

A SHORT ACCOUNT
OF THE ORIGIN OF

Trinity Church
and
St. Michael's Church
In the City of Limerick

by

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FORMERLY
INCUMBENT OF TRINITY CHURCH, ST. LAURENCE AND ST. JOHN
AND
ARCHDEACON OF LIMERICK.

PRICE: ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE

FOREWORD.

The following account has been compiled chiefly from the Deeds of Trinity Church and from statements drawn up for Counsel's opinion and also from notices in the Limerick Chronicle, the help of which is hereby acknowledged.

LIMERICK

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TRINITY CHURCH AND ST. LAURENCE

About the year 1830, it was put into the minds of God's people in Limerick, that another church was necessary in order to meet with the increasing church population. There were three Parish Churches at that time—St. Mary's, St. Munchin's, and St. John's. The Parish of St. Michael's had no Parish Church, because the old church was destroyed in the siege of 1651, but it had in it a private chapel called St. George's, built in 1789 and endowed by the Earl of Limerick. The church in the Parish of St. Laurence had been pulled down by the forces of William III when he attacked the walls during the siege of Limerick. There were over 3,000 Protestants living in St. Michael's Parish alone, so it can be seen that the church accommodation was not at all sufficient.

The Lord Limerick of that date was not willing to give the ground to build a Parish church, and therefore the only way out of the difficulty was to erect a Trustee Church which should be connected with some charitable institution. The one, to whose energies the work is specially indebted, was the Rev. Edward Newenham Hoare, curate of St. John's. He (with the approval of the Bishop of Limerick, the Hon. and Right Rev. Edmund Knox, who gave his sanction to this work from the beginning) gathered a large sum of money in England and Scotland for this purpose. A plot of ground was procured in Catherine Street, and on it was built a church and two Houses, one for the Charitable Institution an Asylum for Blind Females and the other for the minister's house—so was completed what was the earnest desire of a large number of the Parishioners of St. Michael's Parish. This new chapel was to be under such management as would secure as much as human means under God's blessing could, the permanent preaching in it of the Grace of God of the everlasting Gospel of the Lord Jesus as set forth in the Scriptures

and maintained in the Articles and Homilies. At a meeting held in 1831 Five Trustees, who must be clergymen of the Established Church and of evangelical sentiments, were appointed, and to them was given the power of electing the chaplain and a committee of management was also elected. Subscriptions were received locally amounting to £800. The Rev. E. N. Hoare went to England to gather funds. By his first tour he gathered £473, and by his second £654, and a third visit, this time to Scotland, brought in £890. Mr. Hoare gathered in all £2,913. The total cost of the building was £5,273. This debt was practically paid off by 1838. When Mr. Hoare went to England in 1834 the following letter was written to him by the Bishop.

THE PALACE,

29th July, 1834.

I understand, Dear Mr. Hoare, that you are shortly to start for England for the purpose of collecting further subscriptions to enable you to open the Asylum for Blind Females, the Institution attached to the chapel, which I have had the satisfaction of licensing and bringing under Episcopal Jurisdiction. As you cannot effect so desirable an object without liquidating the debt, I cannot let you leave Ireland without assuring you, how earnestly I unite my prayers with those of your congregation for your success in your benevolent mission.

You are going to a country which has the inclination as well as the means of rendering your mission successful. That the Lord may put it into their hearts to be liberal and that you may return to us rejoicing is the prayer of your sincere and faithful servant

EDMUND, LIMERICK.

A memorial, bearing the signatures of a hundred heads of families, being members of the Established Church resident in the City of Limerick, who had

subscribed to the Institution and chapel was presented in 1834 to the Lord Bishop of Limerick, the Hon. and Right Rev. Edmund Knox, praying for a license for the chapel by a deputation consisting of the following gentlemen, Hon. John Massy, George Massy of Milford, Robert George Maunsell, R. C. Langford and Edward Bernard. Immediately after the Memorial had been presented the Rev. E. Herbert, Rev. T. Gibbings, Rev. E. N. Hoare on the part of the clerical Trustees waited on His Lordship with a copy of the Deed of Trust. The Bishop who received each deputation with his characteristic kindness and affability was pleased most cordially to accede to the prayer of the Memorialists and directions were given to have the license issued to the Rev. E. N. Hoare as Chaplain.

The following is a copy of the Memorial:

The memorial of the undersigned inhabitants of the Parish of St. Michael's in the City of Limerick sheweth that the want of an additional place of worship in connection with the Established Church in the New Town of Limerick containing upwards of 4,000 Protestants having been long felt, your memorialists assisted by pious and benevolent persons in various places have caused to be erected therein by voluntary contributions an Asylum for Poor Blind Females with a large and commodious chapel attached thereto which it has always been their wish to have in the strictest connection with the Established Church, of which, your memorialists are sincerely attached members, that the chapel and Asylum with the appointment of the Chaplain have been vested in five Trustees, clergymen of the Established Church who will lay before your Lordship the deed of trust and will be ready to afford such further information as may be desired relative to the proposed Institution and chapel. That the buildings being now nearly completed and fit for use, your memorialists beg most respectfully the favour of your Lordship's patronage of the Institution and requests that you will be

pleased to admit the Chaplain of the Asylum and the Chapel itself to licences in the manner usual in such cases.

The above memorial having been read, the following is part of the Bishop's reply:

Gentlemen, I have heard your Memorial read and find from its contents that you and the other gentlemen are desirous of having the chapel licensed and brought within the Pale of the Establishment. I sincerely rejoice at this and see no reason why I should hesitate to grant your request. When the Registrar returns I shall give him directions to have a licence made out. I most earnestly wish that the Gospel Trumpet may be sounded within the walls of your beautiful chapel long after the bodies of us who are assembled shall be mouldering in our graves and our spirits shall have taken their flight to those mansions of eternal rest where no jarring contention or difference of opinion shall prevail but all shall be harmony and peace.

The chapel was opened for Divine Service on Sunday, May 4, 1834. Most impressive sermons were preached by the Rev. Peter Roe, Vicar of St. Mary's, Kilkenny, the church being full and a collection of £60 being made. The Bishop was present at the evening service.

The Rev. E. N. Hoare having been promoted to the Vicarage of Clane in the County Kildare in 1838, the Rev. Benjamin Jacob was appointed in his place. He was a man of outstanding abilities, and of deep spiritual power who left his mark upon Limerick.

St. Laurence's Parish was joined to Trinity Church in the following way: The Corporation of Limerick with the consent of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners set up the advowson and perpetual right of presentation to the Rectory and Parish of St. Laurence to be sold by public auction in 1842 and the Trustees of Trinity Church having bid were declared the purchasers and it

was thereby granted and sold unto the said Trustees "who shall and lawfully and rightly may at the next and every future avoidance of the said Rectory present to the same." Thus the Parish of St. Laurence became joined to Trinity Church as it is at the present time, and the Rev. Benjamin Jacob, chaplain of Trinity Church was appointed as Rector of St. Laurence's Parish.

ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH, LIMERICK

While the New Town in Limerick expanded rapidly in the opening years of 1800, as has been explained, there was no Parish Church in St. Michael's Parish, only the private chapel St. George's which stood where the Provincial Bank is now. Archdeacon Maunsell was Rector of the Parish of St. Michael's from 1814—1860 but without a church. So the Rector of the Parish had the spiritual care of the parishioners but without a church. Such a state of things could not go on, though Trinity Church was built to help to relieve the difficulty.

In 1833, St. George's was sold to the Provincial Bank. This was the nucleus for the sum required to build the Parish Church. Lord Limerick gave a grant to the Bishop and Mr. Lefroy of a plot of land in Vyzes Fields. St. George's having been sold, there was now no church in the Parish of St. Michael's except Trinity Church, and some of the parishioners met in the Primitive Methodist Preaching House till 1843. Out of the money received from the sale of St. George's, the walls of St. Michael's Church were built up but in 1843 the Methodists gave notice that they would withdraw the privilege granted to St. Michael's Parishioners, and so application was made to the Church Commissioners and a sum of money was granted to complete the church. In 1843, a Bill was brought into Parliament by three parties, Lord Limerick, Rev. Pryce Peacock (who had been chaplain in St. George's) and Archdeacon

Maunsell and passed by it, Lord Limerick was to be freed from all Ministers money and to have the appointment of the chaplain of St. Michael's, which was constituted a District Church and deemed a perpetual cure. So £1,000 was advanced by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to complete the church and the Rev. Pryce Peacock became chaplain appointed by Lord Limerick. All the foregoing did not benefit the Rector of St. Michael's Parish, Archdeacon Maunsell, as it did not give him any further right than he had before. Matters went on till Archdeacon Maunsell died in 1860 and the Rev. Pryce Peacock became Rector and Archdeacon. Thus St. Michael's Church and Parish were joined under the same clergyman as Rector.

At the time of the Disestablishment of the Church of Ireland in 1870 a clause was inserted in the Constitution by which all the former rights of Trustee Churches were preserved, and a special clause was inserted by which it was decreed that anyone wishing to attend another church, not the parochial church, could do so legally by becoming an accustomed member of the church of his choice which qualified him to be registered as a Vestryman of that church with all the rights and privileges conveyed by such registration.

Such is a very short account of important events in the History of Two Churches in Limerick. The sincere prayer of all is that God's blessing may rest upon their work and their witness to all that is in accordance with His Divine Will.

