



**The Rev. Dr. John Edgar D.D. LL.D.
(1820 – 1848)**



Introduction

It takes just five minutes to walk from the front door of Fitzroy down to the River Lagan. It has been flowing for millions of years starting from high up on Slieve Croob in the Mourne mountains, then winding its way down towards Belfast Lough.



The river mirrors the life of Fitzroy and over the last 31 years I have had the privilege of watching the flow of many of your lives. Your faith, love and social passion are evidence of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

In fact, his grace has been flowing through Fitzroy for the last 194 years and in six years time we will celebrate her 200th birthday. Recently a friend told me of an elderly lady who was asked, *“Would you like to reach 100?”* *“Of course!”* she replied, *“especially if I was 99!”*. There’s still a lot of life in Fitzroy; perhaps her greatest days lie ahead.

But how did our church start and what has been happening over the last two centuries?



The Homeless Years : 1813 - 1820

Fitzroy life began in 1813 in Belfast, a fast-growing town of 25,000 people which already had 14 churches (see *Map 1 at Appendix 2*):

- ✦ two Church of Ireland – St. Anne's (1777) and the Chapel of Ease (1811, now called St. George's);
- ✦ two Roman Catholic Chapels – St. Mary's (1783) in Crooked Lane (now Chapel Lane) and a new chapel in Donegall Street (1811);
- ✦ an Independent (Evangelists) Tabernacle (1804, Donegall Street)¹;
- ✦ a Methodist Church (1805, Donegall Square);
- ✦ a Baptist Meeting House (1811, King Street);
- ✦ a Friends' Meeting House (1812, Frederick Street);
- ✦ a Reformed Presbyterian (Covenanters) Meeting House (1812, Old Dublin Road);
- ✦ four Synod of Ulster Presbyterian Meeting House; and
- ✦ one Secession Synod Presbyterian Meeting House (1770, Berry Street).

At that time the Presbyterian family of churches was divided into two groups, the Synod of Ulster with 400,000 members in 250 congregations and the Secession Synod² with 85,000 members in 140 congregations. The Seceders were further divided among themselves into Burghers and Anti-Burghers, that is, conservative and ultra-conservative (*Appendix 1 contains an explanation of these terms*) and these divisions occurred in Belfast. Four large Presbyterian churches belonged to the Synod of Ulster: 1st, 2nd, 3rd were in Rosemary Street while the 4th was in Donegall Street. The First Seceder church, which had anti-burgher sympathies, was located in Berry Street – it was to re-locate to Linen Hall Street in 1839 and then to University Road in 1887, where it adopted the name Crescent Presbyterian Church.



However, in 1813 a struggling Second Seceder congregation emerged with only 22 families, who adhered to the burgher tradition. This was Fitzroy's forerunner. They were independent-minded: they stood aloof from the four large Synod of Ulster churches as well as the ultra-conservative First Seceder Church. For seven years they survived without a church building or a minister of their own. These were the 'homeless' years and they held their services in churches belonging to Covenanters,

Methodists and Independents – see *Map 2 at Appendix 2*. By 1819 they had found a more settled location in a large rented room in the newly-built Commercial Court.

What would you have noticed about them if you had gone along to one of their Sunday Services?

¹ The Independents later became the Congregational Church.

² Their full name being *The Presbyterian Synod of Ulster (distinguished by the name Seceder)*



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Their orthodoxy of belief would have struck you, for they treasured traditional Christian teaching about the Holy Trinity and Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Such beliefs were downplayed in some sections of the Synod of Ulster churches and Unitarian tendencies started to emerge in Belfast's First and Second congregations. Orthodox, therefore, came to mean 'anti-Unitarian'. They were democratic in the government of their congregation. In Scotland, and to a lesser degree in Ireland, wealthy families or estate owners often chose the minister at a time of vacancy. This issue split the Church of Scotland and the Seceders withdrew from fellowship with it, stressing that local believers alone had the right to choose. The members of the Second Secession church valued this and their other rights. They were enthusiastic about their faith and were keen to share it, and it was a faith of the heart rather than of inherited habit. Christ had called them to follow him and they had personally answered his call.

But they were not extreme in their churchmanship for they worshipped in churches belonging to the Covenanters, Methodists and Congregationalists. They were uncomfortable with those mainline churches that were drifting towards Unitarianism, but they were equally uncomfortable with the ultra-conservatism of some Seceder congregations.



However, these 'homeless years' were soon to change for Belfast's Second Seceder congregation. In 1820 they pleaded with the United Secession Synod to give them a minister to lead them more effectively into serving the increasing numbers of people flocking into Belfast from the countryside. Despite opposition to their request from the First Secession church in Berry Street, permission was granted, and John Edgar was appointed. He was born in 1798 in Ballykine, near Ballynahinch. He came from a devout Christian home and his father, the Rev. Samuel Edgar, was minister of the Secession church in Ballynahinch (now Edengrove). His mother was Elizabeth McKee.

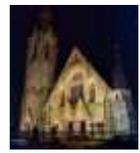
He was educated in his father's Academy held in the manse at Ballykine. In his early teens he felt God's call to the ministry. Although he rarely revealed his inner life, he tells us how one day he talked over his sense of calling with his father during a walk through the forest. Having listened carefully to his son, his father asked him to kneel down on the grass and pray. As his father prayed John Edgar knew that becoming a minister was his destiny.



He loved Classics and Mathematics and gained entrance to Glasgow University. On graduating, he returned home to study at the newly opened Belfast Academical Institution, which, in 1815 had added a Collegiate section for the training of Presbyterian ministers. Here John Edgar studied under his father Samuel, the Professor of Theology appointed by the United Secession Synod.



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The Alfred Street Years : 1820 - 1848

Having completed his studies he received a call from the tiny Second Seceder congregation meeting in Commercial Court. He accepted and on 14th November 1820, at the age of 23, he was ordained as their minister in the Independents' Meeting House in Donegall Street, which was kindly granted for the occasion. The 22 families in the congregation were poor. They could just about pay the rent and the salary of their new minister. When they discussed building their own church, the figure of £500 was far beyond their means. With a vision and energy that were to characterise his ministry, John agreed to go on a fund-raising tour to churches in England and Scotland. Such initiatives were quite common for poorer congregations. He boarded a boat at Belfast Harbour and headed off across the Irish Sea. Using all his passionate eloquence, he moved so many hearts that when he returned to Belfast several months later he had a list of over 2,000 donors whom he had persuaded to support his vision. With this generous outside support and their own fund-raising efforts, his zealous flock raised the £500 in only 13 months. Afterwards, he often said that:

"...it was collected in half-crowns [12½ pence in today's currency], or in coins of even smaller magnitude and value ..." From "Memoir of John Edgar" by W. D. Killen³



*Advert in the Belfast News Letter
(5th January 1822)*

On Sunday 6th January 1822, Alfred Place Meeting House (with a capacity of 250 people) was opened for Public Worship. The Rev. John Rogers of Glascar preached at noon and the Rev. John Reid of Drumbanagher in the evening. The event was advertised in the Belfast News Letter.



Rev. John Rogers

At that time, the church was just 150 metres behind the White Linen Hall (the site of the present City Hall) and was considered to be on the outskirts of Belfast. It was built on the bed of an old milldam that had been a popular resort for skaters during harsh winters. At the opening ceremony, the ushers laid planks along the ground so that those attending could access the building. They were warned to walk carefully, for should they slip, they would sink a foot into the foul-smelling mud. There were no reports of missing persons! Slowly, new families joined the church, drawn by the forceful preaching of their new pastor. He also often used a room at the church for lectures. Meanwhile, John Edgar had met and fallen in love with Susanna Grimshaw, the daughter of an influential Whitehouse merchant. They were married on 24th September 1828 and had a number of children. Their manse is visible beside the Alfred Street Meeting House (*picture on page 8*). This good news was tempered by the death of his father, who had been Professor of Theology at the Belfast Academical Institution for 10 years, on 17th October 1826. The next month, the Secession Synod invited John Edgar to take over his post.

³ Rev. Dr. William Dool Killen (1806 – 1902), Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Pastoral Theology at The Presbyterian College, Belfast and its President from 1869.



The Rev. Dr. John Edgar



The Social Reformer



by Samuel Hawksett (1765-1851)
Presented to Dr. & Mrs. Edgar
by Alfred Street Meeting House



As John Edgar visited the homes of the urban poor living around his church, he was moved by the social devastation being caused by alcohol abuse. He had witnessed similar problems in the countryside around Ballykine, but nothing on the scale that now confronted him. His distress transformed him into a social reformer stirred by the love of Christ. He was convinced that only a massive popular movement could turn things around. The 1846 portrait of John Edgar captures him as a fearless prophet gripped by an inner fire kindled by God: he holds in his left hand the big social issues of his day; his clenched fist pounds his heart; his stare confronts evil; he is on his feet battling for change. Such dynamic faith is recorded in Scripture, but here it was expressing itself on the streets of Belfast. His stance and the rolled-up document in his left hand also indicate that John Edgar was a renowned preacher and public speaker. The book lying flat on the table has the title “Temperance Advocate” whilst the unsealed letter on top of it is a reference to his prodigious public and private correspondence on a variety of philanthropic activities. The upright row of books denotes his reputation as an academic. The two leaves under the book bear the words “Christian Assurance” and “Equality” which relate to his work with various Christian agencies (see the list on page 8). The scrolls in front of the inkwell bear the titles “Anti-Slavery Institution” and “Seamen’s Friends Society”. The rolled up scroll bears the words “Institution” and “Female”, a reference to Edgar’s work with destitute and fallen women.

In August 1829 he submitted a letter (see *Appendix 3*) on Temperance issues to the *Belfast Guardian* and the *Belfast News Letter* newspapers – the former refused to publish the letter but the latter printed it on 14th August 1829 and the Ulster Temperance Society was subsequently launched. The *Belfast News Letter* also reported on a public temperance meeting that John Edgar addressed (*Appendix 3*). He always kept a cask of whiskey at the manse for personal use, but



to show that he meant business, he took it outside and smashed it on the pavement. He began to address public meetings and gathered many to his cause. Invitations for him to speak flowed in from all over Ireland. At first people dismissed him as a fanatic. Whiskey was considered to be a necessity of life. It was common for a minister to be offered ‘a wee glass’ to warm him up before preaching and another to calm him down when he had finished. It was a respected social custom to offer guests who came to your home, not a cup of tea but a dram of whiskey. To refuse such a welcoming gesture was considered rude. John Edgar’s blunt style of speaking impacted large numbers of people.



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Crowds were in tears as he spoke from personal experience of neglected families, starving children, domestic violence and broken homes. He urged high and low, rich and poor to change their lifestyles, give up 'ardent spirits' and adopt a life of temperance. Within four months, 25 temperance societies were set up around Belfast and 800 people committed themselves to the cause. As time passed, people began to ban whiskey consumption at wakes and funerals. One third of the men in his

own congregation worked in the whiskey trade, but within ten years almost all of them had changed their occupations or left the congregation. Ministers of every denomination joined his crusade and slowly the medical profession gave him their professional backing. They were witnessing firsthand the damaging effects of whiskey on the bodies and minds of those they were treating. As Edgar's mission became more widely known he was invited to England and Scotland as well.



Closely associated with alcohol abuse was the exploitation of young women coming into Belfast from the country in search of work. Many were caught in the poverty trap, were tempted into the sex industry and forced to stay in it until early death claimed their lives. At the beginning of the 19th century there were 59 brothels and 236 prostitutes operating in Belfast, and pimps manipulated the vulnerability of their victims.

Accompanied by the local police, John Edgar and other concerned citizens visited the brothels to talk to the women. He sought their views on how to get them out of the misery and into a safe environment where they could rebuild their confidence and find work. The outcome was the creation of an institution for "fallen women" – the Ulster Female Penitentiary⁴, located in Brunswick Street, was officially opened on 18th August 1839, with admissions taking place from November of that year – in the first fourteen months, fifty four females were admitted and none were refused.⁵

"One most valuable improvement has been fully carried out in this Institution—that of separate and detached sleeping rooms; each penitent has a small chamber *of her own*; this at once gives her an impression that she—so late the outcast and despised—has recovered an inheritance; her room, large enough to hold her bed, table, chair, and, from its height, certain of a healthy temperature, *is her own*; a spot where she can retire to, where she can think, and read, and pray, and weep without being observed; where she can commune with her own heart, think over the past, and even *hope* for the future; there she cannot be disturbed—the house is her refuge—her asylum, but the room is *her own—HER HOME*.

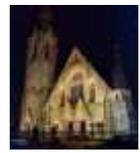
From "Memorial of John Edgar" by W. D. Killen

⁴ Whilst usually meaning prison, in this context the word penitentiary refers to the *penitent* nature of women who wanted to turn their lives around and move in a new direction.

⁵ At some time between 1880 and 1901, the institution became known as **The Edgar Home**



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John Edgar also played a prominent role in a variety of other social and philanthropic endeavours (some of whose names sound quaint to our modern ears, but met very definite human need), including:

- The Destitute Sick Society;
- Belfast Anti-Slavery Society;
- Ulster Institute for the Deaf, Dumb & Blind;
- Belfast District Lunatic Asylum for Down and Antrim;
- Asylum of Idiots;
- Presbyterian Orphan Society;
- The Bible Society;
- Seamen's Friends Society (which later established the Sinclair Seamen's Church);
- Ulster Religious Tract & Book Society;
- The Reformation Society; and
- The Belfast Town Mission



Church Growth and New Directions

Despite the increasing demands on his time, John Edgar's congregation in Alfred Place was bursting at the seams. It could only hold 300 people. Membership had risen to 180 families and so the Kirk Session took the decision to build a new 700-seater Meeting House – literally 50 metres round the corner in Alfred Street. The new imposing and, for the Secession Synod, rather grandiose Meeting House (built with cellars for the stabling of horses during services and an adjacent manse at a total cost of £2,150) was opened on 8th January 1837, the address being delivered by the Rev. Dr. Mitchell of Glasgow. The church was built of brick and the Ionic Portico imitated the near-by May Street Meeting House, which had been completed in 1829.



Alfred Street Meeting House

NEW
Presbyterian Meeting-House.

THE MEETING-HOUSE erected in ALFRED-STREET, Belfast, by Professor EDGAR'S Congregation, will be Opened for Public Worship, on SABBATH, January 8th, 1837, at Half-past ONE o'clock, when a SERMON will be preached by the Rev. Doctor MITCHELL, Professor of Divinity, Glasgow.

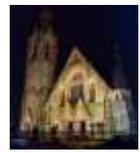
Tickets of Admission at One Shilling each, to be had at Messrs James Weir & Co's, and Mr. Phillip's, Bridge-street; the Tract Depository, Waring-street; Messrs. Colville and Arnold's, and Mr. M-Comb's, High-street; Mr. Carson's, Corn-Market; Mr. Edgar's, Ann-street; and Mr. Druitt's, Arthur-street.

A COLLECTION will be taken, to assist in defraying the expense incurred by the erection of the House.

Advert in the Northern Whig (7th January 1837)



The Rev. Dr. John Edgar



The opening of the new meeting house received coverage in the Belfast News Letter and the Northern Whig newspapers.

NEW PRESBYTERIAN MEETING-HOUSE.—The elegant place of worship, lately erected by the Rev. Dr. Edgar's Congregation, in Alfred-street, was, on Sunday, opened for Divine service. The Rev. Dr. Mitchell, of Glasgow, Professor of Theology to the Scottish Secession Church, preached, in the morning and evening, to crowded audiences. The Rev. Preacher chose for his text, in the morning, 1st Cor. iii. 16, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God?" In the evening, his text was Psalm lxxxvii. 5, "And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the Highest himself shall establish her." The following gentlemen acted as collectors: Rev. A. C. Macartney, George Dunbar, Esq., M.P., Robert James Tennent, Esq., and James Macaulay, Esq. The collections, on both occasions, amounted to nearly £90.—*Chronicle.*

Northern Whig (9th January 1837)

OPENING OF DR. EDGAR'S MEETING-HOUSE.—The new House of worship in Alfred-street, connected with the Presbyterian Synod of Ireland, was opened on Sabbath last for public worship by the Rev. Dr. Mitchell, Professor of Divinity, Glasgow. His discourses were of a very appropriate character, chaste, judicious, and solemn, avoiding every subject calculated to give needless offence, and yet holding forth boldly and without compromise the word of life. The audience at both services was respectable and numerous; in the evening the house was crowded in every part. The house itself was a subject of universal admiration. The following gentlemen acted as collectors in the morning:—The Rev. Arthur C. Macartney, Vicar of Belfast, George Dunbar, Esq. M.P. Robert James Tennent, Esq. J.P. Counsellor Gilson, James Macaulay, Esq. J.P. George J. Clarke, Esq. J.P.; and in the evening, Dr Arrott, and Robt. Halliday, Wm. McCounell, Charles Thomson, John Bottomly, Thos. Hardy, and Henry Reid, Esqrs. —The collection amounted to about a hundred and twenty-five pounds, including the price of tickets of admission and the following sums from Gentlemen who were not able to attend as collectors:—Lord Templetown £1, Col. Ward £1, David Maceer, Esq. Manchester £5, Edward Johnson, Esq. £1, Richard Blakiston, Esq. £1, Robt. Langtry, Esq. £1.

Belfast News Letter (9th January 1837)

Whilst the Seceders generally held a lower social status than their brethren in the Synod of Ulster, John Edgar believed that the architectural attractions of the Alfred Street Meeting House had rendered his communion less unfashionable:

"John Edgar was wont to say jocosely that the grand pillars in front of his new church produced the union between the Secession and the Synod of Ulster."

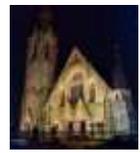
From "Memoir of John Edgar" by W. D. Killen

One of the enduring issues facing the Synod of Ulster was that of Unitarian tendencies within some congregations. This was finally resolved at a Special Meeting of the Synod of Ulster in Cookstown in 1829. 18 Ministers and 197 Elders withdrew to form the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Doctrinal barriers and suspicions were now removed between the Synod of Ulster and the United Secession Synod. Ministers and elders on both sides pleaded for the ending of the divisions that had lasted a century. John Edgar was at the forefront of this movement for reconciliation and was recognised as apostle of unity – the high approval in which he was held by good men in the Synod of Ulster also helped to heal the divisions. On 10th of July 1840 the desired Union was formed and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland was born.

The first Moderator after the formation of the General Assembly was the Synod of Ulster's Dr Samuel Hanna and he was succeeded by Dr. Henry Cooke. But so significant was the healing role played by John Edgar within the Secession Synod that he was chosen as Moderator in 1842. His term in office coincided with the 200th anniversary of the first Irish Presbytery in Carrickfergus in 1642 and he launched a church-wide fund to support the sharing of the Gospel in Ireland. He began to travel extensively throughout the island and was particularly concerned for its most impoverished parts.

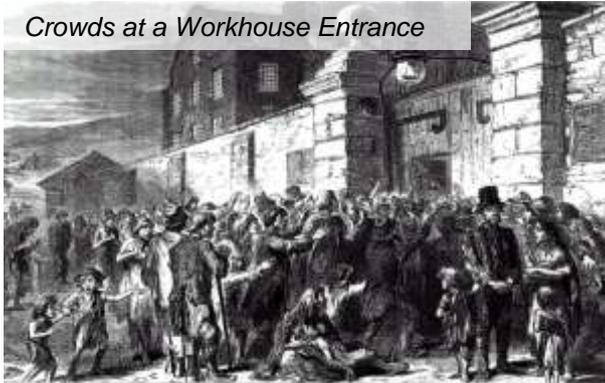


The Rev. Dr. John Edgar



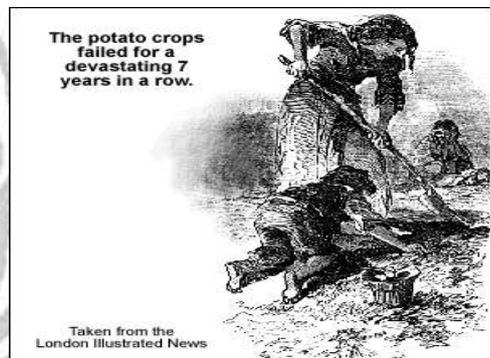
The Great Famine: 1845 – 1847

Crowds at a Workhouse Entrance



In 1846 John Edgar paid an extended visit to Connaught where he watched the onset of the Great Famine with its devastating impact on the country's most vulnerable people. He penned a letter, '**A Cry from Connaught**', to the Presbyterian community pleading for immediate relief for the local Catholic people. He watched as many hammered on the doors of the workhouses and thousands of others died around him. When his

letter was first published in November 1846 it had an immediate impact. 26,000 copies were rapidly circulated throughout Ulster and the response to the call for relief was huge. John Edgar was instrumental in establishing and supporting the **Belfast Ladies Relief Association for Connaught** and the **Belfast Relief Fund for Ireland**. Running alongside relief initiatives, he saw the need to provide basic education for the young as a way out of economic deprivation.



He was behind the formation of Irish Language Industrial Schools, which were supported financially by the General Assembly and staffed largely by local catholic teachers. In one area that he subsequently visited there were 107 Irish Schools with 5,000 young people seizing opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills to obtain employment that was not dependent on the land.

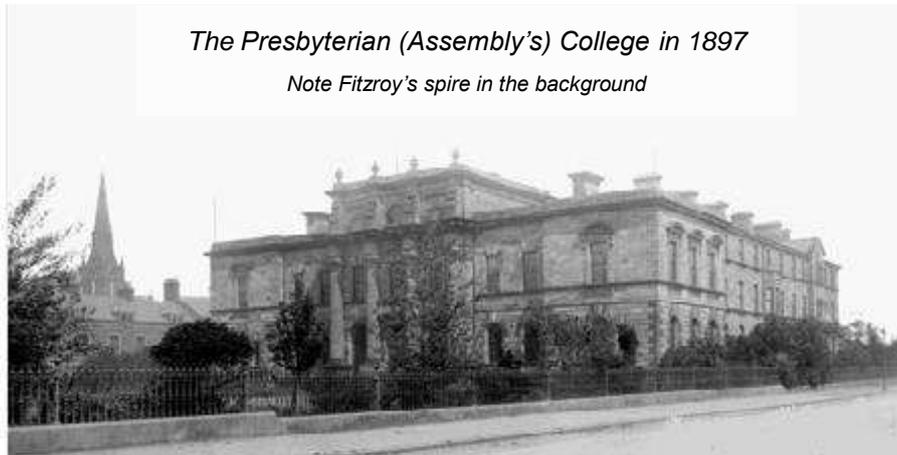
The Presbyterian College Years

A short time later John Edgar's life was to move in a new direction. In 1847 the General Assembly decided that ministers should concentrate on only one task – either their congregations or some other recognised ministry. As a result, in 1848 he reluctantly took the decision to resign from Alfred Street church, which he had pastored for 28 years, and focus his energies on teaching as a Professor of Theology.

As a result of the clash over Trinitarian and Unitarian perspectives, the Synod of Ulster and Secession Synod had withdrawn from the Belfast Academical Institution in 1829. The two synods had subsequently held their theological classes in a variety of temporary locations, including Fisherwick Place Church and the Alfred Place Meeting House.



The Rev. Dr. John Edgar



The Presbyterian (Assembly's) College in 1897

Note Fitzroy's spire in the background

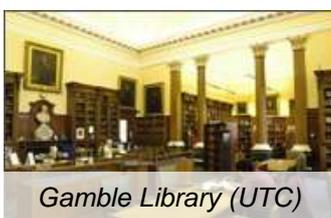
In December 1853 professors and students migrated from downtown Belfast to Botanic Avenue where the Presbyterian College – it soon became known as Assembly's College – was opened for ministerial training. Dr. Merle D'Aubigné, Professor of Reformation History at Geneva, gave the Inaugural Address during which (as W.D. Killen records in his "Memoir of John Edgar"):

"he declared, before one of the most brilliant audiences ever congregated in the capital of Ulster, that he would rather be the author of "The Cry from Connaught" than any of the volumes that he had written."

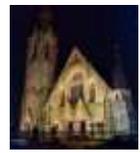
Here Professor John Edgar exercised the final eleven years of ministry in the company of five other distinguished colleagues. During this time, Dr. Edgar resided at 6 University Square and, later, 20 University Square.



*The Faculty of Presbyterian College c. 1863
From left: Prof WD Killen, Prof JL Porter,
Prof H Cooke (president), Prof J Edgar,
Prof W Gibson, Prof JG Murphy*



To this day, his dramatic portrait in the Union Theological College's Gamble Library looks down on the lives of busy students. Those who take the time to look up and explore the story of his life cannot help but be amazed at what his spiritual energy and socially focussed faith in Jesus Christ accomplished.



John Edgar's Death

Edgar—August 26, at Cremorne, Rathgar, Dublin, the Rev. John Edgar, D.D., LL.D., Professor of Theology, Presbyterian College, Belfast, aged 69 years. His remains will be removed for interment from the Belfast Terminus of the Ulster Railway, at one o'clock, on Wednesday, the 29th inst.

Dr. Edgar's death notice

Belfast News Letter (27th August 1866)

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE LATE DR. EDGAR.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NORTHERN WHIG.

SIR,—I think the man whose remains were interred this day in the presence of so vast a crowd of ministers and laity should not want a monument to his memory. Surely the Presbyterians of Belfast and Ulster, and the friends of the temperance cause, would gladly give the money to have a becoming monument raised over the grave of John Edgar?

All that is needed is the formation, at once, of a small committee. Funds will be given freely when it is known where to send them.
A PRESBYTERIAN,
Wednesday Evening.

Northern Whig (30th August 1866)

On Sunday 26th August 1866 John Edgar died at Rathgar, in Dublin at the age of 68 (although death notices in the press and the plaque on his coffin said he was 69!). He had gone there to be treated for a serious throat ailment. On Wednesday 29th August his body was returned home by train, arriving at the Belfast Terminus of the Ulster Railway at 1.00 pm.

His funeral received extensive coverage in the Northern Whig newspaper (*reproduced at Appendix 4*). In addition to over 100 Presbyterian ministers (representing 20 Presbyteries of the General Assembly), there were clerics from a wide variety of denominations as well as representatives from the civic and business communities. Thousands of people from all walks of life greeted the cortege with a silence that spoke of their respect for one who had touched so many lives in practical ways. They walked behind the horse-drawn hearse three miles up the Lisburn Road to Balmoral Cemetery where he was laid to rest. The funeral was conducted by the Moderator of the General Assembly, the Rev. Dr. David Wilson of Limerick, assisted by John Edgar's close friend, the Rev. John H Moore of Elmwood Presbyterian Church, and his colleague (and neighbour) in Assembly's College, the Rev. Dr. James G Murphy, Professor of Hebrew.

Immediately after the funeral, Sir Edward Coey suggested a subscription should be solicited towards the establishment of a scholarship in memory of Dr. Edgar:

"This proposal met with a hearty response; and, in a very short time, the greater part of the sum was forthcoming. The "Edgar Scholarship" will be the most valuable yet established in Belfast Presbyterian College."

From "Memoir of John Edgar" by W. D. Killen



The Rev. Dr. John Edgar



The Edgar Family Memorial

A large granite memorial obelisk to the memory of various members of John Edgar's family was subsequently erected over his grave. Each face of the obelisk bears a memorial tablet and John Edgar's starts with words from the Book of Proverbs 10:7 – "***The memory of the just is blessed.***"

It is a short walk from the manse, where my family and I live, to the cemetery. Twice a year I visit his grave and stand there with a sense of awe at the legacy of his faith. I am usually praying that



the living Christ who inspired John Edgar's life will continue to inspire Fitzroy to believe and become channels of grace, instruments of peace, and servants of joy today.

As I think of all of you who worship in Fitzroy today I know that Christ is active among us and that the river of his grace is still flowing through us into our community and world. This makes me very happy, and deep in my heart I know that it puts an approving smile on John Edgar's face as well.



Rev. John Edgar



Appendix 1 – A Brief Explanation of the terms “Seceder” and “Burgher”

Seceder : this section within the Presbyterian Family represented those who opposed the practice of “patronage” – i.e. the selection of the Ruling Elder (or Minister) by the local landowner. The seceders believed that a congregation should choose (or “call”) its own minister and tended to be theologically orthodox and warmer and more devotional than their brethren in the Synod of Ulster. Their insistence on the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Trinitarian nature of the Godhead, with its explicit rejection of “unitarian” and “arian” viewpoints, impeded the unification of the Secession Synod with the Synod of Ulster – this obstacle was removed in 1829 when the Synod of Ulster decided to adhere to Presbyterian orthodoxy (the ministers and congregations that leaned towards Unitarian and arian beliefs withdrew to form the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church) and the two synods united in 1840 to form the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church and the Reformed Presbyterian (Covenanters) Church maintained their own Assemblies or Synods.

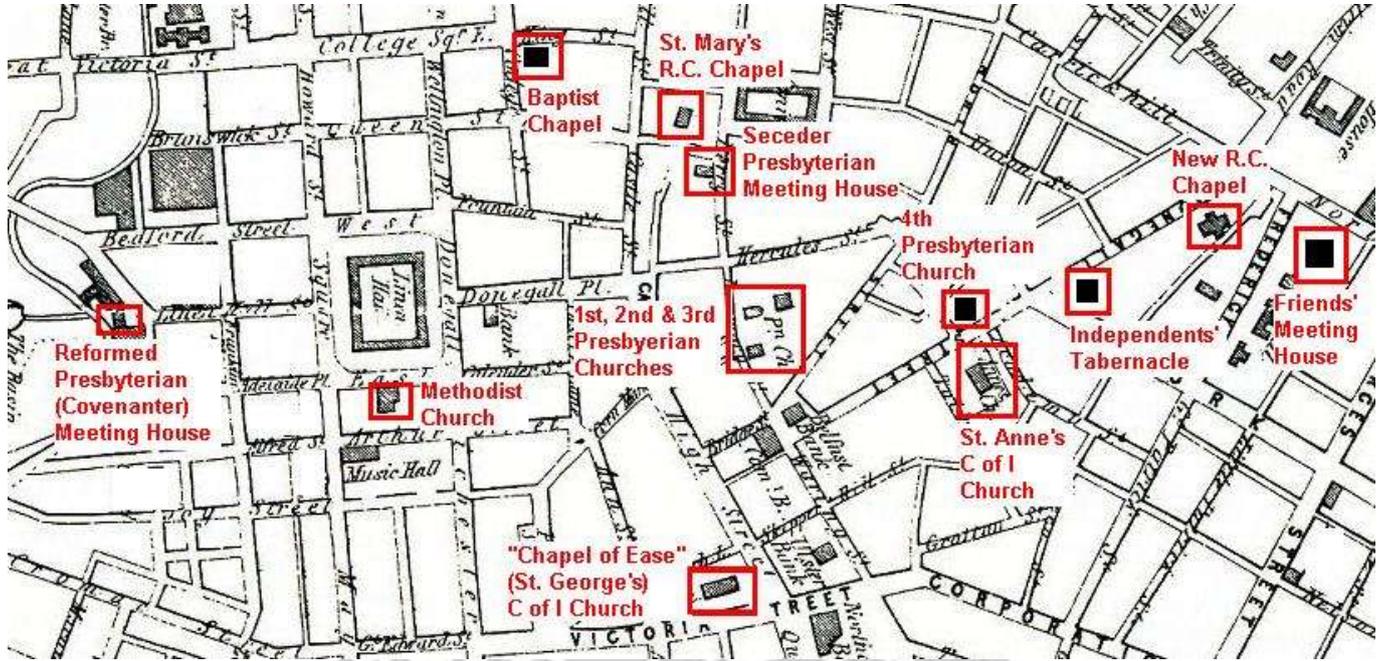
Burgher : within the secession stream there was a further division in 1747 over the issue of the Burgher Oath, in which the Hanoverian Government (reacting to the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion) required burgesses and holders of public offices to affirm approval/loyalty of the “**true religion presently professed in this realm**”. However, it was unclear whether the phrase “**true religion**” referred to the protestant religion generally or specifically to the Established (i.e. Anglican or Episcopalian) Church. The issue was civil compulsion in religious affairs and was effectively a forerunner of the arguments over the separation of church and state. Those who believed that the oath referred to Protestantism in general were known as “Burghers” and were prepared to accept the oath whilst those who felt it to be an oath of loyalty to the Established Church of England were known as “Anti-Burghers”, showing a distinctive independence of conviction and unwillingness to compromise over sincerely held beliefs. There was a tendency for the anti-burgher stance to be taken by people who were more affluent and, therefore, more likely to hold public office or become burgesses.

Although the Burgher Oath was not administered in Ulster, the Secession Synod of Ulster churches took sides in the debate that raged within the Mother Church in Scotland, resulting in splits within congregations. The Berry Street (First Belfast Seceder) Meeting House held the anti-burgher view and group of families with burgher sympathies withdrew in 1813 and later formed the Second Seceder Congregation (from which Fitzroy grew). In 1818 the two streams within the Secession Synod resolved their differences – the burgher dispute church in Scotland was not resolved until 1820.

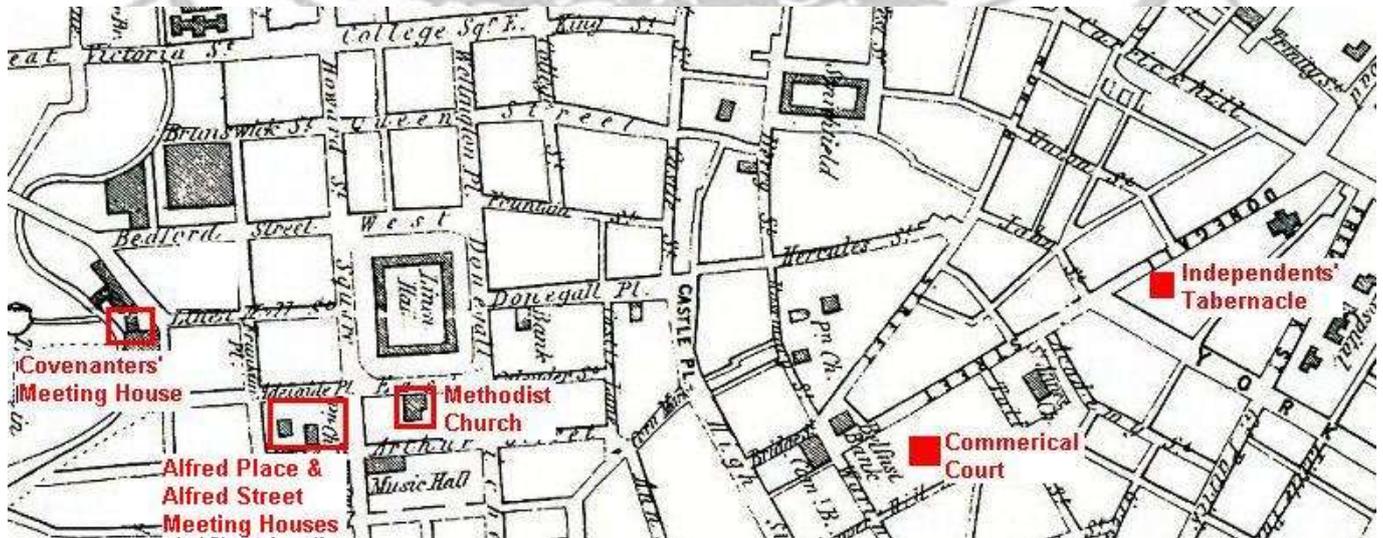


Appendix 2 – Church Locations⁶

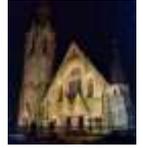
Map 1 – Location of Belfast Churches in 1813



Map 2 – Meeting Locations for the 2nd Seceder Congregation



⁶ Note – These maps detail Belfast City Centre streets in 1861



Appendix 3 – First Temperance Letter & Temperance Article

(The Belfast News Letter on 14th August 1829 - re-produced in full in "Memoir of John Edgar" by W. D. Killen)

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEWS-LETTER.

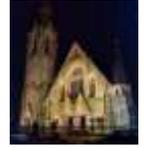
Sir—My own attention, and I trust that of the public, has been arrested by notices in your late numbers respecting efforts made in Belfast for promoting the sanctification of the Sabbath. It appears that these efforts have been directed to such abuses of the Sabbath as the sailing of steam-boats, the keeping of news-rooms open, the running of stage coaches and other vehicles, the unnecessary exposure to sale of various articles, and, worse than all, the sale and use of spirituous liquors. From the peculiar efforts made to abolish this last evil, there seems to be a just impression respecting its enormity and aggravation. It is not my intention, at present, to enter into any discussion respecting the nature or probable efficacy of the means of reform now in operation. I shall take for granted, that by means of the penalties of the civil law, we shall be able to stop all unnecessary travelling, and to close the doors of all dram-shops on the Sabbath. But, Sir, will you or any benevolent man be content with this?—“No.” You will say—“All experience has shown that cessation from labour, without religious and moral instruction, results in dissipation and excess, more injurious to mind and body than unintermitted toil. The Sabbath, as a mere holiday, has always exerted a most terrific, demoralizing influence, and there is no alternative for man, but to keep it holy, or waste away by the toil or the dissipation of its violation.—To promote the true sanctification of the Sabbath, the means employed must be moral. To promote a genuine, and not an external, transient reformation, the means of moral reformation must be employed, the impartial merits of scriptural argument, which address equally the rich and poor, the titled Nobleman and the common pauper. To promote a general reformation, there must be a general influencing of public feeling. You have, for this purpose, much in your power. Begin the work, and you will be supported. To attack single-handed, and at once, the whole host of Sabbath-breakers might be dangerous. Let there be then a division of labour, and commence with the most flagrant and inveterate cause of profanation. The sale and use of intoxicating liquors. Now, it is evident, that we never can obtain an effectual and permanent cure for this destructive sin, except by preventing habitual drinking on other days of the week as well as the Sabbath, and by promoting, throughout the community, on all days of the week, habits of temperance. No sober man will question, that the improper use of intoxicating liquors has been found by experience to be the source of evils of incalculable magnitude, both as to the temporal and eternal interests of individuals, families and communities; that the prevalence of this vice has a fatal efficacy in hindering the success of all the common means which God has appointed for the moral and religious improvement of men, and that the various measures which the friends of Christian morality have adopted, though not altogether unsuccessful, have been found quite insufficient to give any effectual and permanent check to this dastardly evil. It is absolutely necessary, therefore, that some system of instruction and of action should be immediately adopted, calculated to make a steady and powerful impression on the present and following generations; and by thus ultimately effecting a change of public sentiment and practice, in regard to the use of intoxicating liquors, put an end to that widely spreading intemperance, which has already caused such desolation in every part of our country, and which threatens destruction to the best interests of this great kingdom. Such a proposal, I know, will be received as Quixotic, by a great number of sober men. They will bid me count the number of distilleries, spirit stores and dram-shops in the kingdom; the number of rich and poor, the trade and business of whose life is drinking; the multitudes of sober men—men never seen drunk, who drink more ardent spirits than would kill half a dozen men of common constitution; the numbers of very temperate men, who consider a daily portion of ardent spirits absolutely necessary to their bodily health, for cooling them when they are warm, and warming them when they are cold; giving them an appetite, helping digestion, and insuring them sound sleep. All this, Sir, and far, far more, I see standing mountain high in the road of reformation; but all this, and far, far more, cries aloud upon every temperate man, every benevolent man, for prompt and decided exertion. Let it be distinctly understood, as a first prin-



...ple in commencing reformation, that it is not necessary, for insuring success, to reform the present generation of drunkards. It is not with them, but with the temperate members of society, that we have at first to deal. And here is our argument to them. It is impossible that the manufacture and sale of spirituous liquors can be supported by drunkards alone. If you that are temperate unite against the trade, it must go down. The present generation of drunkards may give it a feeble support for a time, but it will be buried in their graves. As you are temperate men, therefore, the relinquishing of the use of ardent spirits must be to you a small sacrifice; and knowing, as you readily may, that the support or ruin of drunkenness is in your power, you cannot refuse to make a small sacrifice for promoting an incalculable good. If you refuse—one of two positions must be true, that you are not temperate, or not benevolent. I fear not, therefore, to proclaim to the world, that it is completely and perfectly in the power of the temperate members of the community to destroy drunkenness for ever.

This assertion is not made in the spirit of idle speculation or of blind zeal. I appeal to facts. I rest on a vast mass of incontrovertible evidence, extracts from which I intend, with your permission, to lay from time to time, before the public. A portion of this evidence will be taken from public and authenticated accounts of the success which has attended the labours of 'Temperance Societies,' of the United States of North America. These Societies, entertaining views which I have in some cases stated almost in their own words, have set the following noble and praiseworthy objects before them: To make appropriate communitations, by pamphlets, correspondence, and personal interviews, to ministers of the gospel, to physicians and others; and to consult and co-operate with them for the purpose of annulling those under their influence against the evils of intemperance; to take pains in all proper methods, to make a reasonable and salutary impression in relation to this subject, on those who are favoured with a public and refined education, and are declined in various ways to have a leading influence in society; to make it a serious object to introduce into the publications of the day essays and addresses on the subjects of intoxicating liquors, and to induce teachers, and those concerned in the support of schools, to labour diligently to impress the minds of the young with the alarming and dreadful evils to which all are exposed who indulge themselves in the use of strong drink; to make affective and earnest addresses to Christian Churches, to parents and guardians, to children, apprentices and servants, and all other descriptions of persons; and to set clearly before them the effect of spirituous liquors on health, on reputation, and on all the temporal and eternal interests of man, and to urge them by the most weighty arguments, drawn from the present and future world, to keep themselves at a distance from this insidious and destructive foe; to do whatever is practicable and expedient towards forming voluntary associations, for the purpose of promoting the ends of the Societies; and, in general, to labour, by all suitable means, and in reliance upon the divine blessing, to fix the eyes of persons of both sexes and of all ages and conditions on the magnitude of the evil which the Societies aim to prevent, and on the immeasurable good which they aim to secure; and to produce such a change of public sentiment, and such a renovation of the habits of individuals, and the customs of the community, that, in the end, intemperance, with all its attendant blessings, may universally prevail.

Now, Sir, it will not be necessary for me to compare the obstacles to the success of these societies with those which would be encountered, should similar societies be established in our country. It will be sufficient for me to quote a passage from an address, delivered before the New Hampshire Medical Society, in 1821, by their President, W. D. Mearns, M. D. “By the Marshal’s return,” says he, “in 1810, it appears that we had then thirty-three millions, three hundred and sixty five thousand, five hundred and twenty-nine gallons of spirits were distilled and imported for a single year’s consumption in the United States; and there is little doubt that this catalogue is far short of the truth, as there is, probably, every year, a considerable quantity smuggled into the country of which no account is given. If, from that time, the consumption of ardent spirits has only kept pace with the population, it will amount to fifty-six millions of gallons; but, from the increase in the consumption, says a distinguished gentleman of our time, in an elaborate calculation, from which the following results are taken, we may safely set it down at sixty millions. This will give to every individual man, woman, and child, including bond and free, five gallons each. Deducting the slaves and children under ten years of age, it will give to the rest not less than



Appendix 3 (continued)

Article on Temperance Meeting

Belfast News Letter

6th October 1829

engagements such. The American Temperance Societies had to commence their work then on a population, each of whom drank at an average, eight gallons of ardent spirits annually. If poor Ireland be worse than this, it is bad enough truly! And what, notwithstanding all obstacles and opposition, have these societies done? The second anniversary of the American Society for the promotion of Temperance, was held at Boston, in Jan. 1829, and, in its reports, (only the second since the establishment of the society), I find the following facts, amidst a vast number of others of the same nature:—Nearly five hundred societies, containing 25,000 members, for promoting temperance by every means in their power, have been established in the United States. Since their establishment, there are upwards of five hundred well authenticated instances of habitual drunkards reformed. Great numbers have adopted the principle of entire abstinence from intoxicating liquors. Many merchants and mechanics, who formerly traded, some of them largely, in ardent spirits, have, from conscientious scruples, abandoned the trade altogether. Resolutions to abstain from ardent spirits, have been passed by thirty-four Synods, Presbyteries, Methodist Conferences, and other religious bodies; by twenty-five militia companies, and by the officers of four regiments; by ten medical societies, and by all the lawyers in the counties of Essex and Morris, New Jersey. All the lawyers in the county of Berkshire, Massachusetts, at the circuit court in Lennox, in Nov. last, removed ardent spirits from their tables, and directed the keepers of the houses where they were accustomed to board, to supply them no more. The house of representatives of the New-Hampshire Legislature, by a resolution, agreed to a similar abstinence during their session. The consumption of ardent spirits has been diminished one half in New England, and one third throughout the remainder of the United States of North America. I shall not occupy your columns farther, by making any commentary on these simple undeniable facts. Can nothing, then, be done for Ireland? I fearlessly answer, and I trust every patriotic Irishman—every good man will answer with me—*There can—there must.* I repeat again, and thus for the present close, that it is at this moment in the power of the temperate part of the community to put an end to the intemperance of the day. Let the temperate but forsake the use of intoxicating liquors and the whole trade of distilling and selling and using will cease.—It is the countenance which they give to the trader that upholds him in respectability, and enables him to sell to the drunkard. No man would engage in a trade that had none but drunkards to support it—no man could maintain a business who had only drunkards for customers. Again, and again, therefore, I say, let temperate men give the trade no countenance, and at once it is a shattered wreck, on which no wise man would trust a foot, and which will assuredly go to the bottom. Up then and be doing, men of patriotism, men of piety; a tide of intemperance, rising every hour, is hurrying all moral and religious institutions before it, up and be doing, now, or weep when all is over, on the closed grave of your country's glory. This subject is deeply interesting to men of all religious denominations, it is peculiarly interesting to Irishmen, and therefore though I cannot expect to find all temperate Irishmen prepared to go the full length in places of reform, I do expect to find them all prepared to do much promptly, fearlessly, and perseveringly, for the overthrow of intemperance and the regeneration of our country.

Yours, &c. JOHN EDGAR.

TEMPERANCE.

On Sunday evening last, at five o'clock, the Rev. John Edgar delivered an impressive discourse on temperance, in the Methodist Chapel, Donegall-square. The evening was exceedingly unfavourable, yet the house was so crowded to excess, as to render it impossible for a large portion of the audience to find accommodation. This fact of itself serves to shew the interest which the subject has created. We shall not attempt an outline of Mr. Edgar's discourse—it is sufficient to say, that it was a most energetic appeal to all the feelings of duty, interest, and religion, by which the human mind can be actuated, in regard to the evils of intemperance.—If we might judge by the attention that was universally manifested, we would conclude that the power of the preacher's appeal was extensively felt, whether it be in the end practically successful or not.

We are aware of the ridicule by which the proposal of forming Temperance Societies has been met; but we are, at the same time, aware that the subject is one of no mean importance; the man who treats it with deliberate levity, affords a proof either of his ignorance, or his want of reflection. The extent to which habits of absolute drunkenness, or, what is equally injurious, the extent to which a periodical consumption of ardent spirits prevails among the lower classes, is incredible. The latter mode, we know, does not in strictness merit the name of intemperance in its worst sense; but in relation to families, and to society, it is just as ruinous in its consequences as the other. A system of periodical stimulants, though the enemy, as Shakespeare calls it, may not be taken by men in such quantities as to "steal away their brains," yet no one doubts that their families are taxed for it, that their constitutions are weakened, and, that individual as well as domestic misery of the most pungent kind is among its customary results. The subject is one in which the happiness and prosperity of the community are involved—and on this ground it is entitled to the consideration of all, independently of castes and creeds. In America, even many avowed Deists are zealous in support of the system of temperance, from no other motive than a deep conviction of its public utility. We shall probably revert to this topic.



Appendix 4 – Press Coverage of Dr. Edgar’s Funeral

The Northern Whig (30th August 1866)

FUNERAL OF THE REV. DR. EDGAR.

YESTERDAY morning, the remains of the Rev. Dr. Edgar were removed from Dublin to Belfast by the eight o'clock train, arriving here at half-past twelve o'clock, shortly after which hour a hearse and several mourning-coaches, provided by Mr. Robson, Chichester Street, were drawn up in front of the Ulster Railway station. The hour fixed for the funeral to leave the railway station for the place of interment—Malone Cemetery—was one o'clock, long before which time a very great number of the ministers of the General Assembly from all parts of Ireland had assembled to accompany the funeral cortege to the grave. There were also present ministers of nearly every religious denomination; while of the laity, people of every religious persuasion were respectably represented—the attendance of the general public being very large. The clergy walked in procession two-and-two, the professors of the Theological College being in front, immediately after the mourners. In the rear of the procession came a long line of carriages. Twenty Presbyteries of the General Assembly were represented at the funeral—those of Belfast, Route, Munster, Comber, Armagh, Newry, Banbridge, Templepatrick, Ards, Magherafelt, Glendermott, Dromore, Tyrone, Athlone, Dungannon, Carrickfergus, Dublin, Down, Derry, and Ballymena. The Rev. Dr. Cooke and the Rev. Dr. Morgan were unavoidably absent owing to ill-health. Dr. Cooke sent a communication from Harrogate, where he is at present, expressing his deep regret that the feeble state of his health would prevent his being present at the funeral of his lamented friend.

Among those present we noticed:—Rev. Dr. Wilson, Limerick, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland; Rev. Robert Park, Clerk of the General Assembly; Rev. Dr. James G. Murphy, Professor of Hebrew, Assembly's College, Belfast; Rev. Dr. W. D. Killen, Professor of Ecclesiastical History, Church Government, and Pastoral Theology, Assembly's College, Belfast; Rev. Dr. Gibson, Professor of Moral Philosophy, Assembly's College, Belfast; Rev. Thomas Witherow, Professor of Church History and Pastoral Theology, Magee College, Derry; Rev. Dr. Glasgow, Assembly's Lecturer on Missions; Rev. Dr. Denham, Derry; Rev. John Rogers, Comber; Rev. John Macnaughtan, Belfast; Rev. J. H. Moore, Elmwood, Belfast; Rev. Dr. Hall, Dublin; Rev. N. N. Browne, Newtownlimavady; Rev. Thomas Greer, Anahilt; Rev. Mr. Aicken, Sandholes; Rev. Thomas Toye, Belfast; Rev. J. W. Crozier; Rev. Joseph C. McCullagh, Bangor; Rev. Robert Moorehead, Loughagery; Rev. Dr. Houston, Reformed Presbyterian Church; Rev. Professor Dick, Reformed Presbyterian Church; Rev. S. Browne, Athlone; Rev. David Edgar, Ballynahinch; Rev. J. S. Browne, Magherafelt; Rev. John White, Methodist New Connexion Church, Belfast; Rev. S. D. Burnside, Carry-

duff; Rev. Francis Petticrew, Faughavale; Rev. J. M. Rodgers, Kilrea; Rev. Mr. Armstrong; Rev. George Magill, Antrim; Rev. John Orr, Portaferry; Rev. L. E. Berkeley, Lurgan; Rev. John Kinghan, Principal of the Deaf and Dumb Institution, Belfast; Rev. James Young, Belfast; Rev. David Magill, Ballywalter; Rev. William White, Downpatrick; Rev. Mr. Rogers, Glasgow; Rev. Robert Black, C.C., Dundalk; Rev. John Meneely, Ballymacarrett; Rev. W. C. McCullagh, Ballysillan; Rev. J. Wilson, Lecumpher; Rev. James Black, Lylehill; Rev. James M'Kee, India; Rev. Mr. Moorehead, Rev. A. H. Beatty, Rev. James Thompson, Rev. J. Warwick, Carrickfergus; Rev. William Patterson, Bangor; Thomas Blain, Esq., LL.D., late Head-Master of the Belfast Academical Institution; Rev. Joseph Mackenzie, Malone, Belfast; Rev. John Beatty, Ballycopeland; Rev. James G. Smith, Ballyhay; Rev. Hugh Hanna, Belfast; Rev. David Jeffrey, Greyabbey; Rev. David Parke, Carrowdore; Rev. Thomas Waters, Newtownards; Rev. J. S. McIntosh, Connor; Rev. Thomas Drow, D.D., Rector of Loughinisland; Rev. J. Poole, Lisburn; Rev. William Linton, Gilnahirk; Rev. J. Thompson, Crossgar; Rev. Isaac Vance, Granshaw; Rev. George Bellis, Assembly's Mission Office, Belfast; Rev. John D. Clarke, Lurgan; Rev. W. J. Gillespie, Parkgate; Rev. Dr. Givan, Castlereagh; Rev. T. Y. Killen, Belfast; Rev. W. Browne, Newtownards; Rev. John Mecreedy, Belfast; Rev. John Greenlees, Belfast; Rev. W. Greer, Anahilt; Rev. W. Orr, Portaferry; Rev. J. H. Orr, Antrim; Rev. Dr. Russell, Principal of the Belfast New Academy; Rev. D. J. Clarke, Lisburn; Rev. Andrew C. Murphy, Newry; Rev. S. Black, Dunseverick; Rev. W. Black, Templepatrick; Rev. W. Smyth, Eglisk; Rev. James Burns, London; Rev. Joseph Moorehead, Rev. William Dobbin, Anaghlon; Rev. Mr. Moran, Sydenham; Rev. William Magill, Dundrod; Rev. M. Moorehead, Garvagh; Rev. George Shaw, Belfast; Rev. Moses Black, Kilmore; Rev. R. J. Arnold, Dunmurry; Rev. George Macloskie, Ballygarey; Rev. Jas. Speers, Assembly's Mission Office; Rev. Geo. H. Shanks, Boardmills; Rev. Alex. Dobbin, Boardmills; Rev. Mr. Gordon, Gilford; Rev. William Macellwaine, Incumbent of St. George's Church, Belfast; Rev. Mr. Patton, Dromore; Rev. John Davis, Ballynahinch; Rev. G. H. Johnston, Hillsborough; Rev. J. Stuart, Ballycarry; Rev. L. T. Martin, Dundonald; Rev. J. W. M'Kay, Methodist minister; Rev. Mr. Carlisle, Methodist minister; Rev. Mr. Dwyer, Methodist minister; Rev. Mr. Dunlop, Methodist minister; Rev. Adam Montgomery, Clerk of Belfast Presbytery; Rev. James Heron, Muckamore; Rev. Mr. Mordie, Rev. Mr. Deacon, Curate, Dublin; Rev. Mr. Irwin, Curate of Christ Church; Rev. Dr. Black, Dublin; Rev. S. J. Moore, Ballymena; Rev. L. Hutchinson, Belfast; Rev. A. Murphy, Newry; Rev. Mr. Dogherty, Curate of St. Anne's Church, Belfast; Rev. James Young, Belfast; Rev. I. S. McIntosh, Connor; Rev. Robert M'Cheyne Edgar, Dublin; Rev. Isaac Mack, Groomsport; Rev. Mr. Clements, Rev. Mr. Beatty, Belfast; Rev. Robert Workman, Rev. Joseph Mackenzie, Malone; Rev. R. J. Lynd



The Rev. Dr. John Edgar



Appendix 4 (continued)

man, Rev. Joseph Mackenzie, Malone; Rev. R. J. Lynd Whiteabbey; Rev. Dr. Bryce, Belfast; Rev. George Moore, Saintfield; Rev. Mr. Clarke, Ballygrainey; Rev. Thomas Cramsie, Bessbrooke; Rev. J. M'Kee, Dromore; William Mullan, Esq., Mayor of Belfast; Thomas Sinclair, Esq., J.P.; Sir Edward Coey, Robert Grimshaw, Esq., J.P., D.L.; C. B. Grimshaw, Esq.; Thomas Sinclair, jun., Esq.; John Sharman Crawford, Esq., J.P., D.L., Crawfordsburn; William F. Bigger, Esq., J.P., Derry; Thomas M'Clure, Esq., J.P.; William J. C. Allen, Esq., J.P., Ulster Bank; Nicholas Grimshaw, Esq.; William Dunville, Esq., J.P.; Charles Lanyon, Esq.; John Sinclair, Esq., The Grove; Charles Duffin, Esq.; Adam Duffin, Esq.; Dr. W. Connell, H.M.E.I.S.; Dr. Marcus Eustace, Dublin; J. J. Murphy, Esq.; I. J. Murphy, Esq.; Charles Thompson, Esq.; John Arnold, Esq.; John Edgar, Esq., Manchester; John Edgar, Esq., Belfast; Robert Corry, Esq., Harbour Commissioner; James P. Corry, Esq.; Robert Corry, jun., Esq.; James Hamilton, Esq., Harbour Commissioner; Robert Patterson, Esq., Harbour Commissioner; A. P. Hewitt, Esq.; Charles Finlay, Esq.; W. L. Finlay, Esq.; Robert Workman, Esq.; John Workman, Esq.; Samuel Gelston, Esq.; Hugh Moore, Esq., Dublin; Dr. Andrews, Vice-President of the Queen's College, Belfast; Professor MacDonall, Queen's College, Belfast; Dr. Meeready, Inspector of National Schools; S. E. M'Cormick, Esq., *Banner of Ulster*; R. F. Dill, Esq., M.D., Coroner for the Borough of Belfast; Dr. Seaton Reid, John Savage, Esq., T.C.; Nathaniel Dickey, Esq.; Hugh M'Call, Esq.; A. J. M'Kenna, Esq., Editor of *Ulster Observer*; George Murney, Esq.; Dr. Murney, J.P.; Dr. Browne, Dr. Read, Dr. Wilberforce Arnold, Howard Arnold, Esq.; James Girdwood, Esq., Harbour Commissioner; Wm. Girdwood, Esq., Oldpark Print Works; Bernard Hughes, Esq.; Jas. Campbell, Esq.; John Clarke, Esq., Ulster Bank; Joseph Bigger, Esq., P.L.G.; Thos. Bigger, Esq.; Saml. Teirney, Esq., P.L.G.; Wm. Addison, Esq., Water Commissioner; James Harper, Esq., P.L.G.; Thomas Gaffikin, Esq., T.C.; John Edgar, Esq.; Henry Hawkins, Esq.; William Simms, Esq.; Thomas Lindsay, Esq.; Henry Kirk, Esq.; Hugh Porter, Esq.; Philip Johnston, Esq.; Hugh Moore, Esq., Dublin; B. T. M'Geagh, Esq., Water Commissioner; Wm. Carson, Esq., Solicitor; Dr. M'Mechan, Whiteabbey; Edward Pim, Esq.; William Browne, Esq., Springvale; John Boyd, Esq.; James Archer, Esq.; Wm. Musgrave, Esq.; E. Musgrave, Esq., Barrister-at-Law; James Johnston, Esq.; R. M. Carson, Esq.; W. H. Carson, Esq.; Dr. Rea, sen.; Dr. Rea, jun.; Robert Hamilton, Esq.; G. W. Braddel, Esq.; Samuel M'Causland, Esq.; Wm. Todd, Esq., Dublin; Thomas Clokey, Esq., Dublin; George M'Auliffe, Esq.; Thomas Hughes, Esq.; George Smyth, Esq.; R. P. Pim, Esq., Dublin; Wm. Fleming Stevenson, Esq., Rathgar, Dublin; William M'Neil, Esq.; John Coates, Esq. (Secretary to the County Antrim Grand Jury); Robert Potts, Esq.; Thomas Hamilton, Esq.; G. A. Carruthers, Esq.; Wm. Killen, Esq.; S. M. Dill, Esq.; Alexander Clarke, Esq.; J. Lockhart, Esq.; James Johnston, Esq.; Dr. Johnston; Joseph Robinson, Esq.; Charles Pelling, Esq.; T. Duncan, Esq., Botanic Road, &c., &c.

The funeral cortege having arrived at the cemetery, the coffin was carried to the grave by six of the nearest relatives of the deceased. It bore the following inscription:—

JOHN EDGAR, D.D., LL.D.,
died
August 26th, 1860,
aged 69 years.

The coffin having been lowered into the grave, The Rev. JOHN H. MOORE (Elmswood, Belfast), to whose congregation the deceased belonged, said—My friends, I may just state that after an extremely brief service from me, it has been arranged that the Moderator of the General Assembly will address some words to us on this solemn occasion; and as our departed friend was also connected with the Assembly's College, Dr. Murphy will close the proceedings of the day with prayer. Mr. Moore having read a portion of the 11th chapter of John, and a portion of the 15th chapter of the Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, offered up an impressive prayer.

The Rev. Dr. WILSON (Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland) said—Need I say, dear friends, that I feel a serious responsibility in undertaking in the present trying circumstances to address you, and nothing but a sense of duty, owing to my official position, could have induced me to yield at the last moment to the request of my friends. I feel that I am totally inadequate to say much with regard to the personal history or character of our father and friend, whose remains we have this day followed to the tomb. A great man—a prince in Israel has fallen; a leader in the Lord's covenanted host has gone; a standard-bearer and a witness for the truth has been removed from amongst us. It is not necessary that I should say much with respect to the character or qualities of him who is gone. This has already been done, and will, no doubt, be done again; and I am sure that all of us had a melancholy satisfaction in reading yesterday the record of his life, written by a faithful and a friendly hand—by one who has faithfully recorded the public character and acts of our father. This is not the time, nor is this the place, to refer to the many acts of patriotism and philanthropy and piety in which he engaged, or to attempt to dwell upon the vast domains of ignorance and sin which he invaded, or to tell of the sins of the rich and

poor, of the high and humble alike, which he exposed and checked. I know well that vast reforms through him, by God's grace, were effected in the hearts and minds and lives of many a man and woman in our community. What scheme of benevolence or humanity was started in this town or neighbourhood for the benefit of his country or the world in which Dr. Edgar did not give a ready hand, and do his best to bear the burden? But Ireland's woes specially touched that pure and good man's heart. His generous sympathies were elicited and the energies of his upright and chivalrous mind were braced to action on behalf of his native land. Connaught's poor found in him a feeling friend; Connaught's ignorance was invaded by him, and knowledge, through his instrumentality, has been scattered through that vast province; Connaught's churches and schools, and pastors, and congregations testify stronger than language to that good man's worth, and to the earnestness of his labours. His efforts were endless in the extension of Christ's cause at home and abroad—among Jews and Gentiles—to maintain the cause of our Lord and Master among the churches of the land, and especially in that section of the Christian Church with which he was himself identified—the Church of our fathers—to raise among us an earnest and pious ministry, and to promote among all classes of the population habits of industry and of temperance. He was a great as well as a good man, and, like many such men, a public man and a motive power in the world—a motive power in the country and the Church. Men had



Appendix 4 (continued)

been at times misrepresented because misunderstood. No man can read, and no man can understand, the history of a man like him who is gone, unless one who has sat at his feet, and looked at him in the light of the glory of a common Master. We have met here this day to commit his ashes to the tomb—dust to dust, and ashes to ashes—believing, as we all do, in certain hope of a glorious resurrection from the dead. It was my privilege not long since, in accordance with the duty imposed upon me by many I see around me, to convey to him a resolution of the Church respecting him, and I was privileged to testify to him when living among us that his many efforts and different and laborious labours for the extension of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ were thoroughly appreciated by you, that his character and honour were endeared to you all, and that to you he was bound by the closest and tenderest ties. It was our privilege to call upon God's Holy Spirit to bless and sustain him, and to strengthen him and sanctify his soul in his affliction; and I feel constrained to tell you in a sentence how our prayers to God were answered, and how our lamented father was upheld in his departing hours. I shall ever esteem it a privilege that I came on Friday morning last from the South of Ireland, and called on our departed friend when lying on the bed of death, and had the privilege of hearing him speak, and it will be to you all encouraging to know that he was then, as through his long and laborious life, a witness to the truth—faithful and uncompromising in testifying to the truth—to the Gospel of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, laying all his efforts for his Master at the foot of the Cross, and giving God the glory. He said to me then, "How low we live—how low we live. Sinners as we have been, it becomes us more and more to look up to the infinite and adorable Saviour. We look to our own imperfections when we ought to be sitting with Christ in heavenly places." He looked up and spoke of the love of Christ as being transcendent and infinite, covering all; and I am here to testify to his glowing fervour with respect to the great and glorious doctrines given to us in the epistles of the apostles to the Churches, and especially the Epistle to the Colossians. I am here to testify to the grandeur and power of those great doctrines on the mind of this dying Christian. They were the food of his soul. I saw what touched his heart and came home to it. Christ was in him the hope of glory—the faith which he preached and taught that we might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. His own imperfections were plainly before him, but, as allusion has been made in the prayer, he saw himself a perfect man in Christ Jesus, his Lord. No man is able to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them in thought, word, and deed; but he saw himself perfect in the sight of his Lord and Saviour, as he said himself, "I am going home, home, home." A few days afterwards I learned the tidings of his departure—on the morning of the Sabbath, just two days after I saw him—that he had exchanged an earthly for a heavenly Sabbath, and went up to be for ever with the Lord. Dear friends, think of that blessed revelation of God, the Word of Jesus, "Whosoever believeth in me shall never die." Never die! never die! Our friend is not dead, but sleepeth. He went asleep on that Sabbath morning at eight o'clock. At eleven o'clock they looked at him and thought he was still sleeping, but his soul had gone to its Heavenly rest, where the soul of the believer lives on and lives for ever. The body of the believer sleeps—sleeps united

to Christ till the resurrection, when it shall come forth a new body. The body of the wicked—foul, festering and torn, which had no connexion with Christ—whose senses, everything were given up to another service, but not of Christ, shall also rise; but the body of the believer is united to Christ, and shall rise at the resurrection into a glorious immortality. And then it shall come forth—how fair, and beautiful, and glorious. It shall come forth, not again encumbered by the bonds of sin, but that which was glorious at the first shall have another glory by reason of the glory which excelleth. What a blessed revelation then is ours. Let me beseech you to think of it that death is not annihilation, but a change into a purer light—that the grave is not the dark and gloomy present, but the resting-place where the emancipated lay aside for a while the worn-out vestments of mortality. Our brother shall rise again. He is not dead, but sleepeth. That which was sown in dishonour shall be raised in glory—that which was sown in weakness shall be raised in power. It is sown a natural body—it is raised a spiritual body, and then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, that death is swallowed up in victory. A word or two more, and I have done. Life is given us by God to be devoted to His glory. Life has been given to us to be devoted to His service. Our departed father has set us an example worthy of imitation. He lived for God and for the advancement of His glory. Life is precious, brethren—live for God. Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Let us all, office-bearers, and ministers, and people, comforted by God, give ourselves heart, and soul, and body to His cause. Let us redouble our abilities and energies, and use our exertions while it is called to-day, for the night cometh when we shall pass into the presence of the Judge of all the earth. Let us leave the world, then, as our departed brother did, and receive the grateful acclamation from the most righteous Judge—"Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things: I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joys of thy Lord;" and to His name be glory for ever and ever. Dr. MURPHY offered up an appropriate prayer, and the melancholy proceedings terminated.