicated to advocacy and discussion, not another populist political party.

McCutchan's sense of nationality grew directly from the Church of Ireland's theology. Furthermore, like Robert McDonnell, he connected the new spirit created by disestablishment to a revived public spirit possible in a locally-governed Ireland. On St. Patrick's Day, 1869, he preached a strongly national line aligned with the Church of Ireland's historical apologetic—the faith of St. Patrick in an 'intensely national' Church enabled by Ireland's never being part of the Roman Empire, and an ancient Irish Church's never coming under the see of Rome. He, as with so many others, presented a chronology of a pure Irish Church eventually subjected to papal domination by England; the Reformation was the resumption of national life and self-government, intimately bound together. The next year McCutchan preached another special sermon on St. Patrick's Day (two months before the Bilton meeting) which connected the theme of nationality and self-government back to the Church's reconstruction, referring to 'the great parliament of the Church

[797] *Home Rule for Ireland. Report of the Inaugural Public Meeting of the Home Government Association, Held in the Rotundo, Dublin, on Thursday, 1st September 1870* (Dublin, 1870).

now assembled in Dublin' revealing the nationality in the Church of Ireland.[798] Even criticism of the General Convention, no doubt picking up on its self-important bickering, used it as a Parliamentary model. According to G.L Tottenham of Glenfarne, Co. Leitrim, '[w]e know what a failure the last Irish Parliament proved, and we have seen not very long ago, in the proceedings of the Church Convention, what we might expect in the next.'[799]

The *Express*' criticism of the Rotunda meeting was again revealing. It disparaged most the group as Repealers, not true Federalists in the style of Galbraith.[800] *The Standard* suggested they would fail for not being based on a rebel mentality,[801] and a letter from 'An Orangeman' declared the instinctive anti-Prussian hatred of most self-described nationalists ensured they would not join in a Federal Parliament.[802] J.F. Maguire, one of the last O'Connellites in Parliament, only offered cautious support.[803] Later in the month the *Standard* renewed the attack, claiming movement 'presents itself as patriotism—which no one objects to in itself—but patriotism with profound Conservative views of a most ingenious kind. This sort of thing is all very well to exercise the ingenuity and learning of Mr. Butt, but it is insipid food to the strong stomachs of the Irish masses.'[804] Soon after the public launch of the Association, Arthur Guinness charitably wrote to Butt, again declining to join but accepting that 'we both desire the same object viz the good of Ireland and only differ as to the means of accomplishing this end.'[805] Butt emphasised the moderation of the movement at a banquet organised by a Roman Catholic association in Liverpool on 8th September 1870:

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[798] George McCutchan, 'The Church's Title', 'Disestablishment and Disendowment', *The Irish Church and the Irish Nation. Sermons Preached Chiefly on S. Patrick's Day, 1869-1874* (Dublin/London, 1874).
[799] *Times*, 16th September 1870.
[800] *DE*, 2nd September 1870.
[801] *Standard*, 3rd September 1870.
[802] *DE*, 9th September 1870.
[803] *Times*, 2nd, 3rd September 1870.
[804] *Standard*, 21st September 1870.
[805] Guinness to Butt, 9th September 1870, NLI Ms.8692/10.

> Irishmen of all classes and creeds would unite in the common-sense movement of asking for Ireland the privilege of managing her own affairs…whatever influence he could extend to the movement, it should not be guided or actuated by an hostility to England, or to the English Constitution; for there was no cause of enmity between the people of Ireland and the people of England.

He also stressed the importance of associations and societies in developing popular politics, and (understandable for the religious audience) the importance of religion in preventing revolution, drawing cautionary tales from the anti-clericalism of revolutionary France.[806] However, these themes were standard lines of Protestant polemic, dating from Burke and renewed in the Irish Church debate;[807] they did not normally accompany the passionate pleas he made for the vitality of Irish nationality.

In addition to confusion over its programme and structure, the Association's wider role was still only hazily understood. Thomas Neilson Underwood of Strabane optimistically urged that Irish MPs somehow compel the Government to try and end the Franco-Prussian War on humanitarian grounds; he suggested the HGA could co-ordinate this effort.[808] Although this suggestion was wide of any actual understanding of the Association's policies and orientation (and the impact of British diplomacy), it showed the idea of Association as an independent, non-Parliamentary check on the government, and its outward-looking focus. The same issue of a broader public role was debated internally, however.

The launch of a new Dublin weekly paper, *The Federalist*, was an opportunity to further educate the public and differentiate federalism, as a political ideal, from the organisational details of their Association. Although all the articles followed the standard practice of being published without bylines, they expressed distinctly different voices and positions. There was no obvious editorial line, save for the opening statement of purpose, which seems to have been written by a committee: it

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[806] *Times*, 10th September 1870.
[807] For example, J. Statter, *Disestablishment and Disendowment* (Oxford/London, 1868).
[808] *IT*, 30th September 1870.

demanded 'the repeal of the act of union [sic] and the restoration to Ireland of its domestic legislature following up that restoration by such an arrangement of the relations between Ireland and Great Britain as may assume the unity of the empire, and in doing so offer the best guarantee for the perpetuity of Irish independence.' The Repeal politics of Martin and O'Neill Daunt and the imperial gradualism of Butt and Galbraith combined in the awkward grammar. It was also explicit about educating Ireland in preparation for self-government. The details of a federalist scheme were unsettled and imprecise, so 'we will prepare the Irish nation for the task of perfecting the plan of an Irish Federal constitution, which her representatives may place before England as the demand of an united country.' Without internal unity their demand was ineffective; with internal unity the demand would become undeniable. The goal of the paper was to fuse disparate groups.

Two other leading articles made bold declarations, on education and 'Protestant Nationality.' The education debate encapsulated the principle that national spirit could mediate the antithetical, hostile positions of Protestants and Catholics (who were generally opposed on the education question). Although the National Schools were considered successful in many respects, '[t]hey have laboured to crush national aspirations. Irish history has been constructed so as to promote English feeling....We want a system of education which will give a sound national tone to the youth of Ireland, a system which will promote constitutional nationality.' However, this did not at all endorse denominational education, a central plank of Cullen's programme. *The Federalist* concluded only an Irish parliament could ultimately settle the education system. The paper assured Protestants that educated Catholics outweighed the priest-led. Catholics trusted Protestants in the 'honeymoon of Irish nationality', 1782-1800. It concluded that '[t]he Irishmen of to-day looks (sic) abroad', where religious toleration was gaining.

On 'Federation *v.* Repeal' it argued Repeal had all the moral and historical weight of nationalist powers and sympathies bound in it—the power of inherited tradition. But now Conservatives felt 'badly treated' by Parliament and joined with nationalists. Federalism 'has no traditions to appeal to, it is essentially a creation of the hour. It aims at expediency and the future. It is thoroughly practical in its constitution. It eschews those principles in the Repeal doctrine, which have made the restoration of our native Parliament, by moral suasion, impossible of attainment.' Furthermore, it claimed many Catholics

> would willingly submit to the government of the Church Convention, rather than the official charity of the London Parliament….Let not the Irish Protestants mistake the tenor of the times….Under a Federal Government, it is more likely that a Conservative sway would be established. Men who are now ultra-national would, under native rule, become eminently Conservative. A Constitutional reaction would set in, and the people would become prosperous, contented and free.

A letter, signed 'T.C.D.' and purporting to be a response to an earlier, non-serial version of the paper, claimed four fifths of all Protestant Conservatives in Ireland would join the Federalists if they could guarantee freedom from priestly interference. On the topic of 'Orange and Green' the paper wrote:

> We have no objection to Orangeism as an institution so long as it does not become or continue to be antagonistic to Irish Nationality. There are Orangemen in Ireland of whom we are proud to say that they are Irish first and Orange afterwards….They are Irish in sentiment and Orange in sympathy….Let Orangeism be anti-Catholic, let is (sic) remain anti-everything, so long as it is not anti-national.

This propaganda was, despite its declarations of institutional independence, clearly timed to solidify support as the Association tried to establish itself in Dublin's political and cultural life.

It also reiterated the importance of placing Ireland's political currents in the wider European context, charting three dominant modes of Irish political advocacy: parliament, demonstrations, and revolution. It was against all three. For *The Federalist*, France was a government of demonstration and delusions, Prussia of

stern truth and stoicism. They sympathised with the plight of the French people but saw the value in what the Prussians did in forming their country. It also proffered more substantive ideas, such as the creation of an Irish National Gallery and the extension of the Royal Dublin Society Library's opening hours—the dry details of an educated public society's encouraging its country's cultural life.[809]

In early October 1870 the Association began meeting regularly, in rooms at 63 Grafton Street—squarely in the academic, associational, and legal quarter of Dublin, hoping to sustain momentum from the Rotundo launch.[810] Their first ordinary meeting was on 6th October, and if there was ever a time to establish a clear ideological or tactical plan, it was here. However, Isaac Butt opened by declaring that 'they were not bound by any programme that was laid before them. He thought the value of these meetings was that every gentleman was free to express his opinions. They were essentially meetings for free debate.' Emphasising the contemporary power of nationalism (with references to Hungary), he also stressed their deliberately limited ambitions, reminding the meeting 'they were not a popular organisation, but an association of a number of gentleman who had joined together to impress on the public mind of Ireland their own opinions'. Galbraith followed and stressed his being an Anglican clergyman. He also emphasised the substance of federalism by comparing Switzerland and the United States to the totemic moment of 1782.

Another Anglican rector—W.G. Carroll, whose ritualistic services at St. Bride's caused the 1866 riot—pointed out a favourable notice of their work in the *Economist.* The notably radical John Martin's contribution was to emphasise the Association's uniting together different strains of nationalism, and how disestablishment enabled the fusion of Protestants and Catholics. The speeches were grounded on the idea that local governance ensured effective governance,

[809] *The Federalist*, 24th September, 1st October 1870.
[810] *FJ*, 3rd, 6th October 1870.

which in turn would stabilise the relationship between England and Ireland.[811] This meeting suggests a clear image of the group at this stage—a fairly self-congratulatory clique advocating a radical constitutional change through fussy, bookish suggestions. When a wider cultural vision came forward, it was with contemporary European nationalisms not a reflexive association with the past. Indeed, the *Express*' criticisms were again attuned to their programme: it refused to believe an Association dedicated to the Parliamentary question could be non-political, and held up the HGA as inherently anti-national in (supposedly) supporting ultramontanism against Italy.[812] Isaac Butt was far from a sole leader, although his prominence was undeniable.

The Federalist emphasised the fusion of a national spirit and practical, constructive Imperialism, arguing that government from Westminster would always come through an English lens, and was thus the root of Ireland's problems. However, the Association was an umbrella for the union of all Irish people, through which '[t]he spirit of disaffection now existing in Ireland may be converted by the talisman of liberty, into the strongest bulwark of the Empire.' It also confronted the skepticism of the Protestant press writing that '[w]e have no objection to Ultramontane nationality, as we have none to Orange nationality, but we have an objection to either usurping the title "National".' Ultramontanism, and its advocates in Ireland, opposed Italian unity, an expression of nationalism. In contrast, 'Madden and his Orange national followers' were on the side of the secular Italian powers against the Pope. Specifically confronting the *Dublin Evening Mail* and *Daily Express*, the paper highlighted their opposition to usurping ultramontanism, writing that

> the Nationalists of Ireland would not wish to be free from a London Government, if for it they would only substitute a Roman one....Give us the worst Orange Parliament, that could be devised, give us, as we said before, even the Church

[811] *FJ*, 7th October 1870; *IT*, 7th October 1870.
[812] *DE*, 7th, 10th October 1870.

> Convention, and we would gladly submit to either as being the rule of Irishmen. Ultramontanism and bigotry, whether in Protestantism or Catholicism, as it always has been the foe of liberty, is our most deadly enemy.

They also reiterated the international dimension by stressing the prevalence of federations: Sweden and Norway,[813] Switzerland, Austro-Hungary, and Canada. *The Federalist* further developed the European parallel and simultaneously attacking their critics: the Franco-Prussian war could not be a Catholic-Protestant conflict, as the Bavarians and many North German Confederate soldiers were Catholics fighting France. Equally, in Ireland, each side tried to undermine the Home Government Association by depicting them as either secret Ultramontanists or Orangemen.[814]

John Hoare seconded the European dimension, writing 'The historical parallel to the granting of an Irish Parlt. by England, is the bold step of Victor Emmanuel in marching on Rome. It wd. take the game out of the hands of the Republicans.' He continued to recount a conversation with a 60 year old man, who stressed 'the weakening of the feelings of Irish Prot. towards England since he was a boy...He attributed it to the "concessions" to R. Cath', which started with Emancipation in 1829:

> I asked about the Irish Ch. Act. He said that had done more than anything since; "and", he said, "I find an undercurrent setting in for the Catholics towards the Protestants, wanting them to join them to obtain an Irish Parlt." I asked if he thought it wd. be successful, he said he thought it wd., for that the Protestants were thinking that the Catholics were right about it, that we ought to manage our own affairs.

Hoare felt an Irish Parliament might either follow or prevent a rebellion, and far preferred the latter.[815]

The General Convention, the most obvious symbol of both Anglican debates and an Irish Parliament, would reassemble on 18th October. The wider Anglican engagement with the fabric of government continued, as local Synods followed

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[813] Which were technically joined by a personal monarchical union, not as constituent parts of a federalist state.
[814] *The Federalist*, 8th, 15th October 1870.
[815] Hoare to McDonnell, 14th October 1870, NLI Ms.18490/4.

Commons procedure—the Killaloe Synod even maintained a system of a Committee of the Whole House, and the Chair counting out the meeting.[816] Irish Anglican distrust towards England focused on the finance issue. The *Belfast News-Letter* reminded its readers that '[t]he disestablishment and disendowment were the work of Englishmen…whose aid now would be very seasonable.'[817] A month before the Convention met, William Bence-Jones asked Archbishop Tait to announce a windfall of English money and dampen the revisionist ardour.[818]

However, other debates carried even more sting. The potential revision of the Prayer Book dominated the Convention. Revision was, undoubtedly, the defining battle within the Church. Richard Clarke has stressed that 'a definite protestant hostility to things English following disestablishment is an important part of the socio-political context of liturgical revision in the 1870s.'[819] The anti-revisionist camp were determined to maintain the distinctiveness of their Church, and more widely uphold the theological and cultural differences between themselves and Presbyterians. But, again, the Revisionists saw themselves as simultaneously purifying the Church and defending its Irishness.

Charles Seaver, stirring Maberly's embers, urged their forming a long-term committee to prevent 'the leprosy which has affected the English Church from spreading in ours.'[820] One pamphleteer bitterly savaged the Archbishops, claiming that, thanks to them, Ireland 'was well prepared for Puseyism…when the baneful seeds of that deadly plant, were blown by the winds of hell across St. George's Channel, to poison the spiritual fields of the Irish Church.' He proceeded with doggerel, lambasting how the '[d]egraded offspring of th' illicit loves/Of Madame Rome, and all her Oxford beaux,/Thus to unite, would cage the Church's

816 *Clare Journal, and Ennis Advertiser*, 12th September 1870.
817 *BNL*, 3rd October 1870
818 Bence-Jones to Tait, 17th September 1870, LPL Ms.Tait/87, fols.268-71.
819 Richard Clarke, 'The Disestablishment Revision of the Irish Book of Common Prayer' (University of Dublin Ph.D. thesis, 1989).
820 *BNL*, 13th October 1870.

doves/with Error's hawks;—a Compromise for *Trenchin'*/', and later referred to 'crimes that call for vengeance from the skies,/And make men wonder that the great Creator/Has not transformed Great Britain to a crater/'.[821] Another piece of splenetic asked of the Church of England:

> Is there not a "scarlet"-coloured disease now widely existing within her, which shews (sic) marks of being likely to be developed ere long into the most dangerous kind of religious gangrene?....she is continually using...galling and unhealthy formularies—formularies so full of defects, and infected with Romanism, the must subtile (sic) and dangerous of all diseases which have ever preyed upon the soul of man.[822]

Several regional petitions flooded the Convention's opening, devoted to the topic. Even if the Convention's members were a clear elite, even if admission was by carefully-controlled tickets, lobbying the Convention incorporated the bulk of the laity into the wider process. A petition from three small parishes in Wexford, many of whose signatories were clearly not accustomed to writing very often, demanded lay influence to prevent congregations from 'introducing' new elements to the service; an impressive Cork petition with hundreds of names protested against the Revisionists' changing the Book of Common Prayer or Formularies in an attempt to 'narrow' the Church.[823] Both sides depicted themselves as conservatives, and engaged with the details of the Convention to pursue the issue; assessing the Convention's role in the debate proved perfect for the Victorian tendency towards hairsplitting.[824] But, as with the antidisestablishment campaign, this was a further engagement with the utility and value of representative systems in confronting Irish cultural debates.

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[821] 'Ecclesiae Amicus Hibernicae [Friend of the Irish Church]', *No Compromise in the Irish Church* (London/Dublin, 1872), emphasis original. According to the pamphlet, it was composed before the General Convention met, but the author was only able to print later.
[822] Andrew WilliaMs, *Ought the Book of Common Prayer, and the Administration of the Sacraments, and the other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of Ireland, be Revised?* (Dublin, ND).
[823] Loose petitions, RCBL, GCP.
[824] For example, anonymous letter, *IT*, 14th October 1870.

Tait prefaced the Convention's reopening with a formal letter to Beresford, reminding him both of the English desire to maintain communion with the Church of Ireland, and to support it financially.[825] The subtext was clear: revision would move the Irish Church away from England, which would cost them any English money. The private English scepticism and dislike of the national strains within the revision movement were now open. This added an urgency to the intense debate on commutation, which, as the correspondence littering the *News-Letter* before the Convention showed, was also a debate about the range of the Government in Ireland. The controversy of commutation, where the Government matched clerical compensation handed directly to the RCB for investment, was ultimately more a debate about the extent of governmental interference and Irish need than it was about funding clerical salaries in the future. Revealingly, the *News-Letter* used the same issue which had an extensive correspondence on commutation to blame English law for maintaining two polarised races on the island of Ireland.[826]

By the Convention's third day they debated new ecclesiastical tribunals—a delicate subject with the Revisionist and anti-Revisionist camps' distrust. PDA activist Richard Gamble mapped a precedent, based on judicial models. When they resumed the debate later, he brought the conversation round to Henry VIII's Act in Restraint of Appeals (which declared the Pope no longer the ultimate authority for appeal in ecclesiastical cases).[827] The Convention also enthusiastically supported a proposed union with the Irish Primitive Methodists,[828] which chimed with the mentality of re-rooting themselves in Ireland, gaining new members, and proving they were the true Irish Church, not a mere appendage of the British State. Those metaphors abounded as the Convention progressed. At one stage, H.H. Dickinson,

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[825] Tait to Beresford, 17th October 1870, CUL Ms.Add.9407/2/30; Copy, LPL Ms.Tait/87, fol.272.
[826] *BNL*, 18th October 1870.
[827] *BNL*, 19th, 22nd, 24th October 1870.
[828] *BNL*, 25th October 1870; Printed Resolutions, preserved at TCD Ms.11183/P37/2/3.

dean of the Chapel Royal, compared one proposed tribunal system to the Star Chamber. The Rev. William Anderson argued for an expansion of the Hon. the Irish Society and further work in the Irish language, as they were 'the national Church of Ireland'.[829] A Belfast cleric named E.J. Hartrick asked the Convention to include the Irish-language version of the Bible and Book of Common Prayer next to the English ones that were always prominently displayed, another clear declaration of nationality. Indeed, the Federalist F.P. Dunne was again active in the Convention, arguing that Church finance should come from an inclusive national system, not the 'spasmodic' efforts of the wealthy.[830]

After the Convention closed on 4th November 1870, a summary reached Archbishop Tait. It mapped out five chief decisions, three of which were technical and logistical points—it prioritised the Representative Church Body's new Charter, clerical commutation and compounding, and the internal judicial system. Most of the two-page summary was exclusively devoted to the revision question, and abandoned a semi-official tone to dwell on the details and individual conflicts—particularly noting the democratic dimension added by the Vestry system. It concluded the Revision Committee 'was rendered absolutely necessary by the unfortunate and ill judged proceedings of the Archbishop of Dublin' in the Maberly case: 'The proceedings raised such a storm as threatened to rend the Church and scatter her with a thousand fragments. All the vestry meetings took up the question, and strongly condemned both the book and the Archbishop's proceedings.' A major temperate memorial, managed by the usual magnate hands, quieted the Church.[831] Even Madden and King-Harman prominently added their

[829] *IT*, 29th October 1870.
[830] *BNL*, 31st October, 2nd November 1870.
[831] LPL Ms.Tait/163, fols.18-19.

names to a petition which advocated a 'constitutional' way of establishing a Revision committee.[832]

Although Butt's leadership of the Fenian Amnesty campaign politically distanced him from the bulk of Protestants, socially and culturally he was still part of that world. He visited Lord and Lady Lifford, magnates from his corner of Donegal, dining informally and attending Evensong with them. In October 1870, when the HGA was trying to establish itself as an accepted association through regular public meetings, Lifford traded Synod gossip with Butt, making jokes about both the Liberals and the evangelical revisionist party.[833] J.A. Galbraith's appointment diary from the time records a whirl of meetings for both the Church and Home Government Association. Socially, he still moved in an overwhelmingly Trinity College world, passing from HGA committee meetings to the Trinity Commons, or, on 30th September, to wine with R.K. Tyrell and J.P. Mahaffy. The noted companions during this time were, naturally, prominent protestant members of the HGA: Alfred Webb, Isaac and Robert Butt, Vesey Fitzgerald, Samuel Haughton, and Sir William Wilde. But totems of the Church of Ireland lay leadership also figured: Anthony Traill, William Digges La Touche, and Richard Gamble. He was feverishly busy with the General Convention, Representative Church Body meetings, and the HGA; Galbraith's diary emphasises how important early meetings of the HGA ran exactly in parallel with the second session of the General Convention.[834]

At the Convention's close, the *Morning Post* favourably commented on how well the delegates, previously 'novices in the conduct of public business', learned the substance of their work, commenting on how 'their progress in parliamentary etiquette and language justifies the favour with which the Convention is regarded by

[832] TCD Ms.11183/P37/2/7.
[833] Lifford to Butt, 19th, no month, 1870, NLI Ms.8692/5; Lifford to Butt, 17th October 1870, NLI Ms.8692/12.
[834] TCD Ms.3839.

some sections of the "National" party, who see in it an excellent preparation for and a step towards the domestic Legislature'.[835] During the Convention, the 67-year-old Earl of Clancarty was active in debates over Church education, in addition to joining the crucial, definitive Revision Committee. After the Convention closed, he wrote to laud Butt's *Home Government for Ireland*. Butt published the letter in the *Freeman* under the title 'Lord Clancarty on Disestablishment and Federalism.'

Clancarty opened by noting that '[t]he recent violation of the fundamental condition of the Act of union [sic] by the disestablishment of the church' removed his previous inability to join the movement. He criticised the Union's not working in Irish interests, and English dominance's resulting in a lack of attention to Irish needs. The poor quality and corruption of Irish MPs stemmed from their competing in a party system. He had long urged that a committee of Irish members and peers meet in Dublin and facilitate a more engaged relationship with the country and the legislature.[836] Following the publication of this letter, O'Neill Daunt wrote to Clancarty, stressing the antiquity of an Irish constitutional tradition, which lead him to argue that 'I do not think that there is amongst the Irish democracy any prevalence an anti-aristocratic spirit, as such.' The nobility's leading their claims for autonomy would only increase popular attachment to the territorial aristocracy. Clancarty responded they were entirely agreed on what they wanted to see for Ireland, and merely disagreed on the mechanisms required to achieve this.[837]

Clancarty's missive was discussed at the HGA's next meeting, as was a paper from John Madden. The *Freeman's* reported it as examining personal rights under Federalism. Drawn from the American constitution as well as the 'Bill of Rights' established in 1688, it contrasted Gladstone's measures—like the Peace Preservation Act—with the ideals of personal liberties secured by constitutional

[835] *Morning Post*, 7th November 1870.
[836] *FJ*, 29th October 1870; *IT*, 29th October 1870.
[837] O'Neill Daunt to Clancarty, 1st November 1870, NLI Ms.8045/1; Clancarty to O'Neill Daunt, 11th November 1870, NLI Ms.8045/2.

arrangements. *The Federalist* characterised this differently, however, describing it as 'a scheme for furnishing guarantees to the Protestant minority, that in the event of the success of the Federalist movement there should be no attempt on the part of their fellow-countrymen to establish a domination in religious matters, or disturbance in the existing rights of property acquired by confiscation or otherwise.' Samuel Haughton followed him—a fellow of Trinity, he delivered a long analysis of Jonathan Swift's position on absenteeism, with contemporary parallels. Haughton compared Ireland to Java under the Dutch, and, like Clancarty, concluded by declaring that disestablishment had freed him and many others—before, defending the establishment forced them to support intransigent politicians such as John Vance and Sir Edward Grogan.

Joseph Galbraith continued Madden's and Haughton's position of turning to federalism because of the blow of disestablishment. He praised Clancarty's support as indicative of 'Protestant Conservative Irishmen' who 'felt as if they were walking through a newly-discovered land'. Galbraith argued this was the first step for internal cohesion and harmony. A third Trinity Fellow, Shaw, backed the economic complaints against absenteeism, but compared the situation to contemporary France and even seventeenth-century Portugal. The only Catholics reported as speaking were A.M. Sullivan and Laurence Waldron, a Deputy Lieutenant of County Dublin, and they did not present substantive papers or speeches.[838] Studiously, only prominent Protestants chaired meetings or were reported as espousing principles for the movement. Subsequent meetings continued to expound the economic benefits of Federalism and the idea of Anglo-Irish harmony through a lack of agitation, commenting on Continental political shifts. They also decided to produce a pamphlet on the financial results of absenteeism, and welcomed small-scale, yet practical, advances, such as a rector in Mayo supporting the Association

[838] *The Federalist*, 22nd October 1870; *FJ*, 4th November 1870

by advancing their ideas through local societies.[839] This was the kind of substantive engagement with local debates, and the diffusion of ideas, that placed them closer to the ideals of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society, not the Independent Opposition Party.

Indeed, *The Federalist* even advocated poor law reform under self-government. It proposed a single 'national poor rate' to avoid local discrepancies, and venality and corruption amongst local boards. Under the current system, '[t]he wealthy are rendered indifferent to the struggles of the poor through a false conception of their obligations to society.' It also continued to specifically appeal to Anglicans, commenting on the unveiling of the statue of William Smith O'Brien:

> Many Protestants followed O'Brien into the ranks of the Repealers, and proved, to a man, a fact which we hope shall become a great fact in our time, that the Protestant can become as patriotic as his Catholic fellow-countryman....O'Brien was the purest type of the Protestant nationalist. With him it was love of country and not ambition....They enshrine him, as they do all Protestant patriots, in their hearts.[840]

Echoing this principle, W.G. Carroll named Robert McDonnell as his idea of the movement's spokesman, since *Irish Nationality in 1870* advocated similar principles, and gloried a similar legacy.[841] King-Harman claimed Federalism would guarantee a more secure Union, and protect England in a time of trying European uncertainty.[842]

This Tory and Protestant ethos was epitomised by R.B. O'Brien's harangue following King-Harman's chairing an Association meeting where he discussed his unsuccessful election.[843] According to O'Brien, King-Harman was too Conservative 'in a case where the majority of the Irish Nation, as yet, think the H.G.A. a Tory dodge to break the ranks of the Liberals, and we want to shew [sic] it is <u>not</u> such a

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[839] *FJ*, 23rd, 30th November 1870
[840] *The Federalist*, 29th October 1870
[841] W.G. Carroll to McDonnell, 26th November 1870, NLI Ms.18490/2.
[842] *DE*, 17th November 1870.
[843] *FJ*, 17th November 1870.

dodge. We want to prove to Ireland we are of no party: and we do the very thing that, rightly or wrongly, will make us wear the livery of a party'.[844] But even here it was important that O'Brien argued they needed to move away from the functions of a political party, not that he opposed King-Harman's actual politics.

On the totemic date of 5th November (also the last day of the General Convention) *The Federalist* repeated its appeals that Ireland's political-cum-religious divisions were solely to the advantage of England and the governing elite. It contrasted this with the HGA, commenting:

> The programme they have adopted proves they have no party prejudices nor religious aversions. Their platform is broad and comprehensive; Whig and Tory, Protestant and Catholic, are all invited to coalesce for one common end—the good of the country. There is no distrust of Ultramontane or Orange sympathies predominating. All persuasions are blended in the universal desire to secure Irish independence....Disunion has degraded us to the condition of a beggared province. Union would elevate us to the dignity of standing among the nations, the peer of the proudest. We are the only nation in which patriotism assumes the font and bearing of partisanship, and where faction and feud appear to be sempiternal.

It then placed Irish federalism in the sweep of European national aspiration. Ireland was bigger in size and population than Denmark, Switzerland, Greece, Holland, and Belgium; in population Portugal, Sweden, and Norway. Of the German states, only Prussia was bigger. Ireland was a close comparison to Bavaria, and was bigger than Hanover, Wurttemberg, Saxony, and Baden.

It also carried news from Versailles—rumours of the creation of a new German Empire that would absorb Prussia, not, as seems to have been presumed, that Prussia would simply incorporate the smaller German states. This was the accurate analysis that the new German state would be an extension of the existing North German Confederation, not a Prussian unitary state. *The Federalist* connected this to the idea of national renewal through internal religious unity, favourably quoting a pamphlet *Irish Self-Government; or, the Repeal Question* by

[844] R.B. O'Brien to Butt, 23rd November 1870, NLI Ms.8692/12.

James Waldyve Willington, who charged against their 'experience of national decay', urging they build on 'innate sentiments of patriotism'. He wrote 'It is our desire to behold all classes, creeds, sects; all Protestants and Catholics; Tories and Whigs; Ultramontanes and Orangemen—all, every one of these, amalgamated together as *Patriotic Irishmen.*' Another pamphlet reviewed by the paper reminded the readers that Ulster and the Orange Order were against the Union in 1800.[845]

Another evangelical association, the pan-Britain Church Institution, lobbied Archbishop Tait to move on organising a subscription for the Irish Church. The Institution had previously raised money and campaigned to entrench the Church's position in Ireland. It was now committed to securing the Church's national, all-Ireland reach. Yet it did so through a system of local collections that was specifically modeled on the mechanisms which created the anti-Gladstone meetings (and riots) during the 1868 election.[846] The Institution still believed in a reservoir of Anglican activism, and mapped out an inclusive mechanism for campaigning on the place of the Anglican Church in Irish life.

Yet the Irish enthusiasm for that kind of effort was potentially diminishing. The annual opening meeting of the 'Hist' took place on 10th November 1870. The Auditor (J.G. Gibson) gave a speech on the relationship between social change and warfare (unsurprising, given the time). In it, he stressed the importance of religious toleration. As usual, the meeting was packed with Dublin luminaries: with Sir Joseph Napier in the Chair, the audience included Sir Dominick Corrigan and David Plunket, JT Ball, Sir Edward Grogan, a young Tractarian vicar in Richard Travers Smith, and several HGA members—Sir William Wilde, Sir John Barrington, and TCD's Shaw.[847] Many of the HGA's discussions resonated with other meetings and events, and the membership crossed over.

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[845] *The Federalist*, 5th November 1870.
[846] LPL Ms.Tait/174, fols.180-4.
[847] *IT*, 10th November 1870.

In *The Federalist*, a letter from 'Ultoniensis'[848] dismissed Lord Clancarty's skepticism of an Anglican presence under Home Rule. The author spoke as a Northern protestant who felt their liberties had been more secure under the Irish Parliament. On the behalf of the rest of North he offered congratulations to the notable Anglican Home Rulers—Butt, Galbraith, Haughton, and Clancarty. In reply to a different letter, the paper even went so far as to define Federalism as different from Repeal in that it gave 'greater security to the Protestant advocates of nationality.' Similarly, Vesey Fitzgerald published a letter arguing that the Franco-Prussian war showed how military force alone could no maintain a nation. Gladstone preceded the Irish Church Act by disarming the country.

However, grasping the sense of Anglican renewal that came with their self-government, '[t]he Protestant, to his great surprise, finds himself in possession of a national church—independent, self-acting, Non-Erastian, more satisfactorily paid, and in a more promising position for energetic work than ever. Hence he is beginning to court the embraces of his mother country.' He continued to speculate about Russia desiring a revision of the Crimea treaty and the resonance Franco-Prussian war: overall, with growing insecurity in Europe, Britain should want the most secure situation at home, which only Federalism would provide.[849] The *Express* responded that the Canadians succeeded in their Confederation 'because they demanded what was reasonable, and not inconsistent with the safety and integrity of the empire'.[850] The Anglicans in the Home Government Association and one of Dublin's Tory, Protestant newspapers were certainly arguing with each other, but the assumptions, axioms, and terms of the debate were shared; they were engaging, and not speaking past each other.

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[848] 'Of Ulster'.
[849] *The Federalist*, 19th November, 3rd December 1870.
[850] *DE*, 10th December 1870.

III
Home Rule and Prayer Book Revision
December 1870—April 1874

A major public meeting in mid-December 1870 brought those themes together. Butt emphasised the Association's uniting religious and political orientations. He also supported the wider imperial federalist project by commending a proposed Australian federal dominion, advocated by the exiled Irish nationalist Charles Gavan Duffy. He made a powerful statement about 'demanding' their 'moral right', where England could either embrace or oppose the twelve million Irish around the world. But he also attacked those who claimed the HGA was an 'attempt to revive Orange ascendancy', and argued they wanted 'to make patriotism no longer inconsistent with honest attachment to England'. Galbraith continued to stress the durability and wide range of contemporary federalism, adding Canada, America, and Confederate Germany to the comparison with Australia, and positioning Irish aspiration next to that of the Czechs under the Habsburgs. Butt opposed a motion urging the Association to lobby Irish MPs, but it was accepted.[851] The *Express* chided that '[r]ecruits will not flock to the standard of "home rule", no matter how vigorously the national drum is beaten, or prettily blended are the orange and green in the Federal ribbons'.[852] The year closed with their noting the Statistical Society considering an idea of locally vetting Parliamentary legislation, and a meeting discussing local government in St. Anne's parish schoolhouse (an Anglican institution).[853]

At this time, the Cambridge historian and Broad Churchman J.R. Seeley wrote to McDonnell on similar topics. He differentiated the principle of Irish unity encapsulated by a national parliament from the idea of British Federalism. On the former he offered routine English worries that, whatever the Protestants might say

[851] *FJ*, 14th December 1870.
[852] *DE*, 14th December 1870.
[853] *FJ*, 21st December 1870.

about being willing to cooperate with Catholics, they would be stifled by majoritariansim. His commentary on Federalism reveals McDonnell's terms of reference: 'I certainly think it, in spite of Franz Deak, a most inconvenient arrangement, and think it would be a pity for the Irish to fancy that they can attain it because the Hungarians have.' His one concession got to the meat of the Home Government Association's programme—'I can quite understand your wish for organized public opinion.'[854]

The Church of Ireland's internal politics had to bleed into this mentality. Their internal contests were becoming nakedly political. That November and December, Henry Maunsell, brother of G.W. Maunsell (an Anglican member the HGA) took part in two elections for synodsmen and parochial nominators in the suburban Dublin parish of Grangegorman, which had three clear slates of candidates. Maunsell stood as part of a Tory package; they were opposed by a patently Liberal slate which included the Hon. Francis Browne and Viscount Monck (a pro-disestablishment Home Ruler). Separately, three evangelical revisionists also put themselves forward, but they included none other than Lord James Butler and John Bloomfield, that faction's leaders. The Liberals lost both contests.[855] The Home Government Association also considered other important, unofficial strains of Anglican politicking—John Dunne, the HGA's secretary, reported on William Johnston's being 'canned' by Belfast Orangemen for political stances Dunne considered relevant to the Federalist programme.[856]

The Federalist even assuaged nationalists worried about the number of Conservatives in the HGA. It declared that, without them, 'Federalism would drop into the tomb of Repeal without waiting for the demise of any of its chieftains.' Repeal failed for a lack of Conservatives: 'Let us remind our countrymen that it was

[854] J.R. Seeley to McDonnell, 14th December [1870], NLI Ms.18490/7.
[855] RCBL Ms.P/511/5/2.
[856] John Dunne to O'Neill Daunt, 19th December 1870, NLI Ms.8045/4.

the Conservative element and Orange bayonets that singly conquered the independence of 1782. It was Conservative eloquence and Orange patriotism that singly achieved free trade; and it was they who held their defensive shield over this doomed land from 1782 to 1800.' During those moments the Catholics had no political and little social power. It also continued to follow closely contemporary European political developments, commenting that '[t]he Creation of a German Empire on a Federal basis is certain.'[857] Beyond the obvious interest in a federalist project, this was also news considered of particular interest to Protestants, given their sympathies during the war.

Culturally, Vesey Fitzgerald's sense of federalism was blatantly elitist and Anglican—he looked back to the anti-Union speeches made by his grandfather John Foster, the last speaker of the Irish House of Commons.[858] Similarly, 'Killirie' reminded *The Federalist*'s readers of the Act of Union's Fifth Article, and the imminent moment of actual disestablishment on 1st January 1871: 'On the day when the Church shall cease to be established the Union will be dissolved. What O'Connell and his fellow-workers strove for in vain has at length been attained. There can be no more fit time, then, than the present for asking for a Home Government, for on the first of January, 1871 Ireland will be without a constitutional Government.'[859] The governmental metaphor extended, as Sir Frederick Heygate, MP for Donegal, at a Raphoe diocesan meeting, made a passionate stand for an all-Ireland Church funding system, which Frederick Goold, the Federalist archdeacon of Raphoe, backed with the shout: 'We won't sent round the begging-box in England.'[860] The comparisons and overlap between the reconstruction of the Church and the launch of the HGA, and the broader

[857] *The Federalist*, 10th December 1870.
[858] Vesey Fitzgerald to O'Neill Daunt, 15th December 1870, NLI Ms.8045/6.
[859] *The Federalist*, 3rd December 1870.
[860] *BNL*, 10th December 1870.

metaphors of independence contained within them, grew from the actual start of voluntarism in 1871.

Thomas Carson, recently consecrated Bishop of Kilmore, appealed to Tait that soon 'the Episcopate in Ireland must sink into poverty and contempt….We shall after a struggle merge into Congregationalism, or subsist only for a time in a meager & attenuated form, until crushed & stamped out by the strong arm of the Romish power.'[861] This clearly addressed the issue of the Church's national role. On Christmas Eve 1870 Peter Fitzgerald, the Knight of Kerry, issued an open letter addressing the Church's new financial arrangements; the topic strayed close to broader aspects of taxation and redistribution. The Representative Church Body's financial planning (much of it authored by J.A. Galbraith) was designed to secure the existing levels of parochial endowment, and rewarded the parishes that maintained their establishment-level clerical stipends. Fitzgerald highlighted the difficulties of a directly parochial funding system when there were such extreme disparities between parishes' size and wealth. He proposed a method that amounted to graduated taxation (although he did not use the term). Fitzgerald suggested that, instead of a flat maintenance charge, each parish contribute a percentage of the total cost of paying clerical salaries, based on their relative wealth and population. William Bence-Jones' response directly picked up the comparison between Fitzgerald's suggestions and taxation.[862] Lord Plunkett included in his response to Fitzgerald a supposed copy of testimony given by Daniel O'Connell to a Commons committee, informing them not to endow the Roman Catholic Church with money taken from the Church of Ireland.[863]

Later that month Dubliner John Norwood asked the Duke of Leinster to join a Dublin committee working on restoring Christ Church Cathedral; the Duke

[861] T. Carson to Tait, 26th December 1870, LPL Ms.Tait/174,fol.185.
[862] Jones to Peter Fitzgerald, 2nd January 1871, NLI Ms.5950.
[863] Lord Plunkett to Fitzgerald, 9th January 1871, NLI Ms.5950.

declined, not believing Dublin could 'sustain' two Cathedrals. This was immediately a discussion about the Church's future life, not the future of an historic building. Norwood told Leinster the purpose was not merely to refurbish the building, but, by rebuilding the chancel and transepts, allowing parish services in the Cathedral again.[864] Disestablishment spurred William Reeves to suggest re-drawing the medieval parish boundaries, and making the Church more naturally engaged with contemporary Dublin.[865] The restoration of the Cathedral fit into this principle entirely: the customary liturgical division was that Cathedral services took place in the quire, and parish services in the nave. A significant part of Christ Church's restoration was opening up the closed-off quire and renovating the nave and entrance to the Church.[866] Essentially, it was opening up the community into the service and incorporating the public.

They were required. As the elderly rector James Dunn O'Hara noted in his diary on 31st December: 'This day is the last of our Church as an establishment after standing 1st from S. Patricks [sic] times then at the reformation rescued from Popery'. It now needed God's help in its new, uncertain, uncharted life.[867] The Irish Church Act took effect on 1st January 1871. It was a Sunday, and Frances Alexander composed a hymn for the occasion—'Look down, Lord of heaven on our desolation,/Fallen, fallen, fallen is now our Country's crown,/Dimly down the New year as a Churchless nation,/Ammon and Amalek tread our borders down.' However, other services presented a different picture of the Church's new existence. Alfred T. Lee preached that the State was 'reduced to a mere system of police….This day no new Church is formed in this land; the shackles of the State simply drop off

[864] Norwood to Leinster, 16th, 17th December, Copies Leinster to Norwood, 17th, 18th December 1870, PRONI Ms.D3078/3/51/1-4.
[865] William Reeves, *An Analysis of the United Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough* (Dublin, 1869).
[866] Hugh Alexander Boyd, 'The Cathedral System in the Church of Ireland since the Disestablishment' (University of Dublin B.Litt. thesis, 1950).
[867] NLI Ms.14911.

the old Church of Ireland, and she goes forth free.' Whilst they had not sought the freedom, a glorious, new, unfettered purpose could be created.[868] The Church's self-equation with the life of the Irish nation itself made that strain of argument a compelling political parallel, which George McCutchan of the HGA unsurprisingly developed further.

Like other Irish federalists, he set their development in the wider European context. The past year had seen the greatest changes in European religion: since Irish Church Bill entered the Commons, the Papacy was no longer in alliance with European powers, France was conquered, and the Protestant German Empire was the strongest power: 'in Italy the Church has been by law severed from the State; and…to-day Pius the Ninth of Rome is a disestablished bishop, more utterly alienated from the civil power than our own primate'. In this backdrop, 'England seized what she never gave'. Like Alfred Lee in Antrim, McCutchan in Kerry felt '[w]e have lost *all* our wealth. We have saved all our honour, and regained independence.' His comparisons were straightforwardly political: 'The alliance of the Church with the State had ceased to be an union: it had become a manifest subjection. The public opinion of the country…had no weight in the assembly where the laws affecting the Church of Ireland were discussed and decided.' The wider constitutional argument was obvious, and McCutchan drew on the Church's cultural-historical apologetic to strengthen it, writing that '[t]he instincts of the English Church were in its early history almost entirely Roman. The instincts of the Irish Church have always been towards independence….For there was a feeling of constraint—a sense of subjection to foreign influences—which during their union preyed upon the spirit and crippled the energies of the Church of Ireland.' Even two years earlier it would have been thought disloyal to suggest that Irish Churchmen

[868] Alfred T. Lee, 'The Duty of the Church in the Days of her Freedom', Alfred T. Lee and Lord O'Neill, *The True Position of the Church of Ireland. Two Sermons Preached on Sunday, January 1st, 1871* (Dublin/London, 1871).

could make better laws for themselves than the English. But now they had elected their 'second parliament' and 'we cease to bear the opprobrious title of an English garrison, and we know no enemy that bears an Irish name….The most bitter taunt that was ever offered to a national church was when men professed to see an antagonism between the terms Protestant and Irishman. In future times…men will think they ought to be Protestant because they are Irishmen.'[869]

Similarly, the *Belfast News-Letter*'s 6th January 1871 leader on the Anglo-Irish relationship questioned the permanence of loyal Irishmen, speculating on home rule.[870] Home Rule's major electoral breakthrough, the old Repealer John Martin's victory in a Meath by-election, demonstrated much of that spirit. In his victory speech, he thanked Catholic Meath for electing a protestant,[871] where he was apparently interrupted by the shout of 'you are a Nationalist', drawing cheers. He later reiterated the goal of uniting all shades of nationalists—from 'moderate Federalists' to Repealers like himself—to achieve home government 'peacefully, without bloodshed, without disturbing the social order, without revolution'. He also stressed the social conservatism of the movement, justifying his campaign's ignoring a certain town (Drumshaughlin) to prevent sparking trouble between the landlord and tenants.[872] However much the Association might make a distinction between themselves and a political party, other organs did not recognise this. The *Morning Post* reported that the HGA were planning to stand a candidate in an upcoming Limerick by-election, and had canvassed local landowners for financial support. It also noted Dean O'Brien's opposition to a contest that pitted the HGA against the Catholic Church's candidate.[873] Even if the paper misunderstood their

[869] George McCutchan, 'The Day of Release, Preached in the Parish Church, Kenmare, 1st January 1871', *The Irish Church and the Irish Nation.*
[870] *BNL*, 6th January 1871.
[871] Martin was a Presbyterian.
[872] *FJ*, 9th January 1871.
[873] *Morning Post*, 17th January 1871.

non-party mentality, they recognised the determined independence from a Catholic political machine.

Although Vesey Fitzgerald lauded the breakthrough in Meath, he only saw it as a way of giving weight to a series of public meetings, writing to Butt '[t]he public mind of Ireland is certainly now capable of being organized in favour of [Home Rule], if the means are adopted which you told me you contemplated, viz., to have a Meeting of leaders in the Mansion House, & then to go to two or three Meetings yourself in the Provinces.'[874] The Association also applauded the victory, but emphasised that Martin was a member of the Association, not an official candidate. At the same meeting, the printer Alfred Webb proposed a long motion decrying English policy on stationary contracts and paper-making. One member opposed it as an insufficient issue—they were introducing 'petty questions'. However, there was no seconder to this. The rest of the meeting recognised it as a matter of economic policy; inequality hindering a domestic manufacturing industry, which local control would rectify.[875] The attempt to keep Association discussion confined to abstract politics died in favour of detailed analysis of legal difficulties and the economy.

A leader in *The Federalist* underscored both the importance of Protestantism to the HGA and the Association's prioritising debates over focused party politics: 'Opinion is our panoply. Neither conspiracy nor traitors can enfeeble it. Opinion wants not arms; nor Fenians in America'. Crucially, opinion and discussion meant that Butt, Galbraith, and O'Neill Daunt could all work together. It commented '[a]s for Protestant opinion of Ireland—Erin-go-brath! From Wood's Halfpence to Johnson's energy—the Protestant opinion has had one tendency. The tendency is to displace the ideas of English rule by Irish rule, for themselves, of themselves, and

[874] Vesey Fitzgerald to Isaac Butt, 7th January [1871], NLI Ms.10415/2.
[875] *FJ*, 26th January 1871.

by themselves."[876] However, the *Express* continued to explain that '[t]he Home Government Association has turned out to be merely a device for sapping Conservatism. It was never adopted heartily by the nationalists….The British Parliament has behaved very badly to Irish Protestants, but would Cardinal Cullen have done better?' The *Express* would never accept men like Martin and Lavelle, ultimately.[877]

James Vokes Mackey wrote a defence of Conservative HGA members in response, characterising Federalism as the truly Conservative position. For Mackey, *The Express* took the line of 'the Irish Whigs, pure and simple, who will not join in advocating home government, because the advocacy would embarrass their English masters'. If HGA were a 'device for sapping Conservatism' he would quit: 'I do not see the inconsistency between the most ardent love of one's country and the most thorough Conservatism, nor between a desire for "home government" and loyalty to the Queen. I wish for a union of Irishmen rather than a union of Parliaments. Separate Legislatures, but united Imperialists.' Mackey ended with a tirade against Gladstone, who would not be satisfied 'until every valued Irish institution were centered in London, nor until this unfortunate country were utterly denationalised.' The *Express* did continue to draw out the protestant elements in the HGA, however.

In the same edition, the paper published an account of an Association meeting, extensively quoting a speech from Joseph Galbraith which located their movement. Although Galbraith acknowledged nationalism was animated by generation-old sentiments, Federalism was again pegged to Europe, where '[t]he Swiss States had upheld a similar form of Constitution for upwards of 500 years, and though the population was small, they could defy an [sic] tyrant Power.' Irish Federalism 'was novel thus far, that it was connected with the great movement now going on throughout Europe. The great war now proceeding with dreadful vigour

[876] *The Federalist*, 21st January 1871.
[877] *DE*, 21st January 1871.

had been the means of founding a confederation which would be one of the greatest monuments of modern history.' Furthermore, Imperial Germany paralleled the United States, substituting Dukes for Governors and an Emperor for President.[878] One of Robert McDonnell's friends commented, from Munich, on the cultural changes following the creation of the Federal Empire: a national, anti-Ultramontane momentum. McDonnell asked for pamphlets on German Federation, hoping to educate the Irish public on the practical and dynamic elements of federalism.[879]

The European, constructive perspective also undercut Anglican prejudice about joining with the old demotic forces. Lord Longford remarked that '[t]he "Home Rule" gentlemen have as much to answer for in the disturbances of the public mind, as the Ribbonmen themselves—and although Mr. Galbraith may not mean murder, he joins with others in the most effectual mode of promoting violence and social disorder.'[880] Certainly the idea of a more stable, and financially advantageous Union should have appealed to the Ascendancy. European federalist success increased Irish legitimacy, by showing the system's proven strength. Additionally, the HGA's Anglican members' circulating pamphlets about German politics dispelled the assumption they were joining with the radicals. This also removed the claws from English attacks, such as a rebuff to one of McDonnell's ideas: 'You have given your impetus to a movement which can only be mischievous. Federation is only another name for Repeal and I for one would not object although I know very well what the peasantry of Tipperary & Clare expected of Repeal in 1845. I don't expect an Irish Parliament would satisfy them anymore than they would the Cork & Dublin mob.'[881]

The context for the *Express*' earlier criticism of the HGA as a 'device for sapping Conservatism' was the preparation of a banquet in John Martin's honour. At the 160-place event in the Antient Concert Rooms, Galbraith said the grace, and

[878] *DE*, 26th January 1871.
[879] N. Ranke to McDonnell, 22nd February 1871, NLI Ms.18940/6.
[880] Lord Longford to W.B. Smythe, 17th February 1871, TCD Ms.11198/8/31.
[881] Fottrell to McDonnell, ND, NLI Ms.18490/3.

letters of apology (declining invitations) were received from touchstones of Anglican Toryism: the MPs William Johnston of Ballykilbeg, Mervyn Archdall, and Lord Claud Hamilton. The Banquet's chair was William Shaw, a Protestant Liberal MP for Bandon who had joined the HGA. He opened with the loyal toast (explaining it was to the Queen and not the Government), and that disloyalty in Ireland was the product of poor governance, not belief in nationality. Martin, in his speech, implored the Irish aristocracy to pledge themselves back to the country, contrasting their current disposition with 1782. He also suggested the HGA expand the Association, turning it into a central coordinating committee of an Ireland-wide system of branch associations. In this, Martin suggested they work to get nationalists elected to local office—poor law guardians, aldermen—as the only work Irish MPs should take in the Commons was the Repeal of the Union.

Sir William Wilde also spoke, careful to refer always to Federalism. He praised the 1782 constitution, and declared that '[t]he Union was a breach of faith', that, originally, some of the strongest opposition to the Union came from the Orange Lodges. Wilde described both Catholics and Protestants being bought by false promises. For the Protestant, it was that their Church would always be Established. He made a strong plea for union between Catholics and Protestants, echoed by Galbraith.[882] Some of the loyal declarations and moderate proposals were hissed by radicals in the crowd,[883] and other speeches came from their bloc. However, the event clearly made much effort to appeal to conservatives. At a normal Association meeting later, O'Neil Daunt explicitly linked their work to a long struggle for Repeal, but emphasised the historic role of Protestants in the movement, and declared one of their strengths was the union of denominations.[884]

[882] *FJ*, 7th February 1871.
[883] Which Thornley considered the notable feature of the meeting.
[884] *FJ*, 9th February 1871.

But this overlapped with standard sources of Protestant politicking. William Johnston advised Disraeli that

> if Irish Protestants are to hold their own, in the new position of affairs there must be a change of tactics. There must be some attempt made to conciliate the bulk of the people: these must be led, & not driven. The priests are losing their power largely, as the Meath election will have proved. Protestants formerly attached to the Liberal party would welcome a moderate but firm resistance to further Papal demands.[885]

The Home Government Association made considerable efforts to make themselves attractive to Protestants, had sent overtures to leading Tories, and always disowned ultramontanism. It was clearly tapping the same source as Johnston, sensing a new possibility in the shifts in Anglican culture following disestablishment.

Returning to the restoration of Christ Church Cathedral, its Precentor, Edward Seymour, followed similar lines in explaining to the Duke of Leinster they were 'connecting dear old Christ Church with the government of our free Church by restoring it as the Chapel to the Synod House of the Irish Church.' Leinster approached the distinguished ecclesiastical architect George Edmund Street, and Henry Roe, the backer, outlining the plans: they wanted a space with 'with galleries on both sides on the ground floor for Divisions', and a 'gallery for Strangers'.[886] It was the floor-plan of the House of Commons. However, attaching the Synod House to the Cathedral by a bridge showed the government of the Church grew from its services; it was theology in stone. To do this, they rebuilt Westminster in Dublin. The cathedral was not the only similar project—models of Irish government flickered through the 'deposed capital'.[887] Indeed, one satire brilliantly pilloried the first General Synod, particularly the gap between the subject of its debates and the level of self-importance with which they conducted this. Purporting to be a debate around minutiae of clerical dress, the author drew clear pictures of Lord James

[885] W. Johnston to Disraeli, 20th January 1871, Bodl.Dep.Hughenden/132/4, fols.24-7.
[886] Edward Seymour to Leinster, 4th March, Copy Leinster to G.E. Street, 15th March, Leinster to Henry Roe, 20th April 1871, PRONI Ms.D3078/3/51/10-11,7,29.
[887] Mary Daly, *Dublin, the Deposed Capital: A Social and Economic History* (Cork, 1989).

Butler ('browbeater'), John Bloomfield, Courtown, Richard Gamble, William Brooke, and H.H. Dickinson. Samuel Haughton (as 'Quintic') proposed only Irish-manufactured cloth.[888]

The *Bradford Observer* even complained that Gladstone's pacifying Ireland resulted in 'new associations springing up'; Ireland finally had all the grievances removed, so why were there further demands made on the Government?[889] Again, this misunderstood the HGA's role: they allowed deputations from the various Dublin Trades Associations to affiliate to them.[890] However, P.J. Smyth, in an open letter to Butt, urged the Association widen its basis into a popular movement, picking up where the Repeal Association and Catholic Associations left off. He felt federalism would satisfy some, but most wanted 'the constitution of Grattan and the Volunteers'. Butt's public response was hugely revealing. He firstly disavowed his own influence, stating that, because of other demands on his time, he wanted to resign from their Committee in September and it was refused on the grounds that the move would be negative publicity. Much of Smyth's letter dwelt on the actual working rules and mechanics of the Association, and Butt responded that

> the Home Government Association was never intended to fill the place of a popular organisation. None of its rules were framed with that object. Its whole constitution was arranged on a basis and on principles entirely unsuited to it. It began with a strictly private meeting of 40 to 50 gentlemen of different religious persuasions and political opinions, convened by a private circular....We might have taken the course of calling a public meeting and proposing to re-establish a popular organisation. I think we acted far more prudently in not attempting anything of the kind. We formed ourselves into a society, in one sense a private one, for the purpose of advancing our opinions; and we invited those who thought with us to join us in that society.

Given the novelty of their arguments, it was better first to educate the public on the nature of federalism, before attempting a popular organisation. Their internal elections to the HGA's governing council showed how they themselves were a

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[888] Anon, *General Synod of the Irish Church. The Suppressed Debate on Proposed Canon No.101, in the First General Synod of the Irish Church, A.D. 1871* (Dublin, 1871).
[889] *Bradford Observer,* 4th April 1871.
[890] *FJ*, 7th April 1871; *PMG*, 8th April 1871.

remarkable success; Catholic Liberals voted for Protestant Tories and vice versa. It was a success in that 'there never was a more honest surrender of party and prejudice to patriotism than that which has been made within the ranks of that association.'[891] Certainly Galbraith publically maintained the old idea that federalism would in fact strengthen the Union, not oppose it. Although they condemned the idea of federalism, the *Belfast News-Letter* entirely understood the HGA's arguments, contrasting them with distinctively different cliques of Repealers and Nationalists.[892] When a deputation of the HGA—including Galbraith, Haughton, and Carroll—met the Dublin corporation, the Catholic Liberal Peter Paul McSwiney condemned the proposals as not going far enough, as not taking O'Connell's line, whilst Alderman J.W. Gregg declared that 'I as a Conservative have no hesitation in accepting the complete programme of the Home Government Association.' Those speaking for them all justified their support in the principle that local government would improve the Irish economy.[893]

When the once-sceptical MP J.F. Maguire lauded the General Convention, he still balanced the praise with a wider, and more unsettling, questioning of the Protestant ethos. He wrote, of the General Convention, 'the proceedings of that assembly were a splendid evidence in proof of the capacity of Irishmen for self-government'. However, he counter-weighted this concession by asking if Protestants 'could be induced to make a public and formal abandonment of all memorials of by-gone strife, of battles that live only in history, and victories or defeats that may well be buried in oblivion'.[894] Condemning Irish Protestant totems and making public obeisance was hardly grounds for political inclusion—especially as Galbraith implored Catholics to accept William Johnston's word that Orange demonstrations

[891] *FJ*, 26th May, 2nd June 1871.
[892] *BNL*, 1st June, 12th July 1871.
[893] *FJ*, 21st July 1871.
[894] *IT*, 21st July 1871; John Francis Maguire, *Home Government for Ireland* (Dublin/London, 1872).

were not intended as claims to superiority or ascendancy.[895] One member of the Association publicly mused on who was the true leader of Home Rule, based on Parliamentary influence and constituency jostling—Butt, Madden, or Maguire. Through the year some of the bloc clearly changed their minds about the role of local associations: at one meeting, Butt lauded newly-gained support from Lord Francis Conyngham as indicative of wider feeling amongst Northern Protestants. But P.J. Smyth, a Repealer, demanded more effective action in Westminster.[896] Through 1872 members of the Association fought, and won, a string of by-election victories. Although these contests were locally distinctive, overall they showed the strength of a Parliamentary-focused Home Rule movement, and the Dublin Association's increasing isolation.[897]

In May 1873 the 'Hist' debated 'That Mr Lecky's views of Federalism are applicable to the British Empire'. However, in November 1873 the Auditor, Cecil Roche, tried to make federalism the topic of that year's inaugural opening meeting, always a central moment in Dublin's political life. However, the University overruled them, as 'at this time and under present circumstances, the public discussion of the subject of Federalism…would be prejudicial to the character [of] the College, and injurious to its peace'. Trinity denied Hist the use of the 'College Hall'. Roche's symbolically pregnant suggestion was to hold the meeting beyond the College's walls.[898] Yet in a lecture in Drogheda, Joseph Galbraith referred to the Hist's occasional votes for O'Connell's career.[899]

Debate over the College's Divinity School continued, driving at how the disestablished Church would provide for a new way of training ordinands. Like so much at this time, the issue was deeply symbolic. For Trinity, it questioned their

[895] *FJ*, 2nd September 1871.
[896] *IT*, 6th February, 24th May 1872.
[897] David Thornley, *Isaac Butt and Home Rule*, pp.122-41.
[898] TCD MUN/SOC/HIST, vol.33.
[899] *DE*, 20th, 21st January 1873.

automatic connection to the Church of Ireland; for the Church, it suggested they would isolate themselves further from a wider role in Ireland by training their clergy on their own. In 1873 the bugbear of liberal Irish Anglicanism, the Protestant Defence Association, involved themselves.[900] The debate on Prayer Book revision was intense—one anti-revisionist attacked the series of pro-revision public meetings in the Metropolitan and Molesworth Halls by quoting from the Savoy Conference. He concluded '[t]his sounds as if written now, in answer to some violent tirade from the Protestant Defence Association;…its twin-brother, the Clerical and Lay Union, has talons no less destructive, though they are for the present more carefully concealed within their velvet sheaths.'[901] Any Church division had significant national tones: responding to the prospect of Irish Anglicans using competing forms of prayer, Bishop William Fitzgerald even warned: 'We are in imminent peril of being split into two communions—an *Apocryphal* Church of England and a *Canonical* Church of Ireland'.[902] This argument makes sense when set against the rhetoric of the PDA, who ranted 'We believe it to be an indisputable fact that the Church of England as a system, and a large proportion of the English people, are becoming gradually and rapidly *unprotestantized*.' They also trawled through history, re-fighting debates over the Prayer Books produced by Edward VI and Elizabeth.[903]

In this hot atmosphere, the General Synod's Revision Committee debated in 1872 and reported in 1873—the bulk of the change concerned the expected warhorse issues of Victorian theological controversy, such as baptismal regeneration and the ordinal. However, much of the Revision Committee's work focused on dismantling the vestiges of being the State Church, removing from the

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[900] *The Trinity College Divinity School. Correspondence Between the Committee of the Church of Ireland Protestant Defence Association and the Board of Trinity College, Dublin* (Dublin, 1873).
[901] Charles Crosthwaite, *Rubrics on the Sacraments* (Dublin/London, 1873).
[902] William Fitzgerald, *Remarks on the New Proposed Baptismal Rubric in a Letter to Friend* (Dublin, 1873), emphasis original.
[903] *Address of the Protestant Defence Association to the Members of the Church of Ireland* (Dublin, 1873).

liturgy the lingering traces of the Crown connection. This was highly political and yet the debates' minutes reveal that clerics did not challenge those aspects of the Revision. After the report was published, the ordained members of the Committee announced their objections. Most had trouble with changes to the ordinal, but nobody mentioned any difficulty with abandoning state prayers.

In the new liturgy, hymns for the Queen, Royal Family and Lord Lieutenant were simply removed. They also omitted the traditional prayers for the Lord Lieutenant and substituted watered-down suffrages for the royal family and Parliament, diminishing the previous weight attached to those prayers. The original phrasing was a prayer for the 'High Court of Parliament under our most religious and gracious Queen at this time assembled'—the Committee changed it to the 'High Court of Parliament at this time assembled'. Additionally, they added a prayer for their own General Synod after the prayer for Parliament. In the consecration of Bishops they removed references to the Queen's mandate and the royal supremacy. The new acknowledgement was to their own internal elections; the declaration of obedience was to the Archbishop of Armagh.[904]

The process behind this was completely political. The Synod, and its elections, soon contained all the trappings of Parliamentary life. One anti-revisionist likened the efforts of evangelicals' organising pro-revision petitions to landlords enforcing their tenants' voting.[905] The veteran politician R.R. Warren complained of contested elections in the Church, echoing the attitudes of magnates cooperating to stitch up the representation of their counties.[906] Individuals

[904] *General Synod of the Church of Ireland. Revision Committee Report. Presented to the General Synod of 1873* (Dublin, 1873).
[905] *Sketches by Different Hands of the Revision Debates in the Irish Synod, 1873*, ed. Charles Crosthwaite (Dublin/London, 1873).
[906] R.R. Warren, *Revision: Possibilities and Impossibilities Touching the Sacramental and Ordination Services, and the Athanasian Creed* (Dublin, 1874).

published their speeches in the Synod, following the same format as Parliamentary excerpts.[907]

These concerns over their public role paralleled the Church of Ireland's developments. In keeping with the Church's tortured debates on its public life (through the medium of theological bickering), self-finance compelled an overwhelmingly new order—landlord control. Quickly, the Church relied on landowners to support the Church financially, which fundamentally changed the Church's culture and sense of self. In 1872 the Rev. R.S. Gregg, one of the Church's chief financial planners at disestablishment, made a fundraising trip to Lambeth Palace. There, he declared they were now a free Church: 'If the endowments of the Church were sacrificed to political expediency; if the connexion (sic) with the State were rudely severed, the one compensating advantage was our freedom; if the Church be a living Church and a Free Church, that life must be manifested in every part of her system.'[908] However, despite Gregg's efforts for broad-based finance, the landowning classes almost wholly supported the Church alone, beyond simple donations.

In the summer of 1873 Vesey Fitzgerald still bombarded Isaac Butt with ideas and plans harkening to their clubby, technical, federalist ethos of 1870, such as details about the effect the discrepancies in English, Irish, and Scottish legislation had on the Irish labour supply, and Corporation reform. He also admonished Butt for not defending the Imperial value of Home Rule, reminding him: 'Party action is a different affair, & less important.'[909] In October, just before the Association disbanded, Major the Rt. Hon. William Le Poer Trench assured Butt

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[907] R.R. Warren (ed.), *Speeches Delivered in the General Convention of the Church of Ireland by Rev. Romney Robinson, D.D., and The Bishop of Ossory, Ferns, Etc.* (Dublin, 1870); [Edward Stopford], *General Synod, 1871. A Bill to Amend the Canons of the Church of Ireland. (The Archdeacon of Meath)* (Dublin, 1871); *Church of Ireland.*
[908] *Lambeth Palace. Condition of the Church of Ireland* (London, [1872]).
[909] Vesey Fitzgerald to Butt, 7th, 25th June, 5th July, 26th August 1873, NLI Ms.10415/4.

that Home Rule and the long-mooted idea of a royal residence in Ireland[910] coincided, and pledged his support for a 'moderate' measure.[911] Similarly, Joseph Galbraith's image of Home Rule was always rooted in the totem of Grattan.[912]

There was still a bloc of Anglicans committed to Irish nationality through the 1870s: as Roy Foster has argued, 'a tradition of conservative, propertied, politically Protestant landlords who formed a potential constituency for moderate nationalism', notably the party-light cliques of 'improving landlords' and residual *Dublin University Magazine* intellectuals. Many of the Protestants who joined the Home Rule ranks through the 1870s came from this world, including, of course, Charles Parnell. As with dogmatic Conservatism, their 'moderate nationalism' was also based on landownership—in their case, a natural result of improving relations with their tenants. However, the new order entailed by the cataclysmic shifts in land law, and thus landlord-tenant relations, removed many of these former Tories. Others were pushed out by the party-political shifts in the movement, such as the adoption of the whip and other Westminster trappings.[913]

But certainly, the familiar clubby culture had initially helped to draw them in. Vesey Fitzgerald eventually held aloof from the Home Rule League because he was adamant 'that Home Rule [should] not to be made the means of bullying for other things'. By this stage, the Irish gentry trusted principles, not parties; becoming more of a party would dissuade them: 'I am in favour of Home Rule, but I should like to know that there is public virtue enough in Ireland…to prefer Country to Party…before committing myself, or friends'.[914] He was not the only one to note the tension—W.J. O'Neill Daunt continued to defend the movement's gradualism:

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[910] James Loughlin, *The British Monarchy and Ireland: 1800 to the Present* (Cambridge, 2007), pp.148-67.
[911] Wiliam Le Poer Trench to Isaac Butt, 28th October 1873, NLI Ms.10415/4.
[912] Galbraith to W.J. O'Neill Daunt, 19th September 1874, NLI Ms.832.
[913] R.F. Foster, 'Parnell and his People: The Ascendancy and Home Rule', *Paddy and Mr. Punch: Connections in English and Irish History* (London, 1993).
[914] Vesey Fitzgerald to Butt, 13th November 1873, NLI Ms.10415/4.

> I desire…that our Home Rule movement should be totally unsectarian; that it should include Irish nationalists of every religion professed in this Kingdom….Were we to demand Repeal pure and simple, we should have almost the whole Protestant population of Ireland against us…thus increasing the weakness in our ranks, who are weak enough already. But our Protestant countrymen see safety to themselves and to their creed in the species of link with Protestant England which is preserved by the Federal Scheme; and this confidence on their part gives to the Home Rule movement an important element of strength, of which a movement for our old Constitution would be destitute.[915]

Even though Augusta Goold's aggressive and romantic nationalism involved her despising Irish Anglicanism as foreign and identifying Catholicism with 'Ireland's cause', she still disavowed ultramontanism 'as inconsistent with the spirit of nationality.'[916] This was, perhaps, the only element of her politics recognisable for the daughter of a wealthy, landed, Church of Ireland Archdeacon. But, crucially, it was one of the most important links between Fenians and Anglican Tories. Shared antipathy to priestly power had been one of the earliest and most important elements of common ground for the initial Federalist bloc. And there were still potential Home Rulers in the Protestant ranks after the creation of a semi-party machine: John Dunne, the Home Rule League's secretary, tried to recruit Achilles Daunt, a prominent Dublin Anglican cleric.[917] Yet even if some (but certainly not all) of the elite Federalists drifted away, the associational mentality lingered.

The HGA re-launched itself as the Home Rule League in November 1873,[918] anticipating the general election forced by Gladstone's defeat on the University Tests Bill. However, it had almost no money, and certainly no constituency experience. Its inept scramble to organise itself before and following the election is well-documented in its own records.[919] To get elected in 1874, the numerous Home Rule candidates were forced to rely on existing nationalist political machines: the circuit

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915 O'Neill Daunt to Lady Queensbury, 24th April 1874, NLI Ms.8045/1.
916 Goold to O'Neil Daunt, 6th October 1873, NLI Ms.8045/7.
917 John Dunne to O'Neill Daunt, 19th April 1874, NLI Ms.8045/5.
918 *Proceedings of the Home Rule Conference Held at the Rotunda, Dublin, on the 18th, 19th, and 21st November, 1873* (Dublin, 1874).
919 PRONI Ms.D213/4-102.

of farmers' clubs, activist Catholic priests and tenant-right campaigners, adding land and denominational education to their electoral programmes.[920] Despite this shift in mentality, Butt's speech proposing Home Rule in the House flowed perfectly from the particular kind of ideas discussed at early Association meetings: moderate reform and good governance.[921] Intriguingly, the response from the *Fortnightly Review* was remarkably sympathetic. Although it concluded Home Rule would not work, it determined this by an interesting theory of international relations: Ireland was constitutionally a dependency, and, culturally, still treated as one by Great Britain. Federalism would not answer legitimate Irish grievances.[922]

Even after the putative electoral breakthrough of 1874, Butt still emphasised the importance of dominating Irish public opinion over Westminster intrigue. Certainly the technical, constructive concerns of their early programme remained within the bloc—Robert McDonnell involved himself in discussions over the reform of the Irish judiciary.[923] In 1875 Isaac Butt contextualised the Home Rule campaign with the declaration: 'The day is gone when great questions were carried by Parliamentary debates. Parliament every day is becoming more and more the instrument of carrying into effect the determination of public opinion.'[924] However, the change in method was unsettling for the Conservative members of the old Association. They were no longer certain Home Rule was purely national. The image is not Conservatives being pulled back to their natural centre of gravity, but Conservatives being pushed out by characters and issues with which they could not agree. The initial idea had been to remove Ireland from the snare of Westminster

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920 Laurence McCaffrey, 'Isaac Butt and the Home Rule Movement: a Study in Conservative Nationalism', *Review of Politics*, vol.22, no.1 (January, 1960), pp. 72-95.
921 *Hansard* HC Deb., 20th March 1874, vol.218 cc110-73.
922 Edward A. Freeman, 'Federalism and Home Rule', *Fortnightly Review* vol.16, no.92 (August, 1874), pp.204-15.
923 Butt to McDonnell, 13th June 1874, NLI Ms.18490/1; Robert Lowe to McDonnell, 21st June 1874, NLI Ms.18490/5; Gladstone to McDonnell, 3rd July 1874, NLI Ms.18490/4.
924 Isaac Butt, *The Parliamentary Policy of Home Rule* (Dublin/London, 1875).

self-interest, and no matter how much the Parliamentary Home Rulers retained their initial ethos, they were, fundamentally, Parliamentary Home Rulers.

For all of his federalist language, Butt did open the flagship speech by justifying the idea of Home Rule to the fact that the majority of Irish members supported it. However, as an effective Parliamentary bloc became increasingly viable through the 1870s, it jeopardised the original, inclusive ethos of the HGA. That had always been dedicated to creating an alternative to Parliament, not engaging with Westminster more. Ultimately, the Tory drift from organised Home Rule was not inevitable, but it was not surprising, given the movement's trajectory after 1872. The Home Government Association did not fail because, as David Thornley believed, it was too Orange. It probably was not Orange enough—before Gladstone alienated the Roman Catholic Church with the Vatican Decrees, the most active, organised, and strident opposition in post-disestablishment Ireland came from newly-galvanised Protestant ranks.

Conclusion

The late 1860s and early 1870s were a unique moment in Irish history. The norms of Irish politics collapsed: dispossessed Protestants championed resistance to the Crown, Catholics endorsed Gladstone. Initially, the Union 'was, not (as Pitt had imagined) between Britain and Ireland, but rather between Britain and the Irish Protestant elite.' The Union had been 'an instrument of Protestant ascendancy'. But following waves of reforms (which began with disestablishment), it became 'the mechanism by which successive British governments undertook social experiments of a more radical design than they would have ever countenanced in England.'[925] Before disestablishment, Irish politics followed the same Liberal-Conservative binary of British contests. The Nationalist-Unionist politics that dominated the island after 1868-1874 was both new to Ireland and distinct from Britain. A renewed nationalism cannot be the only aspect of this transition. Articulate expressions of Irish nationality were hardly lacking through the nineteenth-century, whether Repeal, Young Ireland, the Independent Opposition Party, or Fenianism. Irish Federalism did not eclipse established nationalisms, nor did it immediately inaugurate a new party. Crucially, it reacted to numerous antagonisms and tried to forge commonality.

The Home Government Association's self-defined mandate was to moderate a series of conflicts, to be a shared platform ameliorating several contested spheres. The first was the old contest between Protestants and Catholics, the denominational divide through which most politicians and writers tried to explain Irish conflict. By providing a model of Catholic-Protestant unity in their own society the Association undermined that binary. Another (less-recognised) dispute was the nature of British governance: suspect and on trial since the Famine, and dependant on Protestant cooperation. As this thesis showed, the state itself became a contested space when

[925] Alvin Jackson, 'The Survival of the Union', in Joseph Cleary and Claire Connolly (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Irish Culture* (Cambridge, 2005).

groups like the North Dublin Poor Law Union and Dublin Corporation made constitutional declarations, when the *Freeman's Journal* threatened to marshal Catholics into Church of Ireland elections through vestigial laws about parish vestries, when the Church modelled its resistance to the state on the state itself. By discussing practical, substantive aspects of governance the HGA tried to moderate this battle. The final was the quintessential Anglo-Irish conflict, the competing constitutional claims and interests of the two islands, the political status of Ireland within the United Kingdom. In advocating federalism the HGA tried to perfect and stabilise the Union, not create the groundwork for or preamble of its destruction.

The Association itself was a lived political experience. By presenting themselves as a model of cooperation and Irish harmony the HGA's structure and culture were political expressions. They themselves proved that Catholics and Protestants could work together for local governance. This attitude incorporated the sociability, politesse, and clubbability of the eighteenth century into a nineteenth-century extra-Parliamentary mode of public discussion and debate. In many ways this carried the same elements of performance as the Church and its liturgy: a perfected vision of society, a weekly contract between members of the congregation, and between the congregation and ideals, a collective experience renewing shared moral codes and principles. It entirely chimes with the social function of HGA meetings. As this thesis showed, Irish Protestants reacted to British interventions with internal liturgical politics. After disestablishment, the Church's reconstruction inherited this legacy and channeled it into Prayer Book revision and the wider General Synod debates. These became something of an Anglican self-immolation, burning the political energy of some of the most seasoned, able, and prominent Church activists.

The Anglicans who became involved in the HGA were a minority of their communion, and became a minority within their Association. Although a

demographic fringe, theirs were not automatically fringe voices. As much as the General Convention and subsequent Synods provided the critical template of an Irish Parliament (or at least Irish autonomy) they also provided the political focus and semblance of self-governance which others found in the HGA itself. In some ways, Anglican administration provided enough of a political platform and space to distract from the more substantive—yet unrealised—one advocated by the HGA. A classic instance was the new relationship within the Irish Bench. A formal House of Bishops only came into being with the Synods. Disestablishment enabled a significant new space for discussion, created a new mechanism with which the Irish Church responded to evolving politics.[926] Anglican internal democracy was ultimately an interior, distracting force. But this made it no less political: the Synods were such a good training ground they provided real, practical experience to one generation of Irish politicians (who ultimately used this grounding to prevent self-governance).[927]

The real dissociation between Irish Protestants and organised nationalism came from the politics of land, not nationality. The conflation between Church and Landlords was a financial necessity after disendowment: landlords mortgaged property to support the Church, even for things such as small advances on a local rector's pay in advance of his marriage.[928] This made the future existence of the Church of Ireland seem distinctly fragile during the Land War. In 1880, Sir John Leslie, a representative of an old Orange family, stood in a by-election in Monaghan. Before the election he wrote confidently to his wife: 'I have had a terrific week of canvass—making speeches in Schoolhouses crammed with loyal & true Orangemen'. However, after he lost, he ranted:

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926 RCBL, House of Bishops Minute Book.
927 Alvin Jackson, *The Ulster Party: Irish Unionists in the House of Commons, 1884-1911* (Oxford, 1989).
928 Arthur MacMorrough Kavanagh to De Vesci, 7th, 10th, 21st, 24th November 1871, NLI Ms.39005/1; See also NLI Ms.43472/9; NLI Ms.45444/7.

> The whole of my election turned upon the old principle of R. Catholics against Protestants & if our party had remained true to the cause I had won in spite of fifty Tenant Right Bills. But the Presbyterians are more Radical than ever the since the passing of the Land Act & Church Act & consented to go with the Priests for the first time in the history of Elections in this County.

His failure turned on his inability to form a pan-protestant muster. Now the familiar and gloomy strains of Irish landlords from the 1880s pealed out: 'I look upon the representation of this County by a gentleman as gone for ever' as they were 'surrounded by a treacherous & disloyal tenantry.'[929] Land Purchase transformed their world, and its roots were in the state-supported purchase scheme built into disendowment.[930] During the height of the Land War, Lord Cairns passed his torch to the lawyer and Tory young turk Edward Gibson, charging him to see Gladstone's Land Act of 1881 as a continuation of the process begun with disestablishment.[931] Gibson certainly did, but in the way least intended by Cairns—as Lord Ashbourne, in 1885 he engineered the template of the future Land Purchase Acts.

Parnell himself certainly did not forget the symbolism and power of Church of Ireland motifs. At an 1880 Land League meeting in Fermanagh he appealed to that county's Protestant tradition and emphasised his career as a synodsman.[932] The synods were venues for discussion, not the extension of any one ideology. This declaration is not odd in the light of the lauded Protestant tradition of debate, of discursive, campaigning societies, and is also a testament to how the Church's representative structures became central to Anglican political focus. A Belfast rector refused to allow a meeting which 'might assume an ugly political aspect' from using the Church or Schoolhouse, but he did allow it to use the Vestry.[933] Indeed, before Vestry elections during the Land War, a *Gazette* leader

[929] Sir John Leslie to Lady Leslie, 3rd, 6th, 10th, 12th April 1880, PRONI Ms.T3827/9.
[930] Hugh Shearman, 'The Economic Results of the Disestablishment of the Irish Church' (University of Dublin Ph.D. thesis, 1979).
[931] Cairns to Gibson, ND, 1881, PA Ms.ASH/B/23/2-4.
[932] *Glasgow Herald*, 4th January 1881.
[933] Charles H.H. Wright to William Ewart, 25th June 1885, PRONI Ms.DIO1/25G/9.

reminded its readers that '[o]ur status in the land consists in our being the Church of the land, not as representing a majority of the population, but certainly as representing true Apostolic doctrine and Christian discipline.' Maintaining its strong High Church nationality, it charged its readers to support proper Churchmen, not 'merely surpliced Dissenters.'[934]

In the same vein, J.P. Mahaffy predicted a breakdown in social stability following the 1881 Land Act. He concluded that before disestablishment the Anglican clergy could have held together the dispossessed landlords and tenants. But without the Church Establishment society might imminently disintegrate.[935] Similarly, in the 1880s Richard Nugent returned from London to his family's Ulster estate. His Charing Cross office had long been a Church of Ireland outrigger in the imperial capital. Now he counseled Thomas Greene, another stalwart of the antidisestablishment battle,

> the state of things is completely different at the moment, from what it was…when the Irish Church was Disestablished & disendowed. Any opinion formed and supposed at that time, formed upon the supposition that the state of Ireland would continue as it then was, are I need scarcely tell you, at this moment—on the eve of a Revolution—of no value whatever.[936]

Another *Gazette* leader claimed an Anglican duty to improve the country through a 'pure' Christianity: 'The Irish people—we speak of…our countrymen—have sunk to a level of savagedom.…From being an island of saints it has become an island of devils.' It returned to the idea of a home mission: 'Let the General Synod consider…raising an order of well-trained missionary priests, Irish-speaking men…not your well-bred polished and cultured drawing-room clergy'. A separate piece criticised the lack of a special, national St. Patrick's Day service,[937] which the

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[934] *IEG*, 1st April 1882.
[935] J.P. Mahaffy, 'The Irish Landlords', *Contemporary Review*, vol.41, no.1 (January, 1882), pp.160-76.
[936] Copy Nugent to Greene, 9th December 1885, PRONI Ms.D3835/D/3/1/106.
[937] *IEG*, 8th July 1882; 17th March 1883.

nationalist rector George McCutchan had performed since the disestablishment conflict.

Even during the first Home Rule crisis, some Church denunciations of English policy could have come from nationalist propaganda: M.G. Beresford opened the 1885 General Synod with a speech condemning 'the tremendous difficulties thrown in our way for centuries by crooked English Statecraft'.[938] This culminated in a special Synod in March 1886. Called specifically to consider Home Rule, Richard Bagwell stated most English liberals (erroneously) assumed the Irish Parliament would resemble their Synod. W.C. Plunket, then archbishop of Dublin, opened the meeting with an injunction to maintain the open, deliberating character of the synods, declaring that

> [t]his Synod has never recognised party distinctions…and I hope the time will be long distant when our Synod will be degraded into the position of a machine for the carrying out of party tactics or party manoeuvres.... I am sure I express the feelings of many here present when I say that I repel with indignation the idea that those who call themselves Nationalists ought to have a monopoly of patriotism in this land. I would especially urge this aspect of our responsibility upon all who claim for our Church the title of the Church of Ireland.

His final pro-national and anti-Home Rule blow came with the declaration that he opposed Home Rule because its advocates had ulterior motives, but if the desire for an Irish Parliament came 'simply from a strong feeling of nationality, I really think I would be a Home Ruler myself.'[939] There were obvious chimes of Vesey Fitzgerald 16 years earlier, leaving the Home Government Association because it lost its deliberating, non-partisan character to advocate for other causes.

A distinctive Anglican sense of nationality permeated the emergence of what became the near-monoliths of Catholic-Nationalist vs. Protestant-Unionist, despite the Protestant demographic and economic 'long decline' of the nineteenth

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[938] *IEG*, 7th April, 1885.
[939] *The Church of Ireland and the Present Crisis. Report of the Special Meeting of the General Synod, Holden at Dublin. March 23, 1886* (Dublin, 1886).

century,[940] and despite the deterioration of their status and authority.[941] Their reservoir of patriotism had never been contingent on numerical strength, but on a sense of purpose, mission, and elitism: the religious feeling of a privileged minority Church in a hostile island. In their culture, structure, and idealised constitutional vision, the HGA were an eighteenth-century organisation. Irish Protestant nationality initially flowered in that putative golden age, a response to the insecurities and 'anxiety' of the twin threats of Catholic demography and British colonial assumptions. Patriotism impelled Protestants into claiming a self-definition as the 'whole people of Ireland', enforcing their status an equal, sister kingdom.[942] After 1800, they continued to see the Union as a contract, taking a Lockean position. Disestablishment was none other than Britain's breaking that agreement, defaulting and denying the terms of the arrangement.[943]

The failure of the HGA was not the collapse of a weak nationality, but the failure of middle class civil society in Victorian Ireland, the collapse of its politics of debate, deliberation, and consensus. The failure was the inability of the associational model to contain the dynamism and expectations of the mass electorate after 1867, and particularly the Irish electorate after 1872. Nineteenth-century democracy was more powerful than eighteenth-century clubbability. It was a force no bookish, technical public society could resist. Anglican federalists seized a moment that echoed their grandparents, but ultimately a moment became a movement. Home Rule became part of the modern politics of mass-mobilisation. Ironically, in its earliest phase, its architects tried to arrest that destiny. They tried to perfect and stabilise the Union, and, by showing Protestant-Catholic harmony in

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[940] Liam Kennedy, 'The Long Retreat: Protestants, Economy & Society, 1660-1926', *Colonialism, Religion and Nationalism in Ireland* (Belfast, 1996).
[941] Fergus Campbell, *The Irish Establishment, 1879-1906* (Oxford, 2009), pp.243-95.
[942] Thomas Bartlett, 'Protestant Nationalism in Eighteenth-Century Ireland', in Michael O'Dea and Kevin Whelan (eds.), *Nations and NationalisMs: France, Britain, Ireland and the Eighteenth-Century Context* (Oxford, 1995).
[943] David Miller, *Queen's Rebels: Ulster Loyalism in an Historical Perspective* (Dublin, 1978).

their own association, quell the claims of confident Catholic nationalism. In its initial conception, Home Rule tried to fix the boundary to the march of a nation.

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