

**Ms 772/ 3 Letters to Smyth from the Rt. Revd Richard Mant (1776-1848), bishop
of Down and Connor
1823-48**

This extensive run of episcopal correspondence covering the greater part of Smyth's clerical career, reveals that the bishop had a high regard for this upcoming priest in his early years as curate of Belfast, 1820-28; through his appointment as chancellor of Down 1828-43, and finally as precentor of Connor and rector of Ballymoney, from 1843 until Smyth's untimely death in 1847. It would appear that the bishop was mentoring him for higher office and depended upon the younger cleric for practical advice. In relation to matters parochial, the correspondence reveals that relatively few parishes in the diocese of Down were under the bishop's patronage, or connected to the corps of Down cathedral, with the result that discussion about the same few cures come up time and time again in relation to making appointments and clerical re-shuffles.

The health of the bishop's wife features in some of the letters and there are many references to the couple's family. She was Elizabeth Mant, the daughter of William Woods, of Chidham, Sussex, whose various alignments are described in detail in many letters. She pre-deceased her husband by two years, on 2 April 1846, and from the remaining run of letters in this collection it is evident the bishop moved around much more, staying with different relatives in the aftermath of her death. The Mants had three sons: the Venerable Walter Bishop Mant, Revd Frederick Mant, a son Richard Edward who died in infancy and Agatha, who married the Venerable John Charles Martin, archdeacon of Kilmore, whose lives are covered in graphic detail in the letters. The correspondence further reveals that the bishop and his wife spent a good deal of time travelling – with the Martins at Kilmore, to family relatives in Bath, and on episcopal business, and also spent large parts of the year in both Dublin and London.

1. R[ichard]d Down and Connor, Knocknagoney, to 'Dear Sir' [Revd William St John Smyth]
13 December 1823

In this opening letter of the episcopal sequence, the bishop orders arrangements to be made to cover 'duty at Holywood church'. Mentions Dr Fea [perpetual curate, Upper Falls, Belfast] and Mr Jebb, [curate Knockbreda, diocese of Down].

2. R[ichard]d Down and Connor, Knocknagoney, to 'Dear Sir', The Revd W. St. J. Smyth
18 May 1824

The bishop writes to Smyth of his intention to hold an ordination in Belfast church on Trinity Sunday, and requesting Smyth if he 'be agreeable...to undertake the sermon on the occasion'.

3. R[ichard]d Down and Connor, Knocknagoney, to 'Dear Sir'
20 July 1825

Letter making arrangements for cover of duty for Mr Falloon [Marcus Falloon, perpetual curate of Drumbo, Down, 1809-31] who being in some distress about a difficulty of providing it, has come to the bishop for help. Whilst explaining that he could do nothing directly, Mant has indicated to Falloon that he, Smyth, might be 'at liberty to assist him'. The bishop is giving him advance warning that this would be in order, as he wishes to use Smyth's church for an ordination on the same Sunday, when the archdeacon of Down [Venerable Robert Alexander] is to preach. The choice is Smyth's: 'you will judge altogether for yourself whether it will be agreeable to you to take charge of Mr Fallon's church'.

4. R[ichard]d Down and Connor, Knocknagoney, to 'Dear Sir', The Revd Wm St John Smyth, Belfast
2 November 1826

Responding to a question posed by Smyth to the bishop earlier in the day, which Mant felt his reply had not fully satisfied, concerning 'the service appointed for next Sunday' [5 November] as ordered by order dated 21 February 1820 by His Majesty. The contents of this letter reveal Mant's distain for Irish clergy declining to perform such orders, as they were, as well as the English clergy of the established church duty bound to do so under royal authority.

5. R[ichard]d Down and Connor, Down and Connor House, to 'Dear Sir', The Revd Wm St John Smyth
7 March 1827

Invites Smyth to dinner with Dr Cupples [Revd Snowden Cupples, vicar general of Down and Connor, Seneschal of the manor of Killultagh and Derryvolgie, 1812-34] and Mr Coery[?]. Presumes Smyth knows of his ordination on Sunday, and then, revealing his attention to detail and high standards, gives him notice of the correct order of service, pointing out 'that on the last occasion in reading Morning Prayer, you read the Prayers for the King etc which ought to have been omitted, and omitted the General Thanksgiving which ought to have been read'.

6. R[ichard]d Down and Connor, to 'My dear Sir',
5 May 1827

Thanks him for his communication [an invitation of some kind] adding his cousins will 'probably be glad to avail themselves of the opportunity afforded them by Mrs Curtis's kindness'. As he understands Smyth is intending to call 'to us' next Monday, he invites him to 'partake of our joint of meat at Holywood at 6 o'clock' after Smyth has had his walk.

7. R[ichard]d Down and Connor, See House, to 'My dear Sir', The Revd Wm St John Smyth, 6 Upper Arthur Street, Belfast
29 May 1827

The bishop takes the trouble to apologise that he will have to disappoint Smyth about being with him next Sunday, as he is unable to attend divine service at Belfast on that day.

8. R[ichard]d. Down and Connor, See House, to 'My dear Sir', The Revd Wm St John Smyth, Arthur Street, Belfast
14 June 1827

Revealing a strong oversight of all matters in the diocese, the bishop regrets to inform Smyth that the young woman recommended for the Hollywood school 'will not do'. The bishop explains why: 'you are probably not aware that she was never married', he continues, and furthermore as the result of 'an event' some years ago, she was resident in the village of Hollywood, and had a child, the father of which 'is actually resident in the village, having recently married another woman'. He thus concludes that he doubts 'she would be a fit person to have the care of a girls' school in the place'. Instead a Mrs Alexander has been recommended instead, by Mr and Mrs Burns, the linen drapers. He wonders if Smyth might happen to know any thing of this woman.

9. R[ichard]d Down and Connor, See House, to 'My dear Sir'
22 October 1827

Sending an order [not present] for a mare, and giving Smyth use of his chaise during his absence. Gives his kind regards to Smyth's ladies.

10. R[ichard]d Down and Connor, Bath, to 'My dear Sir', The Revd W. St John Smyth, Belfast
28 December 1827

Replying to a letter from Smyth and glad that the 'chancellorship of Down' is acceptable to him [Smyth]. Answers various queries that the chancellor-elect has obviously posed, in relation to dilapidations and commission into same; the appointment of a successor to the cure of Belfast, which the bishop comments: 'will I fear not be thankful for me removing you'; how much time is to elapse before Smyth changes his charge, to which the bishop advises that he 'would be no means hurry any of the parties concerned. Indeed I think you should not quit your present cure abruptly: but I would recommend that, if practicable, you should be established at Portaferry before Easter'.

11. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Bath, to 'My dear Sir', The Revd W. St John Smyth, Belfast
19 January 1828

He is glad that Smyth's recent visit to Portaferry was satisfactory although sorry to find from Mary [Smyth's] letter to her aunt [Mant's wife] they have experienced, like many an incumbent, problems with the house. It seems that since 'part of your house' was 'blown off various improvements are needed, including a porch, a greenhouse, and the bishop makes a suggestion about a passage to connect the house conveniently at the back.

12. R[ichard] Down and Connor, See House Belfast, to 'My dear Sir', The Revd W. St John Smyth, Rectory House, Portaferry
23 May 1828

It appears that Smyth is now well established in his new cure, and resident in Portaferry: the first communication since the transfer. The bishop troubles him for his attendance at Kilmoody the following week. He further advises a rural dean is required for the deanery, which had lately been under the inspection of 'Mr Birch' [Revd George Birch, perpetual curate Comber, diocese of Down, 1799-1827, who died on a sea passage in June 1827]. The deanery comprises the parishes of Knockbreda, Dundonald, Holywood, Newtownards, Comber, Tuylknakill, Kilmoody, and the bishop concludes it 'will not be inconvenient for [Smyth] to undertake the office' and that he shall be obliged by him doing so. However, should the 'remoteness' of Smyth's situation make it inconvenient for him, he is 'to say so without scruple'. If he does not take the position, he is to write to Mant, but if he decides to take it, he is to write to the Registrar in Lisburn. Mant's next visitation will be on 16th July, and if Smyth 'undertake[s] the office, [he] will have to visit the churches and glebehouses in [his] Rural Deanery within the next four or five weeks'.

Sends his 'very kind regards to Mary and Ellen' in which their aunt and cousin write'.

13. R[ichard] Down and Connor, See House Belfast, to 'My dear Sir', The Revd W. St John Smyth, Rectory House, Portaferry
25 July 1828

He and Mrs Mant are unable to undertake the journey to Portaferry as her collarbone is still uncomfortable, and such a journey would likely result in 'fresh injury'. The bishop is unable to make up his mind what to do, but does not want to be absent two or three nights: 'besides her collarbone she is by no means well, and would be left quite to herself in my absence'. If he has a chance to drop in on Tuesday he will.

Then refers to learning that morning with shock from the papers of the recent death of the archbishop of Canterbury, which took place last Monday at Lambeth:

‘During my connexion with him for seven years I experienced numerous marks of that benignity of disposition and manners by which he was signally distinguished, and I am very sensible of his loss, altho’ latterly I have had but very little intercourse with him. He filled his high station in the Church most beneficially as well as satisfactorily to those who had the best opportunities of judging. For my own part I think his place will with difficulty be adequately supplied. The St James Chronicle speaks of the bishops of London and Chester with a view to the succession, expressing its own feelings in favour of the latter. I had for a considerable time been looking to the former as having no competitor in the event of a vacancy; but when in England last winter I heard it rumoured that it was understood he would not accept the primacy. How these things may be, a very short time will now show’.

14. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Down and Connor House Belfast, to ‘My dear Sir’, The Revd W. St John Smyth, Rectory House, Portaferry
15 August 1828

Brief letter concerning payment of cess in the parish of Ardquin, where there seems to be a dispute. The bishop has examined various documentary sources to corroborate the view that Ardquin is a parish, and is thus due for the payment of cess. He is conferring with a Mr Frazer about the best mode of enforcing the payment, and is adequately persuaded that ‘the people who refuse are under a mere delusion’.

15. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Down and Connor House Belfast, to ‘My dear Sir’, The Revd W. St John Smyth, Parsonage House, Portaferry
22 September 1828

Writes to let him know it is their purpose to dine with him on Wednesday and if he is not tired of entertaining will extend the visit to Sunday. Mentions a christening and leaves it to Smyth to fix a date of convenience, but indicates it might be a propriety to have it in the regular service (morning or evening), when it would be most appropriate if ‘administered after the second lesson’. Mant alludes to a certain ‘awkwardness’ in the service being adopted for a bishop, suggesting his son Walter might act as his representative as sponsor at the font.

16. R[ichard] D&C House Belfast, to 'My dear Sir', The Revd W. St John Smyth, Portaferry
28 January 1829

Mant is obliged to his chancellor for the trouble he has taken in the 'Killough business' apparently to do with the payment of salary to a Mr Nelson. The bishop has concluded that there is no sufficient cause to withhold his salary and instructs Smyth to pay it. However, he is not totally satisfied with Nelson's conduct altogether and he should be on his guard in the ensuing year. He instructs that Nelson is to 'withdraw himself altogether from the school held in the Methodist chapel and from any other school except such as shall be under the discretion of the Minister of the parish'. He gives further instructions about additional training and his obligations to the incumbent, which he thinks concurs 'pretty much with that expected in [Smyth's] letter' on the subject.

17. R[ichard] Down and Connor, to 'My dear Sir', The Revd W. St John Smyth, Rectory House, Portaferry
19 February 1829

Mant advises Smyth that he has recommended to Mr Alexander [rector of Ahoghill] Mr Nevin as perpetual curate to the parish of Portglenone. The salary will be £100 per year, £75 of which is to be paid by the rector of Aghohill and £25 from the board. He further has recommended Mr Campbell for the curacy of the same parish, for which he will receive a good house and garden and £75 per year.

18. R[ichard] Down and Connor, See House Belfast, to 'My dear Sir', The Revd W. St John Smyth, Portaferry

The Ardquin case seems ongoing, as in this instalment Mant informs Smyth he has been to the Record Tower in Dublin, with Mr Hare, a professional man, 'to inquire into the question of Ardquin being a parish'. Again he refers to various documentary sources including the Down Survey and maps, which clearly indicate the presence of a church. There is much useful detail about Mant's sense of what the documents were telling him: about the clear evidence for not only a parish but also a worshipping church and of several townlands belonging to the bishop. He urges Smyth to communicate this information to Mr Frazer and direct 'the churchwardens to procure forthwith in collecting the cess for such things as are requisite to the church' adding their course of proceeding is plainly marked out in the Vestry Act.

19. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Dublin, to 'My dear Sir', The Revd W. St John Smyth, Portaferry
16 March 1829

Thanks his chancellor for the successful result concerning Ardquin. Agrees with Smyth's recommendations for the directors of the Lunatic Asylum: Sir Stephen May and Mr Maccartney, whom he thinks will in all probability be appointed.

Regarding Ahoghill, he advises that Mr Campbell declined the cure, and Mr Corken has also declined it. There seems to be some dispute with Mr Alexander about the rent of 23 acres, and the bishop concludes that Mr Alexander may find it difficult to fill the curacy with such conditions.

Refers to various family visits, and the ill health of Mrs Mant, commenting that 'a walk from the Castle Chapel quite knocked her up for the rest of the day'. On Saturday he dined at the Castle, commenting the Duke and Duchess 'have both of them much of the appearance of affable, unaffected people'.

He makes reference to the Exchequer Loan Bill Commission, and the impact it will have on helping loans for payments in the diocese. On return to Down he will meet with the committee.

Hopes Smyth's cold is better and that Mary, James and Frederick are well. Adds a comment about 'publick news' and the rumours rather than 'authentic intelligence' concerning a matter of great public interest [not specified] but commenting whatever it is 'appears the most perilous enterprise ever taken in hand by a British minister, and that is carried forward in the most astonishing and alarming manner. God grant all may be well!'

20. R[ichard]d Down and Connor, Dublin, to 'My dear Sir', The Revd W. St John Smyth, Portaferry
21 March 1829

Opens with surprise that the 'old church at Newtownards' is to be converted into a sessions house, a development that is not with his sanction, not even his knowledge. He will enquire further about it, but gives permission for the tablets to be removed into Smyth's church.

Indicates improvements to be made to Down cathedral interior, if the Exchequer Loan Bill Commission will lend money for the cathedral, security must be entrusted to the dean and chapter. He hopes for 'frugal and judicious management' of the payment.

He advises the period of his continuance in Dublin will be delayed as he has been asked to preach at the Castle Chapel on Good Friday and Easter Day, when it is usual for a bishop to preach. He thus will be unable to go to the country for a fortnight after he intended. The meeting they have planned for Down will thus need to be delayed, and he doubts if visiting him at Portaferry will be possible.

On the domestic front, Mrs Mant's condition continues to be a concern: 'much as she was, not ill, yet I cannot say she is well and sometimes suffering a good deal'. Agatha and Walter attended 'Patrick's night' [presumably at the Castle, and attended a private musical party with him the night before last. Thanks Mary for her letter, complimenting her writing: 'her ink is beautiful'.

21. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Dublin, to 'My dear Chancellor of Down', The Revd W. St John Smyth, Portaferry
10 April 1829

After the Easter sojourn in Dublin, the bishop is glad to report he will stay with the Smyths in Portaferry, following business on the journey home, including the consecration of a new church in Drogheda for the primate, a visit to Rostrevor which he wishes to see, they will proceed there. He advises that he has arranged a meeting with the dean of Down of the 'Tower committee' and that Mr Sands has commenced 'the work of taking down'. There is much detailed information about the nature of the work and the business of a loan payment for same.

Mrs Mant's condition is much better and she felt strong enough to enter the drawing room last night. Agatha and Walter are both well and enjoying the activities. Walter is planning to go to Oxford.

22. R[ichard] Down and Connor, D&C House, to 'My dear Chancellor of Down'
13 June 1829

Advise he has forwarded his letter to Mr Cupples and hopes to have the pleasure of seeing him towards the end of the week. Adds a note that Smyth's mother has informed them they 'may expect to see [Mant's] cousin Henry John this week', a piece of pleasurable intelligence.

23. R[ichard] Down and Connor, See House, to 'My dear Chancellor of Down'
6 July 1829

Writes he has been in the company of Lord Castlereagh concerning his subscription to Down cathedral, and the pledged subscription of his father, Lord Londonderry. There seems to be some confusion because Lord Castlereagh was unaware of his father's intentions. He requests Smyth to 'attend to this without delay' and find the relevant papers, which he [Mant] remembers seeing in Smyth's house.

24. R[ichard] Down and Connor, D&C House, to 'My dear Chancellor', The Revd Wm. St John Smyth, Rectory House, Portaferry
23 July 1829

Will be obliged if Smyth will drop a line to Robert Nelson, parish clerk of Killough, directing him to call on Smyth for payment of half of a cheque for

£10 Irish currency. In rather convoluted detail, the bishop explains his bankers don't like him issuing cheques for sums less than £10.

Alerts him to the fact that the Primate's visitation will be held on the 20 August. He will be happy if Mary and their children can join with him at that time.

He intends to go to the northern part of the diocese for a few days. His brother and wife will join them. Soon after the visitation he intends to tour towards the 'other side of the channel'.

25. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Hillsborough to 'My dear Chancellor', The Revd Wm. St John Smyth, Parsonage House, Portaferry
14 August 1829

Shall be happy to see Smyth and his party next Tuesday. He will have the carriage ready to meet them at the place mentioned by Smyth.

26. R[ichard] Down and Connor, See House, to 'My dear Chancellor', The Revd Wm. St John Smyth, Parsonage House, Portaferry
11 September 1829

Mant is afraid he must now decline the pleasure of visiting him this autumn at Portaferry. Mrs Mant is not up to the exertion, being 'by no means well'. They have decided to be sensible and avoid 'the ill effects of the climate of the season'. Walter will visit him soon. He further thinks his presence at the chapter meeting next week 'hardly necessary' given the cathedral is closed 'during the progress of the work'. The dean has written to the archdeacon that he has intimated his intention to seek 'retrenching expenses in the service' for the work on the tower.

He has not visited the north, because of other engagements. His brother could not have accompanied him due to a very unpleasant attack – 'something erogenous in his nose'. Agatha has written from Zurich, where she reported they had an alarm due to a fire in the small inn in which they were staying but they 'happily escaped, as did all the other inmates, without personal injury'.

A PS note states a new church project is commencing at Belfast, on ground given by Lord Donegall, and with many persons friendly to the measure.

27. R[ichard] Down and Connor, D&C House, to 'My dear Chancellor', The Revd Wm. St John Smyth, Parsonage House, Portaferry
28 September 1829

Letter requesting information about Ardeen parish church, specifically in relation to the Primate's request for details of urgent cases requiring the

assistance of the Board of First Fruits. Mant wishes to know if Ardkeen falls into this category, and what its actual state is. He also asks for information about any peculiar circumstances that might make its need urgent, if it could 'cess itself for a loan and whether any aid could be procured in it by subscription'.

28. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Hillsborough, to 'My dear Chancellor'
10 March 1830 [letter is incomplete, so no address].

In this letter, Mant congratulates Smyth on 'the late happy event in your family'. He tells him not to worry about being present at his visitation, nor to trouble about the rural dean's returns, the Primate's visitation of the previous autumn being sufficient. He is happy to grant him a 'licence of non-residence for such time as may be necessary beyond [his] three months' in which case Smyth must send a regular petition and nomination of a curate, who must also be licensed, which the bishop hopes will not be inconvenient.

The bishop complains of the illness of his wife, where the letter remains incomplete: 'Mrs Robert Mant has been confined to her room since Tuesday in the last week. Her symptoms greatly resemble those of the doleurence...'

29. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Chapel House [Jersey?], to 'My dear Chancellor', The Revd Wm. St John Smyth, 4 Green Park Buildings [also Jersey?]
15 May 1830

The change of address for the Chancellor seems to confirm his absence as alluded to in the item above. The bishop requests that if he has the means to procure information could he establish how the law would apply to Mr Ballick 'in the want of his becoming perpetual curate of Ardkeen', and if he would be able to hold his present appointments, so as to have a resident curate. A number of pencilled calculations are annexed to the letter, itemising various salary options and exemptions.

Mant asks the chancellor to assist him by sending on relevant information, or if he had 'no other engagement' hopes he might be so good as to bring it to him.

30. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Bath, to 'My dear Chancellor', The Revd Wm. St John Smyth, Portaferry, Ireland
9 July 1830

Thanks Smyth for his congratulations and informs him that their nursery is going on extremely well. The bishop comments that: 'we have reason to be thankful that every thing has from the beginning been in a most prosperous state'.

Family details follow: 'Mary [Smyth] will be happy to hear a good account of her mother' who visited them yesterday.

Refers to contested elections being the norm in several of the counties of the North of Ireland, having read today's *Newsletter*. He has seen his neighbour Mr Robert Bateson among the candidates for Derry, adding 'on such occasions I find myself better out of the way'. His absence notwithstanding however, he has received several letters soliciting support from the Downshire candidates, including Col. Forde who he is rather perturbed to report suggested to him 'to use my influence with my clergy, which I begged to decline'. Forde's subsequent letter to electors shows him to be 'far from accommodating'.

In the election climate, he urges Smyth to pursue Lords L[ondonderry] and C[astlereagh] for their subscriptions to 'the Tower', noting that 'perhaps the heart may be more open, and the purse less exhausted, just now, than at a future period'.

Refers to Walter's plans being altered, allowing him to 'take another opportunity for his being ordained'. Frederick is in Scotland, his last letter from Leith after which he was going to Aberdeen. The younger son has reported he is 'well pleased with his Captain and his prospects'.

Final issue in this rather long communication relates to Ardkeen and Ardquin parishes. Mant does not like Smyth's account of the situation, and asks him to let Mr Ballick know that he wishes Mr Ward to become fixed in this cure.

31. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Bath, to 'My dear Chancellor', The Revd Wm. St John Smyth, Portaferry, Ireland, enclosing a letter from the Revd Charles Moffat, Downpatrick, addressed to 'My Lord' Bishop of Down and Connor, in which Moffat outlines how undertook duties in the parish of Ardkeen, during the absence of Mr Gregg, dated 10 July 1830
15 July 1830

It appears that Mr Moffat has not been paid for several months of his eight month cover of service in Ardkeen and that there is some dispute with the incumbent, Mr Gregg. The bishop gives his opinion and advises Smyth to take the appropriate action.

32. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Lichfield, to 'My dear Chancellor', Mr Chancellor, Portaferry, Ireland
8 August 1830

Agrees with Smyth's measures in relation to Ardkeen, that 'Mr Bullick cannot be properly called upon to pay for the services performed by Mr Moffat until he shall have received wherewithal to pay it from the benefice'.

They saw his friends recently in Green Park Buildings and all were well. 'They' are going to Western Super Mare, and then Matlock.

The bishop reports of his own movements in the vicinity of Bath, including Malmesbury Abbey, Warwick Castle etc before arriving at Lichfield.

33. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Bowness, to 'My dear Chancellor', Mr Chancellor Smyth, Portaferry, Ireland, by Portpatrick
8 September 1830

States his intension to hold an ordination in October, and asks Smyth if he will preach 'the ordination sermon', adding he might answer him at Patterdale, near Penrith, Cumberland, where they expect to be next week, on their way to Carlisle, then Portpatrick and then back to their own residence. If he undertakes the sermon, Mary and Alicia have promised to attend, and let he and Mrs Mant 'see them for a few days at Down and Connor House'. A PS notes he may bring the children and any servants.

The letter concludes with descriptions of their excursions in the English countryside, in Warwickshire, Derbyshire, Yorkshire, and Lake of Windermere.

34. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Down and Connor House, to 'My dear Chancellor', The Revd Mr Chancellor Smyth, Portaferry
25 September 1830

Reports they returned four days ago. The wind was up on the journey, and Mrs Mant suffered a good deal. However, in spite of the heavy winds, had they not travelled that day, they would have been detailed at Portpatrick or suffered a still worse passage. He is grateful that Smyth will preach at the ordination fixed for the 10 October, and does not think it will put him to any inconvenience: 'I remember you gave us a very good one when you preached before on the occasion'. Mrs Mant has begged him to say that the same nursery used for James Frederick will be available for the 'little boy', and hopes that Mary will bring him.

The main purpose of the letter is to enclose 'an account of proceedings in Mr McGillicuddy's case' for which Mant requests Smyth's opinion. When he has read the papers, he requests Smyth to forward them to Mr Creery.

35. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Dublin, to 'My dear Chancellor', The Revd Mr Chancellor Smyth, Parsonage House, Portaferry
22 November 1830

This letter contains useful insight to Mant's views about the government administration, which is far from complimentary. It opens with routine comments about building work for a clergy residence, and Smyth's judicious advice about a 'Mr George's additions' for the residence for Mr Ward.

The bishop compliments Smyth on his 'loan to the Lagan Navigation Company', then has some interesting comments about a recent storm, which appears to have been countrywide, as the Bishop of Cloyne reported to him that it was 'the highest gale of wind that I remember since I came to the south of Ireland'.

The bishop then goes to political matters, and says he knows not what may be 'plotted concerning the Vestry Act and the First Fruits', but fears it will doubtless be 'no good'. The recent change of administration has no promise of 'any protection to the Church'. He is gloomy about 'the aspect of things' but reminds himself: 'God is good, wise and powerful, and here only is my anchor'. He speculates whom the new ministry may be: 'Lord Grey as Premier, Mr Birmingham as Lord Chancellor, with a pledge that Parliamentary Reform shall be a cabinet measure, and the M[arquis] of Anglesey as Lord Lieutenant': an appointment about which Mant seems particularly unhappy.

36. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Dublin, to 'My dear Chancellor', The Revd Mr Chancellor
21 February 1831

The letter is full of routine diocesan administrative business, between bishop and chancellor. The Armoy parish issue seems resolved as Mr Ward has declined, and Mr William Blackwood has accepted the offer. He mentions the 'college livings' have come 'down so low as John Martin', but two vacancies will remove the chief impediments out his way. The bishop of Kilmore is to offer him a home which will secure him from his 'present desultory state'.

Commenting on matters episcopal, Mant says in relation to the diocese of Cork that 'the uncertainty about Cork appears as great as ever: perhaps greater, for publick conjecture which was once busy on the prospects of individuals seems to have lost objects for its exertion'.

He reports that the Ecclesiastical Enquiry is going forward and making progress.

On family developments, he reports their son Frederick's ship is ordered to Lisbon and thence to Rio.

37. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Dublin, to 'My dear Chancellor'
22 February 1831

A brief letter informing the Chancellor of the appointment of the Provost [of Trinity College] as the new bishop of Cork and of his successor as Provost as Dr Lloyd. He reports a number of names were 'sent over to the other side of the water for selection.

38. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Dublin, to 'My dear Chancellor', The Revd Wm St. J. Smyth
25 March 1831

Letter reporting that Mr Frazer has terminated his cure at Ardkeen early, and entrusting the Chancellor to manage the business of finding his successor: 'it is my wish that you should find in him an agreeable neighbour as well the parish an useful pastor'. He suggests Walter [Mant?] as a possibility but then retracts it, as Walter would be better remaining where he is for the time being. He has offered it to another, whom he suspects will not take it, and so concludes that perhaps Mr Black who was interested in the parish of Ardquin would accept it. The letter concludes with detailed proposals for shuffling clergy in the diocese.

The letter concludes with kind regards to Smyth's family and hopes that the eldest son, James Frederick, 'will understand what is meant by the Bishop sending his love to him'.

39. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Ardbawn House, Killeshandra [County Cavan] to 'My dear Chancellor'
26 December 1831

Routine letter about arrangements for the appointment of Mr O'Beirne to the parish of Ardquin. The bishop reports they have come to Killeshandra, in expectation of 'the great event' in the family, but does not say what the event will be. Their son Frederick is making advances in the admiralty, and his various destinations and employments are detailed.

40. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Bath, to 'My dear Chancellor', The Revd William St John Smyth, Parsonage, Portaferry, Ireland
8 June 1832

Thanks Smyth for his letter of 30 May and 'most pleasing intelligence' during troubled times and absence of peace for the Empire. Domestically, his wife has had a violent attack of cholera and although recovering, has little strength. Reports of Smyth's friends at G.D.B. who have moved to Freshford. Mentions having breakfast with 'the Captain' who is planning a visit to Ireland, and then speaks of his own intended return to Ireland, which he intends will be soon, although he has 'nothing in particular to fix me to time'.

The Primate has decided not to hold his triennial visitation this year, and so Mant decides he will cancel his own visitation, which he thinks will accommodate the clergy.

The letter concludes with two other items of business: payments of salary for Mr Lascelles and Mr Tyrrell, and the licensing of the latter, which Mant feels

will improve his situation, and the alleged slander of William Bristow of Hollywood by Mr Bland, about which the bishop has received a letter from the former containing 'very violent language against Mr Bland'.

41. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Bath, to 'My dear Chancellor', The Revd William St John Smyth, Portaferry
19 March 1833

The bishop opens with another mention of a letter from G.P.B. which contains information of the welfare of Smyth's friends there. They have since had Anne and 'her pretty little boy' to visit, and George is expected from London that evening. Mrs Mant is getting better and stronger and he hopes she will be able to bear their approaching journey, which will be next week after he has attended to some unexpected business in Bath. He reports of a recent visit of John Martin and Agatha, with their little ones, and that they have he supposes now returned to Killeshandra. Of his sons, he writes: Walter write a good account of himself. Frederick is probably by this time at Barbados'.

Mant then responds to Smyth's desire to take pupils, which he has no objection to as he has confidence it will not affect Smyth's parochial duties. However, he hopes it will not lead 'to the sacrifice of much domestick comfort'.

He agrees with Smyth's views on Lord Althorp's bill [the Irish church reform bill, which threatened church livings and incomes], which contains many 'highly objectionable provisions', about many of which 'many of the bishops have objected', and refers to a recent meeting 'of all the clergy of the diocese of Dublin, open to other clergy' under the chairmanship of the dean of St Patrick's at which similar meetings were recommended to protest about the bill. The bishop comments that when such action is taken it is 'more likely ... to have some effect'. However, rather negatively, he wonders if any such effort may be made in Down and Connor.

The letter concludes with family news, including that his brother's wife is 'pretty well' but Miss Lyn 'has been very ill'.

42. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Down and Connor House, to 'My dear Chancellor', The Revd William St John Smyth, Portaferry
9 April 1833

This letter contains news of the ill health of various family members and friends. His trip home was delayed because Mrs Mant became ill, and they had to stop. His granddaughter Lizzie [daughter of Agatha and John Martin] took 'very ill a month ago at Borrodale on their way to Killeshandra' with worm fever and has suffered a great deal, requiring the 'most powerful medical applications'. While Walter is better, the doctor has prohibited him

returning home at present. They have heard nothing of Fred since he sailed on February 18th.

Dr Cupples has informed him about a petition from the clergy against the 'Spoilation Bill' [reference to Althorp's proposed Irish church reform bill], which Mant reiterates he has 'no present intention of moving in the business'. Whilst the moment appears quite a critical one and requires some communication on his part, he is now on the spot, but has not changed his view. As he did when he petitioned the throne along with a large number of the bishops, he remains 'against the measure'.

He reports that Mrs Mant is busy attending to household affairs, and will have to postpone writing to Mary. He concludes enclosing various items, including 'a little volume lately published', which may be one his own works. He hopes Smyth will soon 'come into this neighbourhood' when the Mants will be happy to see him.

43. R[ichard] Down and Connor, D&C House, to 'My dear Chancellor', The Revd William St John Smyth, Parsonage House, Portaferry
6 June 1833

Refers to an enclosed memorial from Mr O'Beirne [Andrew O'Beirne, chaplain at Ballycastle, 1830-31?], and begs Smyth to have another interview with him on the same matter. Mant reveals that when he saw Mr Emerson Tennant's notice of his intended motion, he [Mant] thought it 'extremely ill advised and calculated to do no good rather injury to the very class of persons for whose benefit it was proposedly intended'. But he concludes that it is up to Mr O'Beirne and his brethren to make their own judgement.

He concludes with family news and glad to report 'my family are wellnigh recovered from their late illness. The latest account of little Lizzie is also promising'.

44. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Down and Connor House, Belfast, to 'My dear Chancellor', The Revd William St John Smyth, Rectory House, Portaferry
5 July 1833

He apologises for informing Smyth late about his proposal to hold an ordination on the 14th inst. He does not wish to inconvenience his chancellor, but hopes if he is available he can attend the previous Thursday for 'the examinations', when he will be assisted by Walter who 'is on the spot' and Mr Creery. If he is able to attend, they would have much pleasure in seeing him.

The domestic news continues to improve, with the arrival of a little girl [to Walter and his wife, see letter below] and the house has the appearance of a 'lying in party'. All are recovered the late epidemick, and little Lizzie is 'quite

recovered'. They also heard not long ago from Frederick, then at Jamaica, and preparing to embark to Halifax.

45. R[ichard] Down and Connor, D&C House, to 'My dear Chancellor', The Revd William St John Smyth, Parsonage House, Portaferry
5 August 1833

Mant requests Smyth to preach at his forthcoming visitation and apologies for the short notice in making preparation. He hopes that Smyth will bring Mary and his children for visitation week, and on this issue, refers to his wife's letter on the 'other half of the sheet' in which she outlines domestic arrangements. She also refers to the progress of the little newborn baby and her role as nurse and overseer of diet.

46. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Hillsborough, to 'My dear Chancellor', The Revd William St John Smyth, Parsonage House, Portaferry
18 September 1833

With regard to Ardglass, he informs his chancellor that he has not yet heard from Mr Erck although he has heard he has been returned from Dublin for a fortnight. He reports that Mr Traill [Robert Traill, rector of Ballintoy, 1777-1842, and prebendary of St Andrew (Down) 1782-1842] has had a severe attack, which may prove fatal, and so he decides to leave the matter for the moment, so that in the event of a vacancy occurring they can see what arrangement may be effected. But in the meantime, he would be glad to learn 'the value of the P.C. of Ardglass'.

He then attempts to calculate if Ballintoy would be a preferable preferment to Portaferry, reckoning it 'to be worth about £250 clear, with the House and glebe'.

There is a short P.S. note signed by Robert Mant, sorry to hear that Smyth has been 'again inconvenienced from [his] eye', and hoping that if Smyth proceeds to Bath shortly, that he will make their house his own on his journey.

47. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Lehard, Killeshandra, to 'My dear Chancellor', The Revd William St John Smyth, Portaferry
11 October 1833
Marked confidential

More about the bishop's intended arrangements for Mr Erck, who did not receive his last letter, in relation to 'the proposed alteration' of arrangements for Ardglass and the prebend of St Andrew's.

Then discusses various pending vacancies and possible arrangements for each of them in great detail, including the deanery of Down and the parish of Inch, the composition of the latter being worth about £286.

He refers to the resolution of the clergy of Kilmore, as 'much more discreet' than that from the clergy of Dromore, and concludes in contemplation about what step the clergy of D&C might make at this time.

48. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Lehard, Killeshandra, to 'My dear Chancellor', The Revd William St John Smyth, Archdeaconary House, Hillsborough
19 October 1833

The bishop has now heard from Mr Erck, and there is more detail in this letter about possible commutation arrangements for the prebendary of St Andrew's, and juggling of other appointments in the diocese of Down.

The bishop again refers to the Kilmore resolutions, published in the *Dublin Evening Mail*, and the useful meeting of the clergy there, including a motion put forward by Mr McGhee, the *Christian Examiner* and the *Evening Mail*, which Mant comments to be 'a sober view...that might turn mens' minds into a different course'.

On domestic fronts, he thanks the Smyths for taking charge of Miss Woods. He has availed of corresponding with Smyth at his brother's house in Hillsborough, and thanks him for his letter.

49. R[ichard] Down and Connor, D&C House, to 'My dear Chancellor', The Revd William St John Smyth, Parsonage House, Portaferry
20 February 1834

Illness has again afflicted, this time the Smyth household, with something contagious. Mant and his wife are concerned to hear the bad account of Smyth's family but glad that they are 'mending' and hopes they may join their friends 'without danger to yourselves or them'. It transpires that Mrs Mant has also been ill with various afflictions, about which the bishop devotes some detail.

He has heard nothing more about arrangements for Ardquin, nor any further communication from Mr Erck. He concludes their various calculations about parochial livings are not yet at an end. He commends the course of action Smyth is taking with the Ecclesiastical Commissioners concerning parochial payments. He presumes Smyth's church has not been afflicted by the winter storms, which have resulted in several applications for repairs made to the Commissioners, from other parishes.

50. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Hillsborough, to 'My dear Chancellor', Mr Chancellor Smyth, Parsonage House, Portaferry
28 March 1834

Writing from the home of his brother, the archdeacon, Robert Mant, the bishop informs his trusted chancellor of Walter's sudden and serious illness, a tumour at the base of his back. Thankfully following medical attention [detailed in the letter] it appears that at the time of writing he is recovering, but the bishop is remaining to attend in Hillsborough to assist with the duty until Easter Sunday.

He advises Smyth that an address is 'in preparation from the archbishops, bishops and clergy (of Ireland)...declaring attachment to the polity, doctrine and worship of the Church, and deprecating alterations, especially except by the recommendation of its spiritual guardians'. He expects a copy of the proposed address from the primate for the purpose of procuring signatures.

51. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Hillsborough, to 'My dear Chancellor', The Revd Mr Chancellor Smyth
9 April 1834

Letter announcing the sudden death of the bishop's brother, the Venerable Robert Mant, archdeacon of Down. In it a shocked bishop reveals the sudden deterioration of his brother's health, and unexpected demise. The arrangements for the funeral are added in a PS.

52. R[ichard] Down and Connor, D&C House, to 'My dear Chancellor', Mr Chancellor Smyth, Parsonage House, Portaferry
14 April 1835

Another death has occurred, and this time the bishop reports the circumstances of the death of the curate of the parish of Holywood, Mr Henry Davis Corry, [who died aged 28 on 11 April 1835]. The letter reveals he had a sudden attack of small pox 'which carried him off' quickly. Plans to provide cover to assist the rector, Mr Davis, are then discussed, and the bishop proposes Major Rowan's son as a possibility, but asks his trusted chancellor for his opinion first.

Then discusses another personal matter concerning 'the young man in this parish' about whose character some reservations have been expressed about his fitness to be ordained to be bishop. No name is provided, but the bishop's dilemma is revealed in full. He seems unconvinced by the tenor of the opposition.

He gives a fair report of his wife's health and the good health and spirits of his daughter Agatha, hoping that in a few days 'her expected troubles will be well over'.

He concludes his letter with delight at the reinstatement of Robert Peel to office, making reference to the inclusion of [Daniel] O'Connell in the new ministry, which it seems clear that Mant did not approve of: 'It has been

feared impossible to construct a new ministry without including O'Connell, and to that the King (God help him!) privately objected'.

53. R[ichard] Down and Connor, D&C House, to 'My dear Chancellor', Mr Chancellor Smyth, Portaferry
17 April 1835

The bishop has received an anonymous letter concerning the conduct of the young man, as first revealed in letter 52. above. This has placed the bishop in further dilemma 'to act in such a manner as may not only acquit me to my own conscience, but to the Church'. He cannot proceed until he knows the identity of the writer, and outlines to Smyth an idea to place an advertisement in *The Guardian* asking the writer to come forward.

There is more about the appointment of a curate for Holywood, and news that it has been offered by the rector, Mr Davis to Mr [Gerard Wensley] Tyrrell [Tyrrell eventually became curate, on 8 March 1836], but this letter reveals that at this point Major Rowan's son was also in the running.

There is more brief domestic updates, and a PS notes a letter just received from the Primate conveying the general belief that 'the Whigs will not let slip the present opportunity of regaining office'.

54. R[ichard] Down and Connor, London, to 'My dear Chancellor', Revd Wm St. Smyth, Portaferry, Ireland
12 July 1835

After a difficult passage of 14.5 hours, the Mants reached Liverpool, and are now in London. He has travelled somewhat urgently it seems, having answered the Primate's call, and yesterday at the archbishop's house Mant reports that he met the bishops of Kildare, Elphin, Cork and Limerick. They are resisting a bill before Parliament. Other bishops and the archbishop of Dublin are on the way, although some will not be able to travel because of illness.

The letter reveals the nature of episcopal meeting and fraternity and also how parish matters, including a visit to several parishes in his diocese, were postponed by Mant, in the light of impending parliamentary business.

Concerning his accommodation in London, Mant adds that he is relocating from his hotel to private lodging in Suffolk Street, Pall Mall East.

55. R[ichard] Down and Connor, London, to 'My dear Chancellor', Revd Wm St. Smyth, Rectory House, Portaferry
24 July 1835

There is more about the opposition of the bishops to the proposed bill, and whilst 'perfect agreement' between them has not been achieved, they have

settled an address to the King and the Lords, bearing the signatures of the following who are present in London: the Primate, Tuam, Kildare, Elphin, Down and Connor, Cloyne, Cork and Ross, and Limerick. In contrast, Dublin and Derry 'will not sign'. Several bishops are not in London, but authority has been given for 'six out of seven' to sign up.

The Primate will spend a couple of days at Windsor with the King, and Mant's letter reveals that his Majesty is with them 'in favour of the Church'.

On other matters, this letter records word from Mr Charles Wolseley, rector of Ballyculter parish, that his church has been closed for repairs and in good ecumenical spirit, Mant recommends that the Methodist house in Strangford would be a suitable temporary accommodation. He requests Smyth to settle the business.

He concludes his letter by asking Smyth to 'let it be known' amongst the clergy, that he intends to return home in time for the 'adjourned confirmation'.

56. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Lahard, Killeshandra, to 'My dear Chancellor', 24 October 1835

This letter records the death of Dr [Snowden] Cupples, rector of Lisburn, and suggests that the rectory might be a more suitable benefice to Smyth than his current one. The bishop advises him not to be concerned about withdrawing from his current situation, in which he [Mant] had previously placed him. The letter is merely suggesting a course of action, but Mant is careful to point out that in the event that Smyth puts his name forward, he 'must abstain altogether from taking an action or part on the occasion...and must be kept clear of all obligation to the Patron of Lisburn or to any person whom he may consult on the occasion'. He makes it clear in conclusion, however, he is 'very willing to cooperate for the attainment of your object', of which he would consider him worthy.

57. R[ichard] Down and Connor, 8 Nassau Street, Dublin, to 'My dear Chancellor', The Revd Mr Chancellor Smyth, Parsonage House, Portaferry 9 November 1835

The bishop responds to information about the patronage of Lisburn provided by Smyth, which he says is 'quite new to me'. He advises Smyth that he would not be disposed to any risk. It appears that Lord Hertford is the patron, as the bishop continues he has received no intelligence about Lord Hertford's intentions. He is clearly trying his best to secure the position for Smyth as the letter further divulges other conversations and communications he has had with Dean Stannus [James Stannus, who held the sinecure post of dean of Ross, 1830-76, and was eventually appointed as rector of Lisburn], Dr Cupple's son, Edward, and the Registrar. He informs Smyth that Edward is to succeed his father as vicar general: 'his long

experience of the duties of the office, his diligent and faithful discharge of them, and his general acquaintance with ecclesiastical law pointed him out to me as the fit person for the appointment’.

The bishop finally reports that they left Lahard in Killeshandra two weeks ago, having spent a pleasant family time there. Frederick is soon to embark on more world travels, ‘first for the *Leveret*, Plymouth and thence...for the coast of Africa’. He goes into some detail about all the ships in the station being small, and that Frederick will sail to Africa on an 18 gun ship.

A PS commends Smyth’s collection for the ‘Association’ as good and then refers to a recent report in the *British Magazine* describing the recent address of the clergy to the Primate, as ‘pretty disrespectful’.

58. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Dublin, to ‘My dear Chancellor’, The Revd Wm. St John Smyth
14 November 1835

There is more about the Lisburn benefice, and detailed information about the extent of the patronage, which Mant reveals he thinks ‘so very dubious a chance of the Bishop having any right of the patronage’. He further reveals information from Dean Stannus, and that Messrs. Morewood and Robert Trail have applied for it, but so far Mr Edward Cupples has not.

He reports of his son Frederick’s appointment on the coast of Africa and again goes into detail about his travels there.

The letter concludes that he will soon be resident at Belmont, Cold Blow Lane, in Dublin, until next March, when he ‘shall have occasion to be here on official business’.

59. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Belmont, Cold Blow Lane, Dublin, to ‘My dear Chancellor’, The Revd Mr Chancellor Smyth, Parsonage House, Portaferry
18 December 1835

Brief letter informing Smyth that the bishop has forwarded to G.P.B. [Bath] his “rejected address”. He also mentions various reports in newspapers about Lord Clare’s arrival at Mount Shannon and other city gossip. His son Frederick has left for Africa aboard the *Water Witch* as senior mate and thus next to the lieutenant who commands it.

60. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Dublin, to ‘My dear Chancellor’, The Revd Mr Chancellor Smyth
5 March 1836

Response to Smyth’s letter in which he has been critical about the ‘conduct of ministers in relation to the church’ namely the recent appointment of Mr Hompden which Mant agrees ‘under the circumstances’ to be scandalous,

and the proposed new bishop of Durham, whom it is suspected will be a translation of bishop Longley from Chichester, as a 'natural course'. However, Mant is concerned that it should be 'a man of less questionable orthodoxy in that high place of the Church'.

On other fronts, he gives Smyth the name and address of the secretary of the 'Lay Association' as Sir George Rick, 39 Westmorland Street, Dublin, and then indicates his intention to cross the water in a few days, as soon as they get a promising day to sail.

He is glad to report they had a full compliment of four archbishops and nine bishops at their recent meeting (the only absentees being Killaloe, Clogher and Limerick). They achieved 'perfect unanimity' condemning the principle of the Home Mission Society while agreeing to have a conference by a committee with the Episcopal Chapel of Ease Society, with a view to getting a parliamentary bill on the subject. They also agreed a memorial fund for a theological prize at Trinity College Dublin, in memory of the late bishop of Ferns.

Finally there is good detail about parish realignments, following the appointment of Dean James Stannus to the parish of Lisburn. Mr Savage Hall goes to Ballinderry, Mr Thompson to Derreaghy, and Smyth's young friend, Revd Robert Rowan to the prebend of Dunsford. On the pending vacancy at Ardquin with the removal of Mr Milligan to 'the little vicarage of Killaney' the bishop reports that Smyth may soon expect a new neighbour: Mr Cecil Smyly, who will, he hopes 'be an acceptable acquisition' for him.

61. R[ichar]d Down and Connor, Abingdon Street, London, to 'My dear Chancellor', The Revd Mr Chancellor Smyth, Parsonage House, Portaferry, Ireland
5 May 1836

The bishop congratulates Smyth on the arrival of his 'little daughter and the safety of her mamma' [reference to Smyth's only daughter, Gertrude Adeline]. He then speaks of his own son Frederick's success as commander of the *Water Witch* and quotes from a recent letter in which the new commander recites the capture of a Spanish Brig.

With regard to Mr Rowan, he has refused to give him letters dismissory for Limerick and looks forward to ordaining him soon

The remainder of the letter is devoted to political matters: the issue of ecclesiastical polity; Lord Morpath's Bill, and also mentions the publication of two tracts by Mant: his letter to Lord Melbourne, "The Churches of Rome and England Compared" and "Romanism and Holy Scripture Compared", which are available at Parker's on the Strand. He begs that Smyth will promote news of their publication.

62. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Abingdon Street, London, to 'My dear Chancellor', The Revd Mr Chancellor, Portaferry, Ireland
14 May 1836

Since his last letter, there has been much concern about Agatha, who is suffering from 'sharp rheumatick fever' and as a result John Martin left town a week early. His return home had resulted in her improvement. But they received opposite news about a good family friend, Mrs Rickman, who died suddenly, following a heavy chill. Mrs Mant feels this loss terribly.

Again he mentions his recently published tracts, and hopes for their promotion among Belfast booksellers. He encloses a copy of the 'RC marriage bill', seeking Smyth's comments upon it.

Finally, their return to Ireland is uncertain as they await the bringing forward of the Irish Tithe Bill. He has desired Mr Rowan to take charge at Dunsford, and has referred him to both Smyth and Mr Campbell in respect of the Communion.

[note a gap in the run of correspondence covers the best part of a year, during 1837]

63. R[ichard] Down and Connor, D&C House, to 'My dear Chancellor', The Revd William St John Smyth, Parsonage House, Portaferry
14 April 1838

Routine business letter informing Smyth of recent communication by Mant from a Mrs Colhoun for influence with the Dean and Chapter of Down cathedral in securing her one of the widow's houses overseen by the chapter in Downpatrick. The bishop has no intention of asking Smyth to do anything other than what he judges as right, but to satisfy Mrs Colhoun's demands. He is sorry to trouble Smyth, which he does only because his son Walter has left for Dublin.

Mr Rowan, described here as Smyth's commission, has requested a change of parish owing to his wife's health, and desires 'an inland parish'. [He was subsequently sent to Lambeg], but here the bishop considers him for Holywood, following the death of the rector, Revd Mr Davis. He proposes various names to take over at Dunsport, but regrets the loss of 'our present curate, who is a steady man, and has been very useful in the parish'.

Finally, proposes to call a meeting of the clergy to discuss Lord Russell's resolutions. The Armagh clergy and the primate have already objected to them.

64. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Down and Connor House, to 'My dear Chancellor', Mr Chancellor Smyth, Parsonage, Portaferry
22 April 1838

Thanks Smyth for his letter concerning Mrs Colhoun. With regard to Mr Rowan's successor, there is much detail and many names are mentioned, including Mr Lecalles's curate of Belfast, by the name of Anderson.

Concerning the diocesan clergy meeting to discuss Lord Russell's resolutions, he has fixed it for the 3 May, and has advertised the meeting in both the *Belfast Com. Chronicle* and the *Ulster Times*.

He reports that again Mrs Mant has been unwell, but doing better now that she has been prescribed with medication. Walter has returned from Dublin, where he consulted with someone named Gervas, and 'much pleased with the result of his journey'. He and his lady will accompany 'the Captain', Mant's other son Frederick to the Lakes on Frederick's next break,

65. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Down and Connor House, to 'My dear Chancellor', the Revd Wm St John Smyth, Rectory House, Portaferry
28 May 1838

This letter reveals that the bishop has injured his arm, but is now 'going on very well', the bandages having been removed. The state of the writing and his own admission reveal that it will be some time before the strength returns to it. He declines Smyth's invitation to visit Portaferry, on account of the expected arrival of his sister Emily from Ramoan, also Mr and Mrs Phillott, and an impending wedding at Holywood House.

He then goes into much detail about arrangements for his personal coat of arms, having discovered on his promotion to the Bench, that arms long in use by his family, including his father and uncles were 'false heraldry'. He has consulted the proper channels at the Herald's Office [not specified if this is the Dublin-based office of the Chief Herald, or the College of Arms in London but presumably the latter as] the Earl Marshall of England has granted him new arms, based on the arms of the town and county of Southampton, with a bible, and motto from the 119th psalm included. All has now been rectified by the heralds, and he is glad to report he has legitimate arms. He hopes that if Smyth has the opportunity he will convey this information to George [relative of both?].

Of clerical developments, the bishop reports that Mr Tyrrell has made arrangements with the future incumbent of Holywood to stay until August or perhaps November, but he is looking for a curacy, and if Smyth should hear of one suiting him, he might recommend him 'as a clergyman who has been very attentive to the duties of his present cure, and made a sensible improvement in the state of the parish'.

66. R[ichard] Down and Connor, D&C House, to 'My dear Chancellor'
19 January 1839

More clergy movements are revealed. Mr Smyly is about to quit Ardquin, and as Mr Tyrrell is now engaged with the Church Education Society, the bishop wishes the parish to be 'in the hands of a good clergyman, and one who may be pleasant to [Smyth] as a neighbour'. He recommends Mr [James] Geraghty as such a character and whose engagement with Mr Rowan he expects to expire quite soon. Should this accord with Smyth's notions, the bishop recommends 'to do good as to offer him the cure: it is only £74 per annum'.

He further informs Smyth of their intention to go to Dublin, where they will reside at 29 Molesworth Street, and from where he will take in the business of the Church Accommodation Committee. He reports that arrangements are well in hand for its work, and furthermore that the rules of the Church Education Society of Ireland have been settled. He anticipates taking in a meeting of 'our diocesan society' on his way to Dublin, and asks Smyth to look into arrangements for the son of someone called Richard to get to Bath – either by Holyhead or Liverpool, through Birmingham, whichever is the cheaper.

He complains his hand is rather tired, and concludes the letter suddenly.

67. R[ichard] Down and Connor, D&C House, to 'My dear Chancellor', Mr Chancellor Smyth, Portaferry
17 May 1839

The poor handwriting continues, and this letter contains mostly family news of health and a recent visit to Lahard, Killeshandra. There is a humorous comment about matters political: that in spite of Smyth's loyal patronage, it looks as if Sir Robert Peel will soon be 'out of government', whilst in relation to matters royal, the bishop conveys that he is sorry for 'the poor queen', whom he states 'is to be pitied in being made such a cat's paw by her monkey advisers'. The rest of the letter is devoted to his son Frederick's future studies at Oxford, and news of his sister's family at Ramoan.

68. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Dublin, to 'My dear Chancellor', Mr Chancellor Smyth
22 December 1839

The bishop outlines plans for a publication of a selection of his writings in the ? Cat[hedral] Mag[azine], by the publisher Parker [who published his history of the Church of Ireland], and mentions a decision by the S.P.C.K. Committee.

He then outlines the success of his recent ordination of no less than 25 new clerics at the College Chapel in Dublin, who had been trained directly by himself, 'having found there were several young men looking for holy orders, with no prospect of procuring them. I therefore volunteered thinking it be a general benefit for the Church, provided the responsibility of examination was taken intirely from me'.

He informs Smyth that his Registrar, who attended the recent ordination, will return with a copy of his *History of the Church of Ireland* recently published, for which the bishop begs his chancellor's 'acceptance' and hopes he 'will find it sufficiently interesting to induce [him] to go through it'.

The letter concludes with the usual health reports. Mrs Mant's 'sufferings are less acute' while Frederick 'is recovering from the small pox'.

69. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Dublin, to 'My dear Chancellor'
28 February 1840

Letter responding to Smyth's last, to enclose 'accompanying papers' [no longer present] concerning the site for the intended church at Ardkeen.

He wishes Smyth well in his arrangements with 'H.J.M.' and advises that he has seen the dean of Kildare this week who 'seemed to say that a pulpit had been procured' for Smyth. Mant adds that he hopes it 'will so turn out'.

He is glad Smyth is well disposed to his 'History' but fears it is 'all but a selection', however, it is good that there is a 'continuous account of the Irish Church' and he adds the forthcoming 'Dub[lin] Univ[ersity] Mag[azine] contains a favourable account of [his] book'.

70. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Dublin, to 'My dear Chancellor'
6 March 1840

Follow up letter thanking Smyth for his opinion on the site for Ardkeen Church, in which the bishop reports that he enquired about it at the Castle, but no decision has yet been made about the ground by the Council. The papers about it remain with Mr Bullick.

He reports that the question about the diocesan school 'is settled', an unnamed person having 'resigned the mastership'.

71. R[ichard] Down and Connor, D&C House, to 'My dear Chancellor'
8 June 1840

Rather convoluted letter seeking Smyth's opinion about the bishop's complicated travel arrangements, which reveal he would prefer not to stay with the curate at Kilmoody [where the rector and precentor of Down, Mr Gordon's] house 'is down' and opting for more salubrious accommodation with Lady Annesley and others, on his journeys to various parishes.

He does not wish to leave Mrs Mant alone for too long, as they have recently had much company, who have all departed, thus potentially leaving her alone. He reports information about her condition, which seems to be a form

of arthritis: whilst more capable on her feet, 'her hands are sadly disabled'. They look forward to a sojourn to Buxton, which may ease her condition.

72. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Buxton, to 'My dear Chancellor'
24 July 1840

Mrs Mant's condition continues to restrict her movement, and the bishop reports with regret she has been forced 'to give up bathing in the natural bath' and advised to 'resume the warm bath' which they hope will have 'good effect'.

He is glad of the 'intelligence of Primate Newcome' which he thinks promising. There is mention of books, and arrangements for payment of a bond, about which Smyth's guidance is sought.

A PS notes that on the last half of the page, which bears the words 'Whitehall, July 14th 1840' the bishop had begun to copy a letter by Lord Normandy, acknowledging 'our recent address'.

73. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Bath, to 'My dear Chancellor'
25 August 1840

More on health issues, and the bishop is pleased to hear about Mary Smyth's improved health. Mrs Mant is also doing well. The bishop is pleased about how 'cathedral proceedings' are going, and the decision shared by his son, Walter, the archdeacon, 'not spending all your money on the service without securing a place for its celebration' is well advised.

Clerical appointments for the parish of Ardquin again are up for discussion, and a Mr Freke is to be considered. The bishop urges Smyth to 'undertake that he would be properly examined'. As the bishop of Limerick is proposing to hold an ordination in September, that might be a way of ensuring the appointment. Otherwise, he suggests that Mr Tyrell might fill the cure, in addition to his role as Secretary to the Church Education Committee.

Finally there is discussion about a new appointment to be made for the new church in the parish of Craigs, in the diocese of Connor, and the bishop seems a little perturbed that a Mr Nevin sent his application to the Lord Lieutenant, not having first informed the bishop.

74. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Bath, to 'My dear Chancellor'
29 September 1840

This letter opens with comments about the offer by Mr Ricky [Revd Walter Ricky, appointed curate of Ballymacarrett, diocese of Dromore, in 1840, and concurrently as chaplain of Ballycastle, in the diocese of Connor, from 1841] to take temporary charge of Killough. The bishop seems concerned that Mr

Courtney [perpetual curate in Ballymacarett] is too much 'in want of assistance' to allow this to happen.

On other matters clerical, the bishop does not understand 'the Dean of Connor's proposal' [not specified], but hopes the dean [Very Revd John Chaine, dean of Connor 1839-55] has 'clear view of it himself', as he appears to Mant to be 'a well disposed and liberal man'.

Mrs Mant's afflictions continue, and the malady is acutely restricting her movement. In these circumstances, the bishop cannot think it right to re-convey her to Ireland, and so he has 'taken the Chapel House for her winter abode'. He thus will only countenance a temporary visit to Ireland. He reports finally to be busy with his book [*The History of the Church of Ireland?*], and has just sent 'page 320 to the press'.

75. R. D&C, Bath, to 'My dear Chancellor'
26 November 1840

Brief note advising Smyth he has offered 'the precentorship of Down to Mr Cumming [Revd Hugh Smith Cumming] of Ballymena, recommended to me by his long standing, his high character, and my own judgement of his merits'. [Cumming served in this position from 1841 until his death in 1859].

There is reference to Mr John Gordon, of whom the bishop has good opinion, and forwards related information [not present], indicating an expected resignation.

76. R[ichard]d Down and Connor, Bath, to 'My dear Chancellor'
5 December 1840

Another brief letter informing Smyth that Cummings has accepted the precentorship of Down, and further discussing 'J.G.' [Revd John Gordon] and forthcoming vacancy of Donegore and Kilbride.

77. R[ichard]d Down and Connor, D&C House, to 'My dear Chancellor'
22 April 1841

Letter opens with thanks for Smyth's kind letter of welcome, and announcing their arrival 'after a long absence, which has been productive of much benefit to Mrs Mant who speaks of herself and evidently is much more capable of using her limbs than she was last year, and a great part of our sojourn in Bath. Her general health is good, and I thank God my own is admirable'.

The remainder of the letter is devoted to his own travels in the countryside; news of Frederick's preparations for examinations at Oxford; seeing Walter and Marianne with their children at Hillsborough, and finally, arrangements at Ballyclug and benefice entitlements under the Church Temporalty Acts.

A PS informs Smyth:

'I propose to hold an ordination on Trinity Sunday, but would not wish it to be published'.

78. R[ichard]d Down and Connor, D&C House, to 'My dear Chancellor'
31 July 1841

Brief note thanking Smyth for his offer of hospitality, which he is glad to avail of, providing they will put him 'into the little room at the stair head or wherever else may be more convenient'. He tells him he has 'one or two projects about my journey, about which I would wish to consult you'. He asks about arrangements for his horses, and if the carriage will 'make it over the water without difficulty'.

He reports Mrs Mant is much as Smyth has seen her. Frederick was ordained the previous Sunday.

79. R[ichard]d Down and Connor, D&C House, to 'My dear Chancellor'
22 December 1841

Sorry that Smyth has been ill, which he understands prevented him from attending the recent chapter meeting. He complains that as Smyth and others were not in attendance, Mr Gordon should not have called the meeting. In recent days, he has heard from Mr Gordon, and has 'accepted his apology as a peace-offering'.

He reports Mrs Mant has been very ill, and he fears 'a general breaking up or her constitution...she is very very feeble'. In these circumstances a visit by Smyth and his boys would not be advisable. 'A little company for an hour or two' is all she is able for. On his own health, he reports he is good, and last Sunday he 'held an ordination in the College chapel...with little fatigue though the building is long and the service requires exertion'.

For light reading, the bishop has sent some books of the Englishman's Library, which have afforded 'amusement in the evenings' and which he thinks might be enjoyed in Smyth's household, so he has forwarded them for his perusal.

80. R[ichard]d Down and Connor, D&C House, to 'My dear Chancellor'
14 June 1842

Letter informing Smyth that he has written to the Lord Lieutenant in relation to the prebendal corps connected to
, ordering new arrangements and parish unions. These are outlined in some detail.

He reports Mrs Mant is much improved and improving, and able to walk about without much difficulty. Indeed she has gone into Belfast to meet Frederick and his bride, returning from the Lakes, via Whitehaven. He jokes that according to the *Ulster Times* of this morning the bishop is informed that Frederick is 'to have Ballintoy', and various other rumours have also been heard.

Of the parish of Inch, he reports it to be in some uncertainty: 'the house is now empty and the commission of dilapidations has been applied for...the farm seems to have been not properly cultivated, and is much out of order'.

There is other brief family news, a recent visit from the archdeacon and 'Mrs Walter' and the death of the late master of his sons' school, Mr Dec has died due to scarlet fever which appears to have broken out in the school.

81. R[ichard] Down and Connor, D&C House, to 'My dear Chancellor'
15 June 1842

Again refers to re-ordering of parishes and prebends and asks for Smyth's consent in discontinuing the link between Ardglass and the chancellorship. He refers to the 'Ramoan party' being prevented from visiting because of Mrs Mant's indisposition. Frederick and 'his pleasing little bride' have arrived as expected and the bishop announces that this son 'is to have Inch and Mr Carter Ballintoy'.

82. R[ichard] Down and Connor, D&C House, to 'My dear Chancellor'
2 July 1842

Another brief letter offering 'sympathy' to Mary for some unfortunate event, not explained, and inviting her to say 'for a little change of air and scene' which might 'assist in soothing her mind'. Mrs Mant is to write letters along the same lines

83. R[ichard] Down and Connor, D&C House, to 'My dear Chancellor', the Revd W. St. John Smyth
7 December 1842

This letter seems to indicate a change is afoot for Smyth, as the bishop enquires has he heard from the Registrar calling for 'his resignation, consent etc'. He continues with other news – a melancholy visit to Dublin; agreeing with Smyth's estimate of the character of the government; some comments about the course of the Church Education Society; glad to hear of Smyth joining the Church Architectural Committee.

Finally the bishop asks for Smyth's opinion on 'the circumstances of Mr [Gerald Wensley] Tyrrell's appointment to Ardquin'. [The clerical succession list for Down does not indicate that this man was rector of the parish of Ardquin, but became rector of Drumbeg in 1843, but the bishop's comments in this item seem to indicate that he had been appointed].

‘It has sometimes struck me that objections may be such to his holding that cure, and that it may be not altogether desirable for himself. Can you say what may be his views and whether he would feel dissatisfied or otherwise if an opportunity should occur for placing a permanent curate there?’

The letter concludes with more news of Mrs Mant, whose ‘hands are much swollen again and well nigh useless’.

84. R[ichard] Down and Connor, D&C House, to ‘My dear Precentor of Connor’, the Revd W. St. John Smyth
11 March 1843

This is the first letter following Smyth’s appointment as Precentor of Connor, and the bishop uses it, opening the letter: ‘For such I understand is the designation to which you are intitled’, adding he is ‘glad to learn that you have accomplished your business, and centred on your new station, which I trust will be productive of as much good as can be reasonably expected for yourself and your family’.

On other business, the bishop asks Smyth to sort out a problem in relation to the ‘office of Chaplain to the Poor House’, held by a Mr Dunseath [curate of Ballymoney?]. He has objected to holding the position ‘on the ground of a want of provision for a clerk’. The bishop thinks it is not ‘sufficient ground for relinquishing the office if otherwise not objected to’. His opinion is that one of the clergy of the parish is the most suitable person for the appointment, because ‘the bringing in of a strange clergyman might be inconvenient’ and so he asks Smyth to ‘overcome [Mr Dunseath’s] scruples’.

85. R[ichard] Down and Connor, St Nicholas’s House, Westminster, to ‘My dear Precentor’, the Revd W. St. John Smyth
30 May 1843

The bishop is glad to learn that soon the new precentor and his family will be ‘settled in your rectory’. He is sure the past few weeks have been the cause of much fatigue with little relaxation. He encourages the new incumbent of Ballymoney [with which the precentorship was linked] that he may look forward to ‘some very pleasant neighbours’.

Hinting at a dispute in the past, the bishop comments: ‘If Mrs Leslie retains the power of being so agreeable and intelligent a companion as she used to be, Mary will have much satisfaction in her Society’, while her husband Mr Leslie is described as ‘a worthy man’. The ‘friendly owner of O’Hara Brook’ [Mr Charles O’Hara, with whom later correspondence reveals Smyth was to have his own difficulties, see section 6/ below] will, the bishop is sure under Smyth’s instructions ‘be cured of the alarm which he felt for the heterodoxy under the ostensible guise of Church Architecture’.

Finally the bishop reveals the business [unspecified] which brought him to London has occupied him much and hitherto he has been unable to form any judgement of the issue.

He sends kind regards to Mary, their children and Mrs Peter Egerton Warburton.

86. R[ichard] Down and Connor, D&C House, to 'My dear Precentor', the Revd W. St. John Smyth
24 June 1843

He congratulates Smyth on the 'above date' which is his birthday and outlines arrangements for his forthcoming visitations, which have been announced in the *Ulster Times*. Mrs Mant will be unable to visit, as she has had two journeys in a week to Inch, where there is a sick child [possibly a grandchild]. The symptoms are described in detail, and the bishop is glad to report the danger is over, but Mrs Mant will not return for another day or two. He hopes that on her return she will 'have no great annoyance from the Down race course repeal meeting'.

He regrets the date of his confirmation, which he hopes will not derange Smyth's plans, explaining 'this time of year is generally most convenient for the clergy, however individuals may sometimes be affected'.

87. R[ichard] Down and Connor, D&C House, to 'My dear Precentor'
20 August 1843

He is glad to 'hear so flourishing an account of [Smyth's] proceedings' and wishes him success for his forthcoming sermon, whether preached by Smyth himself, or by Boyd or by any other substitute.

Regarding some query about attending at political meetings that Smyth may have previously asked of him, the bishop replies: 'As a general rule the less part the clergy take in publick political meetings in my judgement the better. Whether the circumstances of the approaching meeting are such as to take it out of the general rule, each will judge for himself. It is not my purpose to attend'. Smyth will obviously have to make his own mind up on the basis of this information.

Finally in relation to internal improvements to the church at Ballywillan, the bishop makes small sketches of his preferences for recesses on the north and south sides of the altar, and alludes to further sketches that have been made by his daughter Agatha. He asks Smyth to make arrangements about the windows.

88. R[ichard] Down and Connor, D&C House, to 'My dear Precentor', The Revd W. St John Smyth
12 March 1844

It would appear from this and the next letter that Smyth has suffered a significant affliction of his health, as in it the bishop is rejoicing that Smyth's health has returned, and continuing to pray 'that the good Being who has thus far restored you will continue his good work and enable you to provide many years to come for his honour and the benefit of those who whether domestically or officially connected with you, have cause to take a lively interest in your welfare'.

He then follows with poor news about the state of his wife's health: 'now so much crippled by it that she can not walk up or down stairs and with difficulty even from one room to another', and while on the whole cheerful, 'her extreme debility [sic.] shows itself in her spirits at times'. They have also received news of her brother, Mr Woods, who is gravely ill, and so much so that they would not be surprised to hear of his death.

He has heard little news of Smyth's neighbourhood, on account of the cessation of the *Ulster Times*. He is glad to hear of a new paper coming, and will support it.

Finally on the parish of Ballyculter, nothing has reached him, and if the rector, Mr Leahy has vacated the benefice, it is news to the bishop as 'no resignation has been tendered'; while on the prebend of St Andrews, the primate is giving it his consideration.

89. R[ichard] Down and Connor, D&C House, to 'My dear Mary' [Mary Smyth]
14 March 1844

Letter enclosing item 88 above, asking Smyth's wife to read it, and if she thinks fit to submit it to her 'good man' for his immediate opinion. If he cannot, she is to return it to him immediately. He is glad to report that Mr Woods seems rather better.

90. R[ichard] Down and Connor, D&C House, to 'My dear Precentor'
21 April 1844

He is glad to hear from Mr Waddy that Smyth is much recovered and back 'wandering, I know not how far, from you own house'. He hopes he will gain more and more strength in the coming days.

He asks Smyth for assistance in seeking out intelligence about the original dedications of several parishes including Holywood, which is to 'christen' next week. Mant's preference he states is to dedicate 'after the old ecclesiastical custom' as well as giving it the name of the parish. He cites the example of Ballyclug the previous week, where he consecrated the new church in the 'name of St Patrick, the original building having been created by him'. There is more anecdotal information about the ancient history of both parishes.

The letter concludes with arrangements for new parish unions in the district of Kircubbin.

91. R[ichard] Down and Connor, D&C House, to 'My dear Precentor'
26 April 1844

Smyth's health is still clearly an issue, as in this letter the bishop warns him not to return to Church and his 'publick duties of religion' until Dr Lathmore says that he may do so safely. Permanently endangering his health is no 'act of duty either to God or man'.

92. R[ichard] Down and Connor, D&C House, to 'My dear Precentor'
26 June 1844

Glad to hear of his precentor's continued report of improvement, the bishop turns attention to his duties and making provision for cover. In relation to the duties of rural dean, he hopes he will not resign the position, but that perhaps temporary arrangements can be made to procure Mr Dunseath's services. If however Smyth decides to resign the office, Mant stresses: 'I will by no means require you to retain it and will look about for a successor'. As to Smyth's other office, Mant comments this carries no privilege, and therefore Smyth's holding of it will not interfere with any one. The bishop adds he has 'a full compliment of six' such chaplains, and feels that Smyth will not sink under the weight of being returned 'emeritus'.

The bishop concludes by informing him he is off to Dublin 'on account of a bill which I am preparing for Parliament, with good hope of success'. Mrs Mant may join him on the journey.

93. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Dublin, to 'My dear Precentor'
11 January 1845

Long and detailed letter on the subject of patronage of benefices, and in particular the claim of the Marquis of Donegal to the patronage of Connor, Ahoghill, Ballymoney, Island Magee, Kilroot, Ramoan, Kildallock in Connor, and Drumbeg in the diocese of Down; the additional claims of the Earl of Antrim to Culfeighston, Ramoan, Ballintoy, Rathlin and Armoy; and of Edmund McDonnell Esq. to Larne, Cairncastle, Kilwaughter, Glenarm, Alyde and Ardclinnis.

In relation to the general Irish context where there is a movement 'for keeping alive a claim' the bishop comments many benefices are under the patronage of the several bishops, and 'lay proprietors have pretended a claim to'. But having outlined various acts of parliament, he tells Smyth not to be too concerned in relation to the claim in his own case. Even in rare cases where claims would be allowed, few patrons would actually go to the length of removing the actual incumbents of parishes: 'I am told that the claimants

do not wish to dispossess the incumbents, but only to establish their claim on future occasions’.

Commenting on Smyth’s return to work as rural dean, the bishop says he is glad to see his handwriting as Rural Dean, and admires his calligraphy.

Clearly enjoying social events in Dublin, the bishop reports that Mrs Mant is much improved, surprising her old acquaintances in Dublin ‘by the beauty of her countenance and the activity and elegance of her movements’.

94. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Dublin, to ‘My dear Precentor’, The Revd W. St John Smyth
3 March 1845

Reporting the outbreak of small pox in the family of his son, the archdeacon Walter Mant, the bishop admiringly reports that ‘the manner in which he has been enabled to bear his trial has been exemplary’. They hope the disorder is ‘now vanishing from the family’.

On divisions within the Church, the bishop goes into much detail, believing they have in fact ‘fallen on evil in many respects, in none more than the disagreements in the Church’. He admits it is ‘difficult to see one’s way among conflicting opinions and practices’, but guides that his own is simple: ‘I endeavour to do what I take to be my duty and to assist those with whom I am connected in doing theirs, leaving the result to the One who can guide things, as he sees best, to good’. By contrast, he does not think there will be much benefit from the Archbishop of Canterbury’s letter, which has been ‘written with no decided judgement, the natural consequence of a sense of inability to interpose with authority, for authority in fact, any more than any other diocesan bishop, he has none’. Returning to Mant’s ideal way of cooperation between bishop and clergy, his own way of conducting business is revealed: ‘By a good understanding and mutual cooperation among the bishop and clergy of the a diocese, much might be done, and I see no other way of doing it’.

The letter concludes with an indication that due to ill health, the incumbent of Glenavy [Revd Edward Cupples] is to resign.

95. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Dublin, to ‘My dear Precentor’, The Revd W. St John Smyth
14 April 1845

The bishop mentions the case about which Smyth is troubled concerning Lord Donegall’s claim [for patronage], and that he has been advised by his agent Mr Hare to put the case into the hands of a solicitor.

He reports Mrs Mant is ‘much better than she was some months ago, although suffering the last day or two from a temporary ailment.’ He further

reports his sister Emily was unwell ‘from partaking somewhat too largely of the Sunday plum pudding, from which however the rest of our party escaped’.

96. R[ichard] Down and Connor, The Palace, Belfast to ‘My dear Precentor’, The Revd W. St John Smyth
29 July 1845

Alluding to Smyth’s dispute with parishioners in Ballymoney about liturgical innovations, that are detailed in section 6/ below, the bishop responds that ‘it would be awkward for me to give advice or an opinion, unless brought before me officially’. However, as his son the archdeacon happens to be with him on his way to Scotland, the bishop has passed Smyth’s letter to him and advises he will write about it [see item 96a below].

In relation to what he refers to as ‘the Dunaghy business’ [perhaps a vacancy in the parish] the bishop has referred it to Mr Rowan, rural dean, and begged him to ‘call some neighbouring clergymen into council: you, if your health will allow; and Messrs, Hobson, Kirkpatrick and Reeves’.

- 96a. Walter B. Mant, archdeacon of Connor, The Palace, Belfast, to ‘My dear Smyth’
29 July 1845

Referring specifically to the locking of a seat in the church at Ballymoney [see item 6/8 below for more background] the archdeacon shows much empathy and gives practical advice: ‘if I were you I would take off the lock at once and run the risk of consequences’. The young Hutchinson who was responsible for fixing the lock had no power: ‘he might just as well have locked up the pulpit...although long occupation [of a seat] may give a claim to a person to occupy, it can give more to shut out others’. So he concludes that Smyth ‘should take off the lock without fear, and let them try the remedy if they dare’.

97. R[ichard] Down and Connor, The Palace to ‘My dear Precentor’, The Revd W. St John Smyth
5 January 1845

Brief letter thanking Smyth and his wife Mary for their good wishes, wishing them the same, and informing him they are surrounded by two generations: Agatha and four of her children. All are recovered from the small pox. The bishop outlines possible visits to Ballymoney and Dublin and also extends an invitation to Hillsborough.

[Note that all the letters from 98 to the end of the sequence are bordered in black – indicating that the bishop’s wife Elizabeth passed away in April 1845, and he is marking the year of mourning with all his correspondence].

98. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Shrivenham [?], to 'My dear Precentor', The Revd W. St John Smyth
2 June 1846

Brief letter concerning proposed nomination of boy pupils at Marlborough School, which Smyth clearly intended doing, but his bishop urges that his 'prospect of success...is I fear, very faint'. Thanks Smyth for his kind invitation and looking forward to his Dromore confirmations next month.

99. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Archdeaconry, Hillsborough, to 'My dear Precentor', The Revd W. St John Smyth
4 July 1846

Announcing that he is offering the post of rectory of Layde to Mr Dunseath, following the death of the rector, Revd Marcus Falloon. If Mr Dunseath, curate at Ballymoney accepts, the bishop informs his precentor that 'the appointment of a successor in the cure of Ballymoney will devolve on you'. Then more discreetly but helpfully, and revealing how appointments were made, the bishop continues that should it convenience Smyth, and not interfere with his rights, 'there is a clergyman in the united diocese, of longstanding, of much parochial experience and of high professional character, who has been recently removed from his cure by the return of his principal, and who is anxiously looking out for another, so circumstanced as to enable him to find a residence for a large family of young children'. Should Smyth be interested, the bishop assures him he will give his name and references, but again reiterates he would 'not be looked as interfering with your free agency'.

100. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Hillsborough, to 'My dear Precentor', The Revd W. St John Smyth
8 July 1846

By last evening's post the bishop has received a letter from Mr Dunseath, to whom 'in offering him Layde' the bishop admits he wished to 'do him an acceptable and beneficial service'. However, the tenor of Mr Dunseath's reply has led him to 'doubt my success': the bishop revealing: 'until I reached the last sentence I expected him to be declining it. In the end he accepted it, but with such hesitation and qualifications, that I hardly feel sure of his determination'. The bishop continues, however, that in the event that Dunseath does quit, the name of the person recommended is 'the Revd Robert Forde, late curate of Drumballyroney / Rathfrialand in the diocese of Dromore', adding his good opinion is founded principally on the advice of the incumbent of Clonduff, Revd Richard Archer.

101. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Hillsborough, to 'My dear Precentor', The Revd W. St John Smyth
12 July 1846

Brief letter advising further reference about Mr Forde may be procured from the Dean of Dromore, but that he has 'no difficulty about receiving [Smyth's] nomination of him'.

102. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Hillsborough, to 'My dear Precentor', The Revd W. St John Smyth
23 July 1846

Brief note enclosing a letter for Mr Forde, if he is at Ballymoney. The content [not explained] will, the bishop comments: 'place you under the necessity of having to nominate another curate'.

103. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Hillsborough, to 'My dear Precentor', The Revd W. St John Smyth
24 July 1846

Brief note alluding to further arrangements for Mr Forde, and his intended duty of Annclon[?] The bishop asks about Smyth's engagements in August, as he hopes to accept his invitation to stay then, as 'Frederick [Mant] has expressed his wish for me to attend the re-opening of his church early in September, so that I think of taking Ballymoney on my way'. He is sorry to further trouble Smyth by requesting that two servants with a pair of horses may also stay.

104. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Hillsborough, to 'My dear Precentor', The Revd W. St John Smyth
27 July 1846

A new curate for Smyth is again discussed. The bishop reports that Walter and he have been talking about a curate for Smyth, and 'with respect of Mr Wilson' think he is probably well paid by Lady Bateson, 'and would not wish for another cure'. However, he urges Smyth to write 'frankly to Mr Wynne, telling him your tale and asking his sentiments'.

105. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Ramoan Rectory, Ballycastle, to 'My dear Precentor', The Revd W. St John Smyth
19 September 1846

In this letter, the bishop mentions the death of his daughter-in-law, Mrs Robert Mant: 'it was a great mercy that she was returned to her family with so little trouble and both her sisters and herself felt comfort in their re-union'.

Referring to another family affliction, the bishop reports that his son Frederick and wife Isabella with 'their two surviving children, are now in a cottage...near the Ballycastle shore', but are going in a day or two to Armoy'. The bishop's stay at Ramoan depends on the date of the opening of Frederick's church there, which is as yet undecided.

Smyth's hint about relinquishing the rural deanery, the bishop finds 'judicious' and presumes he will 'be glad to surrender [his] office'.

Finally the bishop alludes that he is recovering the whooping cough.

106. R[ichard] Down and Connor, Armoy Rectory, Ballymoney, to 'My dear Precentor', The Revd W. St John Smyth
11 October 1846

Having finished his round of visits, the bishop requests if Mary [Mrs Smyth] and Smyth will be able to receive him for a couple of days later in the month. He alludes again to his bout of whooping cough and hopes there will be no concern about infection to any of the Smyth children, and Smyth is urged to have 'no scruples about telling' him if that is the case. If it is possible, the bishop will be accompanied by Frederick, as by that time he will have 'completed the enlargement of his church'.