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The Lay Contribution to the Anglo-Catholic Movement in the Church of
England, 1845 to 1901

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Declaration

I declare that

- a) This thesis is my own composition
- b) That the work carried out is my own
- c) That this work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Signed

Claire McArdle

Date 22.07.06

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Abstract
The Lay Contribution to the Anglo-Catholic Movement in the Church of England, 1845 to 1901.

In this work the lay contribution to the Anglo-Catholic movement in the Church of England from 1845 to 1901 is examined. Chapters are devoted to the English Church Union, Church of England Working Men's Society, female religious communities, the guild movement and the work of lay patrons in the field of church building. The study reveals that Ritualism, thought to be so popular in this time period, was not a primary motivation for the Anglo-Catholic laity. It also shows that, while they were intensely devoted to the movement, the groups examined were also prone to extreme tensions, petty jealousies, and financial irregularities.

Of the five groups presented in this work only the female religious communities have been addressed by historians. The English Church Union and Church of England Working Men's Society have existed to this point only as footnotes to the work of highly regarded members of the clergy. The guild movement has been viewed in terms of Stewart Headlam's Guild of St. Matthew, yet this study reveals that Headlam's organisation was the exception rather than the rule. Alexander Beresford Hope and Robert Brett have both been given fleeting mention in literature which covers the church building projects of the era. An examination of their extensive correspondence with episcopacy of the era has allowed for this study to give new insight into the characters and activities of both Hope and Brett.

The organisations which are presented show the degree to which there was strong lay-led contingent in a movement that has, until now, been regarded as very much under clerical control. What is most apparent from this study

is that there was a devoted laity attached to the Anglo-Catholic movement which sought to embody the High Anglican ideals of the Eucharistic Community.

Introduction

Born out of the Tractarianism of the 1830s, the Anglo-Catholic movement was a diverse one and this study will examine the lay groups which developed around the Catholic Revival in the Church of England from 1845 to 1901. The clergy of the Anglo-Catholic movement were ridiculed in the popular press as effeminate and weak in an age of muscular Christianity and manliness. With its smells and bells, its surplices and sisterhoods, Anglo-Catholicism was unfamiliar and therefore feared by the majority of Victorian society. Viewed as poor, helpless young things who had fallen under the dreadful spell of Papists in all but name, those members of the laity who were attracted to the movement were pitied by a society that was staunchly anti-Catholic. Whatever the popular perception, the characters and organisations that emerge in this study demonstrate that the Anglo-Catholic laity were neither helpless nor in need of pity. As a member of the Church of England Working Men's Society, Charlie the night watchman journeyed to North America and met the Bishop of New York while brandishing a letter of introduction from the Archbishop of Canterbury. The surgeon Robert Brett earned himself the title of 'The Lay Pope of Stoke Newington' in recognition of the string of Anglo-Catholic churches that he had helped to construct and travelled around his domain in a coach that was a gift from friends with *Pro Ecclesia Dei* painted on the doors. Far from being helpless women who could not find themselves husbands, the Anglican sisterhoods waged wars against prostitution, cholera and starvation in the slums of England. Like any other group in Victorian society the Anglo-Catholic laity formed organisations that writhed with internal tensions, petty jealousies, and succumbed to financial irregularities.

This is a subject that has been largely neglected by studies of the Anglo-Catholic movement in the nineteenth century. While much energy has been devoted to the impact and importance of the clergy, the involvement of the laity in Anglo-Catholicism has been mainly ignored. I hope to go some way to redress the balance on this issue by examining Anglo-Catholic lay involvement and motivation as well as some of the reactions to these efforts from those outside of the movement. The intention is to look at common themes and to provide a broad insight into the lay groups which embraced the Anglo-Catholic movement once it moved beyond Oxford.

The time period for this study begins in 1845 because the secession of John Henry Newman to the Roman Catholic Church is generally regarded as the point at which the Catholic revival began to move beyond the confines of Oxford. The end of the Victorian era marks a natural conclusion for this study.

This study emerged from the fleeting references that were made in the secondary literature to the English Church Union, to the Church of England Working Men's Society, the sisterhoods, and the men who contributed vast sums from their personal wealth to construct huge gothic revivalist churches. When attempts were made to find out more about these groups an impasse was reached. It seemed almost as if the reader was supposed to have an innate knowledge of these groups as there was little in the literature on the Catholic revival to shed any light on them or their contribution to the movement. This study seeks to do this, to provide a comprehensive look at the lay groups that were attached to the Anglo-Catholic movement in the Victorian period.

The work is divided into five thematic chapters. Each chapter investigates a different group or organisation that played a significant role in the Anglo-Catholic movement. The English Church Union and the Church of England Working Men's Society are the subjects of the first two chapters and fall under the category of defensive organisations. Both of these societies were initially formed in order to defend the Catholic characteristics of the Church of England from a perceived attack. They were, however, very different organisations and these chapters explore their formation and motivations as well as the work that they carried out. Both the English Church Union and the Church of England Working Men's Society held interesting characters among their members who challenge the somewhat ethereal concept of Anglo-Catholics that emerged due to the hagiographical accounts of many of the leading lights of the movement.

The second section of this study is concerned with the female religious communities and guilds that formed in the period. These two groups demonstrate that the call of the Anglo-Catholic clergy was heard by members of the laity who wished to commit heavily to the movement. With the sisterhoods we see a total devotion to the ideals of the Catholic revival, while the guilds offer insight into how laity who wished to continue to work within society could increase and develop their spiritual commitment to the movement.

The final chapter addresses the role of the lay patron and in this instance deals specifically with two patrons who directed their attentions towards church building. Alexander Beresford Beresford Hope and Robert Brett were two very different men with different ideas about how far the

ceremonial of the Catholic revival could be taken. They devoted a large amount of their time and effort to constructing buildings which reflected their concept of Anglo-Catholicism. Hope and Brett had no issue with confronting bishops who disagreed with their decisions or attempting to overturn diocesan decisions relating to the clergy. They were strong and forceful personalities who challenged the views of many in the Victorian era for whom Anglo-Catholic men were weak and effeminate.

That the literature concerning the Anglo-Catholic movement has neglected the laity is somewhat surprising when one considers the attention given to the pastoral efforts of the clergy associated with the Catholic revival. The so-called 'slum-priests' are lauded for their efforts with the working classes and yet little mention, if any, is made of those working class people who responded to their endeavours. The Anglican sisters who did much work in the slums with the prostitutes and the poor often appear only as a footnote to work of those such as Charles Lowder, or are mentioned because they happen to be related to famous figures from the Anglo-Catholic movement, like Elisabeth Mason Neale, sister of John.

The guild movement in the nineteenth century has until now been viewed in terms of Stewart Headlam's Guild of St Matthew and much has been written on this pioneering clergyman who sought to make the National Church inclusive to the labouring classes. Most recently J. R. Orens has covered this in his work *Stewart Headlam's Radical Anglicanism: The Mass, the Masses, and the Music Hall*, (Illinois, 2003). However, it has become apparent in the course of the research for this study that Headlam's guild was in fact the exception rather than the rule. In the 1870s hundred of small parochial

guilds existed all over the country in which groups of Anglo-Catholics came together to learn more about their Church and to support each other in their spiritual development. It is astounding that these groups have remained uncovered in the literature of the Catholic revival and their importance to the Anglo-Catholic concept of the Eucharistic Community is immense.

From 1845 those young men who had been at Oxford under the tutelage of the leading lights of Tractarianism moved beyond academic confines and became involved in a concerted effort to take the Catholic revival out to the parishes of England. The significance placed on regular communion in this effort encouraged and active participation from their congregations. This pastoral work of the Anglo-Catholic clergy has been addressed in several studies. Most notably Nigel Yates has investigated the works of the clergy at a local level in various areas England,¹ while several works have explored the pastoral work of the clergy in London.² John Shelton Reed's excellent book, *Glorious Battle: The Cultural Politics of Anglo Catholicism* (Nashville and London, 1996) investigates all aspects of the movement but the scale of the work has meant that relatively little space, if any, has been devoted to the groups and figures considered in this study. The movement away from studies devoted entirely to the Anglo-Catholic clergy, or to the theology of the movement has certainly begun but there is still a limited amount of work which addresses the laity or their concerns.

¹ N. Yates, *Leeds and the Oxford Movement* (Leeds, 1975); *The Oxford Movement and Parish Life: St Saviour's Leeds* (York, 1975); *Ritual Conflict at Farlington and Wymering* (Portsmouth, 1978); *Kent and the Oxford Movement* (Maidstone, 1983); *The Anglican Revival in Victorian Portsmouth* (Portsmouth, 1983), *Holy Spirit, Southsea: A Parish History* (Portsmouth, 1983).

² See L. E. Ellsworth, *Charles Lowder and the Ritualist Movement* (London, 1982); M. Reynolds, *Martyr of Ritualism: Father Mackonochie of St Alban's Holborn* (London, 1965).

The female religious communities have received a thorough investigation in Susan Mumm's recent work *Stolen Daughter, Virgin Mothers* (London, 1999) but this study seeks to examine the sisterhoods in the context of the other lay groups that formed in the period. Mumm's examination of the Anglican sisters expands and revises the approach taken in the 1950s by A. M. Allchin and P. F. Anson³ who both produced works that were largely descriptive and focused upon sisterhoods connected to prominent clergymen. However, Allchin's work, *The Silent Rebellion*, did examine some of the main themes relating to the sisterhoods. The lack of scholarly work on the sisterhoods from the 1950s through to the late 1990s is surprising as there is much research still to be done, especially into individual figures and communities.

With regards to the guilds there was no secondary literature at all to consult and the discovery of individual guilds came largely through their mention in the *Church Times*. Once names had been obtained, further research could be conducted through library catalogues for primary source materials. The Church of England Working Men's Society were also missing from the secondary literature save for fleeting mentions such as in M. Reynolds's *Martyr of Ritualism: Father Mackonochie of St Alban's Holborn* (London, 1965). They are also referred to in H. McLeod's *Religion and Society in England, 1850-1914* (London, 1996) but only in the wider context of the relationship between the National Church and the working classes and little is revealed about them.

³ A. M. Allchin, *The Silent Rebellion: Anglican Religious Communities 1845-1900* (London, 1958); P.F. Anson, *The Call of the Cloister* (London, 1955).

The English Church Union was the largest group with lay membership attached to the Anglo-Catholic movement and benefited from a history of the organisation written by a member in 1894.⁴ They too receive mention in some of the literature on the Anglo-Catholic movement but this is again fleeting. They are also mentioned in relation to the fact that both Pusey and Keble were members, or in connection to comments on the Public Worship Regulation Act which they strongly opposed. A wealth of information came from the biography of Charles Lindley Wood (Viscount Halifax) who was president of the organisation for decades. However, J. G. L. Lockhart's account was written less than ten years after Wood's death and there is little critical analysis to be had.⁵

Both A.J.B.B. Hope and Robert Brett were the subject of somewhat hagiographical accounts after their deaths. Hope's was written by his granddaughter and her husband⁶ and is incorporated into an account of the Beresford Hope family from the eighteenth century. Unfortunately, the author Irene Law destroyed all of Hope's correspondence upon completion of the tome which is a considerable loss to scholarly research. Similarly, the account of Brett's life was written by his close friend Thomas Belcher and, as was common at the time, all correspondence and diaries were destroyed upon publication.⁷ Due to Hope's connections aristocratically and politically, as well as his involvement in the Ecclesiological Society, he is a known

⁴ G. B. Roberts, *The History of the English Church Union* (London, 1894).

⁵ J. G. L. Lockhart, *Viscount Halifax* 2 volumes (London, 1936).

⁶ Irene & William Law, *The Book of the Beresford Hopes* (London, 1925).

⁷ Thomas Belcher, *Robert Brett (of Stoke Newington) His Life and Work*, 2nd Edition (London, 1891).

Victorian figure. Brett proved somewhat more elusive in literature on the Anglo-Catholic movement.

The vast majority of the research for this study was conducted into primary source material. The correspondence of the bishops of London and the Archbishops of Canterbury which are held at Lambeth Palace Library proved to be invaluable to understanding some of the key figures examined in this work. Charles Powell of the Church of England Working Men's Society, A. J. B. B. Hope, and Robert Brett were all frequent and fearless correspondents of bishops and archbishops and their letters provided some fascinating insights into both their characters, and those of the bishops. Since no archives exist of the correspondence and diaries of Powell, Brett and Hope these papers were essential to the writing of this thesis. The papers also brought to light Episcopal opinions on many matters relating to the Anglo-Catholic cause.

The *Church Times* was a crucial starting point for many of the studies, providing key dates and events in the lives of the organisations studied. It was a wealth of information on the Church of England Working Men's Society and proved crucial to identifying guilds and their activities. Reading through the pages of the partisan Anglo-Catholic publication provided a real feel for the issues and opinions of the era. The letters pages were an excellent source of some of the more extreme opinions prevalent in the movement at the time.

Fortunately, the guilds of the period were keen to print their manuals, rules and reports and this was the main source of information on them since no secondary material existed. The Bodleian Library in Oxford had a wealth of such material although few guilds had more than one or two printed sources

relating to them. Of further help was the *Church Work* newspaper which documented the formation and work of guilds and reported on the meetings of the Church Guilds Union at which important matters pertaining to the character of the guild movement were discussed. The Guild of St Alban was the most organised of the guilds and also had a national structure. This meant that regular updates were required and they are one of the few guilds that produced a significant amount of literature.

One of the key primary sources which provided an amazing amount of information on all of the organisations covered in this study was the pamphlet literature of the time. The Victorian enthusiasm for the printing press has meant that there exists a rich vein which can be mined for information on most aspects of nineteenth century life. These pamphlets proved invaluable in determining the opposition that the Anglo-Catholic laity faced and the pamphlet wars that broke out over the sisterhoods were particularly useful. Obviously many of these pamphlets must be read in the context of the discussions that raged in the period and a comment in such literature should not be regarded as reflecting the general consensus of opinion at the time.

It is the intention of this study to draw out themes and key characteristics of the Anglo-Catholic laity through a comprehensive study of their involvement in the Catholic revival in the Church of England. There are several areas that will not be addressed in this research. The Ritualist trials have been extensively covered in the work of both James Bentley and Nigel Yates.⁸ Similarly the theology and ecclesiology of Anglo-Catholicism

⁸ Bentley, J., *Ritualism and Politics in Victorian Britain* (Oxford, 1978), N. Yates, *Leeds and the Oxford Movement* (Leeds, 1975); *The Oxford Movement and Parish Life: St Saviour's Leeds* (York,

in the period are extremely well documented in the bibliography of the movement. Where appropriate the impact of theological developments or the impact of Ritualism are discussed but attempting to conduct original research into these areas would detract from the fact that this a study in lay participation.

Any one of the groups that are covered in this work could be the sole subject of a doctoral thesis; however, I feel that at this point a wider study of Anglo-Catholic lay activity is needed. While much time has been devoted to examining what the call of Anglo-Catholicism was, no one has systematically considered those lay individuals and groups who answered it.

1975); *Ritual Conflict at Farlington and Wymering* (Portsmouth, 1978); *Kent and the Oxford Movement* (Maidstone, 1983); *The Anglican Revival in Victorian Portsmouth* (Portsmouth, 1983), *Holy Spirit, Southsea: A Parish History* (Portsmouth, 1983).

Chapter One

The English Church Union

Introduction: Foundation and Organisation

From humble beginnings the English Church Union became the largest of the Anglo-Catholic organisations that emerged after 1845. The foundation of these groups marked the migration of the Anglo-Catholic movement away from purely theological concerns and highlighted the progress that its clergy had made at a parochial level. The creation, maintenance and operation of the English Church Union is an excellent example of the level of lay involvement in, and commitment to, the Anglo-Catholic movement in the second half of the nineteenth century. When placed within the context of the other organisations founded at this time, most notably the guilds examined in chapter four, the role of the Union is clearer. This was an enterprise that allowed Anglo-Catholic lay men to actively defend the High Church from the perceived Erastianism of the state. The English Church Union did not exist in order to give its members spiritual or moral guidance, it was founded with the sole purpose of defence. The demise of the Public Worship Regulation Act that the E. C.U. had opposed with such vigour gave way to a period when the group was unsure about its contribution to the movement. This is perhaps a reflection of the status which the Anglo-Catholic movement had gained by the end of the century.

The English Church Union came into being in 1859 when the Church of England Protection Society and several local church unions united. Since the 1840s several Anglo-Catholic church unions had sprung up across the

country. The first of them had been formed in Bristol in 1844 to oppose proposed education reforms that threatened to diminish the role of the National Church as the educator of the people. The church unions may have been in danger of becoming single issue organisations but found a further cause to adopt in 1847 when the Prime Minister, Lord John Russell, recommended to the Crown that Dr. Hampden be appointed to the see of Hereford. Several prominent Anglo-Catholics were involved with Bristol Church Union in the early stages including the Tractarian William Palmer and G. A. Denison, the Vicar of East Brent in Somerset who would later fall foul of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council⁹. Throughout the 1850s the attentions of the church unions were focused on Anglo-Catholic and High Church causes. The London Church Union, which boasted Pusey and Beresford Hope among its members, was extremely active in protesting against the Gorham Judgement of 1850 and the Metropolitan Union focused its efforts on the need to revive Convocation.

In 1859 the president of the Manchester Church Union, Colin Lindsay, sent a circular to the various church unions inviting them each to send two delegates to take part in a provisional committee that could move towards a national plan of action.¹⁰ There was a feeling in Anglo-Catholic circles that the Church of England was in grave danger and the time had come to defend her doctrines and discipline from the Erastianism of the State. The delegates met on 8 February, 1859 and resolved that the time had come for a united response. On 12 May they joined together within the existing Church of England Protection Society and one year later adopted the name the English Church Union. In the early days the organisation had few members and

⁹ P. G. Cobb, 'Leader of the Anglo-Catholics?', in *Pusey Rediscovered*, ed. P. Butler (London, 1983) p. 351.

¹⁰ G. B. Roberts, *The History of the English Church Union* (London, 1894) p. 9-12.

little influence but it was set to feature highly in the next forty years of the Anglo-Catholic movement.

It was the growing feeling in Anglo-Catholic circles that their movement was beginning to come under a concerted attack that had prompted Colin Lindsay to contact these unions in 1858 and suggest the formation of a national organisation. After the secession of Newman in 1845 public interest had moved away from the Anglo-Catholics and by 1858 issues overseas in Crimea and India had become the focus of attention. The Anglo-Catholic clergy were still cast in the role of sneaky Romanizing Puseyites but there was an assumption that the movement had been broken by the departure of the man that many assumed to be the Tractarian mastermind. In the period after Newman's conversion the Anglo-Catholic movement began to move out of academic circles and to establish itself outside Oxford. Once this, and the extent of ritual that many of the Anglo-Catholic clergy were using, came to the attention of the Low Church the deluge began. In the 1850s however, the attacks on Anglo-Catholic values were subtler than the prosecution of clergy that was to be a feature of the next two decades.

The Gorham Judgement of 1850 dealt the Anglo-Catholic movement a particularly heavy blow. In 1847 Bishop Philpotts of Exeter (consecrated 1831, died 1892) denied Gorham the living of Brampton Speke because, as an Evangelized Calvinist, Gorham did not hold the orthodox Anglican doctrine that regeneration occurred during baptism. Gorham was not prepared to accept the Bishop's decision and took his case to the Court of Arches, which upheld Philpott's judgement. In an unprecedented move Gorham appealed to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council which, although it had no experience of dealing with doctrinal or ecclesiastical questions, ruled in his

favour. The Judicial Committee claimed that its duty was to consider possible legal interpretations of the Articles *not* to rule on questions of doctrine or faith.

For those who held that the authority of the Church was derived through its Apostolic Succession and the tradition of living doctrine this was an unacceptable development. Whether intentionally or not, a civil court had determined the ways in which the doctrine of the Church of England could be interpreted and had overturned the decisions of both a bishop and the Court of Arches. The 1850s did not get any better for those who believed in the Catholicity of the Anglican Church. The attempt of Pope Pius XI to set up sees in England and Wales in 1850 was seen as an act of papal aggression and anti-Catholic sentiments were rife at this time in England with the Ecclesiastical Titles Act of 1851 passed to counteract the Roman Catholic Church. Between 1854-57 Archdeacon George Anthony Denison, the vicar of East Brent, was prosecuted for his teachings on the Real Presence in the Eucharist as revealed in two sermons conducted in Wells cathedral to which his neighbouring incumbent at South Brent had taken exception¹¹. 1857 saw the passing of the Divorce Act and the end to the trial against the Hon. Robert Liddell, vicar of St. Paul's Knightsbridge, the notoriously Anglo-Catholic stronghold¹². The latter involved the churchwarden at St. Paul's, Charles Westerton, who had sued in the Consistory Court¹³ for the removal of objects of ceremonial from the communion table. In this case Liddell appealed to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council and the decision of the lower court, which had ruled in Westerton's favour, was reversed.¹⁴

¹¹ B. Palmer, *Reverend Rebels* (London, 1993) p.20-62.

¹² *ibid.*, p. 7-8.

¹³ The Consistory Court was the Bishop's court for ecclesiastical offences.

¹⁴ B. Palmer, *Reverend Rebels*, p.7.

It was these incidents that convinced those who gathered together in 1859 that the catholicity of the Church of England needed to be defended. Lindsay remarked that it was the attacks of the 1850s that,

at last roused Churchmen to a sense of their duty and to the necessity of more combined action in their part, if they hoped to preserve "the things that remained, which were ready to die" by reason of the unfaithfulness of many in high places, both in the ecclesiastical and the civil departments of this great country.¹⁵

The attack was two pronged. There were the prosecutions of Anglo-Catholic clergy for the use of what they deemed to be ritual in accordance with the Common Prayer Book. On the other side were the decisions made by the State that contravened the teachings of the National Church. The passing of the Divorce Act provides an example of the ambiguity, which, by the middle of the nineteenth century, surrounded the Church and State relationship. Attempts to pass the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill met with continued opposition from the E.C.U. and all too clearly demonstrated to its members that the State could no longer be trusted to encode in law the moral teaching of its National Church.

The English Church Union laid out a set of objectives in response to these perceived threats:

1. To defend and maintain unimpaired the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England.
2. To afford counsel and protection to all persons, lay or clerical, suffering under unjust aggression in spiritual matters.

¹⁵ C. Lindsay, *The English Church Union: its rise and progress* (London, 1863).

3. In general, so to promote the interests of religion, as to be, by God's help, a lasting witness in the land for the advancement of His glory and the good of His Church.¹⁶

Members were required to communicate at least three times a year, including Easter, and failure to do so would incur expulsion from the Union.¹⁷ The E.C.U. was initially a small organisation with only 205 members on the books by the end of the first year¹⁸, but the defence of the Church of England was no small task and from the beginning they set out the means by which this defence could be achieved. They intended to combine efforts with similar societies, hold meetings throughout the year (including annual meetings at a national and local level), publish papers on church matters and produce their own journal or newspaper to report on their progress. At the end of the session for 1859-1860, the president and Council addressed all members of the E.C.U. on the constitution, organisation and objectives of the Union. The constitution of the organisation was summarised thus:

1. that all power is vested in the entire body, subject of course to the authority of the rules of the society.
2. that the council, excepting only in a case of great emergency, can only recommend resolutions for the consideration and adoption of the Union in general meeting assembled, and
3. that the President is charged with the duty of 'governing' the Union according to the rules, and of suspending all proceedings until the next succeeding general meeting, if he should be of opinion they would be detrimental to the Church cause.¹⁹

¹⁶ G. B. Roberts, p.12.

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 13.

¹⁸ See Appendix 2.

¹⁹ C. Lindsay, *An Address to the Members of the English Church Union, and others, on the Constitution, Organization, and objects of the Union* (London, 1860) p.6.

The system of organisation included local branches, a combination of similar societies, and parochial associations. Local branches had to be sanctioned by the president and council and were to be formed by existing members of the E.C.U. coming together in their district. Organisations that had been established under the title of 'church union' in the period before the formation of the E.C.U. were invited to become incorporated societies. These incorporated societies had to adopt all E.C.U. objects and rules as well as agree to accept all plans and schemes adopted by the Union. However, they were also granted privileges beyond those granted to the local branches. Incorporated societies could elect one lay and one clerical representative to the Council who could speak and vote on all subjects except for the election of the president and council which had to be undertaken through delegates.²⁰

The parochial associations allowed for those who did not have the financial means to join the Union to 'join us in our great work, for if their influence as individuals is small, their moral weight as a multitude must be considerable, and especially when united with such a body as our own.'²¹ Associates could be male or female²² and were permitted to enrol under an existing full E.C.U. member. Their duties were to pray daily for God's blessing on the work of the Union and on the Church, to assist in the circulation of Union papers, to aid in gaining signatures for authorised petitions, and to help in the collecting of donations.²³

²⁰ Ibid., p.7-12.

²¹ Ibid., p.13.

²² Women could not be full members of the Union.

²³ C. Lindsay, *An Address to the Members of the English Church Union*, p.17.

From the early days of the English Church Union the president and council held the branch system to be the key to a successful and powerful movement. The branch unions, spread out across the country, would be the foot soldiers of the organisation, supporting the E.C.U. with their money and their prayers. These branches were permitted to carry out local activities at their own initiative but were required to consult the council on any matter that could affect the organisation as a whole. The president and the council were aware that the Church of England could not be protected without manpower. At the Annual Meeting of 1863, Lindsay explained the importance of the branch system,

No society can ever hope to be great, or ever become numerous and powerful, without the employment of this auxiliary system, which tends to promote unity between the members and the general association, infusing in them earnestness, energy and zeal, creating a powerful *esprit de corps* without which no Association can long continue in vigorous action.²⁴

Three years later the president was again highlighting the importance of the branch system. He urged all members to take a 'lively interest' in the welfare of their Union and promote the establishment of local branches and district unions.²⁵ Reports from the local branches appeared in the E.C.U. circulars and show that efforts varied from town to town. In 1865 the Ludlow branch organised a course of lectures proposed by a Mr. Crowe who 'thought that such a course might be made very interesting, and be very useful in dispelling many prejudices.'²⁶ The E.C.U. in Great Yeldham reported that in the last year it had 'confined its proceedings chiefly to

²⁴ C. Lindsay, *The English Church Union: its rise and progress*, p.7.

²⁵ C. Lindsay, *The English Church Union, Past and Future* (London, 1866) p.7.

²⁶ *English Church Union Circulars, 1865-1867* (London 1867) p.110.

practical discussions bearing upon parochial ministrations, and to establish some more definite notions upon some of the great doctrines of the Church.’²⁷ Meanwhile, the report from Bath stated that the Branch could be strengthened and much be achieved ‘by the force of quiet example.’²⁸ 1865 was not a good year for the Malton branch and the secretary made known his disapproval at the lack of attendance at ordinary meetings, especially considering the large area that the branch covered.²⁹

The spiritual home of the movement was not faring much better than its Malton counterpart. In its report for 1867 the committee of the Oxford branch remarked upon the unwillingness of members to sign petitions. They conceded that this was ‘perhaps because these powerful engines for public expression had been plied vigorously before.’³⁰ Nevertheless, petitions calling for the Amendment of the Court of Appeal, the Abolition of the Divorce Court, and the increase of the Episcopate, received fewer than thirty signatures each. These were all issues at the forefront of the national E.C.U. campaign. Enthusiasm did return for a petition opposing Lord Shaftesbury’s Vestments Bill, which received one hundred and fifty signatures in a few days, suggesting that the Committee was probably accurate in its assessment that members tired of signing petitions unless they felt particularly moved by the issue.³¹

The reports from the first decade of the E.C.U. suggest that the branches were not forming the great and powerful army that Lindsay had

²⁷ Ibid., p.111.

²⁸ Ibid., p.118.

²⁹ Ibid., p.121.

³⁰ *The English Church Union Oxford Branch. The Committee’s Reports 1867-1871* (Oxford, 1871) 1867 Report, p. 9.

³¹ Ibid., p.9.

envisaged. Various branches reported problems with payment of subscriptions. In 1870 the Oxford Branch was only saved from bankruptcy by a generous individual donation.³² But as early as 1860 Lindsay had made clear that the E.C.U. was not a centralised society.³³ When the catholic doctrines and discipline of the Anglican Church seemed threatened to new extremes by the Public Worship Regulation Act in the 1870s the members of the English Church Union sprang to attention.

³² Ibid., 1870 Report, p.6.

³³ C. Lindsay, *An Address to the Members of the English Church Union*, p.10.

Presidents

Between its foundation in 1859 and the end of the Victorian era, only two men held the presidency of the English Church Union. Colin Lindsay, who did so much to instigate the formation of a national church union, has faded into the background somewhat due to the events surrounding his departure and the charismatic man who succeeded him. Charles Lindley Wood was only twenty-nine when he was elected president and remained in the position until 1919. In 1927, in his late eighties, he returned to the role. Wood has therefore become synonymous with the E.C.U., as it was he who steered the organisation through the turbulent years of the Public Worship Regulation Act.

The initiative to form the Union came from the first president. Lindsay and Wood were both examples of the social classes that were involved in the Anglo-Catholic movement. Lindsay was the youngest son of the Earl of Crawford, and Wood became the 2nd Viscount Halifax and married the daughter of the wealthy and influential Earl of Devon who also played a role in the E.C.U.

There is little biographical information on Lindsay in the literature of the Anglo-Catholic movement³⁴. One can only assume that this is largely to do with his brief period in charge in comparison with Wood, and his conversion to Roman Catholicism. Before being elected to the presidency of the E.C.U. he was president of both the Manchester Church Union and the

³⁴ Lindsay was however recognised in the Dictionary of National Biography, in an article penned by the eminent Tudor historian, A. F. Pollard.

General Committee of the Pew System.³⁵ After ten years at the helm of the E.C.U., Lindsay announced his resignation at an ordinary meeting on 21 April, 1868,

For many months I have been more or less suffering from indisposition, and a sudden attack of illness some days ago has rendered me unfit for any further exertion on behalf of your Society. My medical adviser has informed me that if I continue my present work serious results may follow. Under these circumstances, and also having regard to the duty I owe my own family, I am forced to place in your hands the post I have held so long.³⁶

He not only resigned the presidency but all membership to the Union. On 28th November 1868 Lindsay was received into the Roman Catholic Church. At the ordinary meeting of 15 December, 1868, a resolution moved by the Rev. T. A. Maberley was adopted which stated,

That the Council of the E.C.U., retaining a lively sense of the services rendered to it for several years by the Hon. Colin Lindsay, have received with much pain and regret the announcement of his secession from the Church of England. While they are mindful to the trials which, at a period of great perplexity, the faith of Churchmen is exposed, they can consent to see in these trials only an additional motive for loyalty and devotion to the English branch of the Church of Christ, whose real claims are not lessened, though her difficulties are seriously increased, by the desertion of those who have been foremost among her defenders.³⁷

³⁵ The abolition of the pew system had been a key concern among Anglo-Catholics since the onset of the Oxford Movement.

³⁶ Quoted in G. B. Roberts, p. 99. Original source not identified.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 105-106.

It is not difficult to sense the betrayal that the members felt at Lindsay's secession to Rome. G. B. Roberts who chronicled the first fifty years of the organisation remarked that, 'it may be said, without fear of exaggeration, that such a misfortune, at an earlier period of its existence, would have been absolutely fatal to the future influence, if not the continued existence, of the Union.'³⁸ The fact that the resignation and secession of Lindsay did not deal the Union a fatal blow is testament to the type of society that he had been instrumental in founding. The power lay with the members rather than the president and council and over fifteen hundred new members were added to the books for the year 1868-69. This would suggest that its reputation did not suffer greatly within Anglo-Catholic circles.³⁹ Such an incident was, however, ammunition for the Union's detractors.

Charles Lindley Wood assumed the presidency of the English Church Union in 1868. Wood was, however, better known to the general public as a collator of ghost stories. These were first published in two volumes after his death in 1934 as *Lord Halifax's Ghost Book* and *Further Stories from Lord Halifax's Ghost Book* in 1936 and 1937. The stories are primarily concerned with the haunting of Britain's great country homes and it is worth note that many names linked to the Anglo-Catholic movement appear in the books. The tale of *The Harper of Inverary* is supplied by H. W. Hill, secretary of the E.C.U. for many years. So too is *The Last Appearance of Mr. Bullock*, in which he dreams that he sees Rev. Bullock (also a member of the English Church Union) looking very ill and the next morning is informed that Bullock is indeed very ill and will not be attending the next meeting of the Council. In *The Secret of Glamis*, Robert Liddell, vicar of St. Paul's Knightsbridge, offers

³⁸ Ibid., p.105, Roberts penned the official account of the history of the English Church Union until 1894.

³⁹ New membership was not to exceed this figure until 1873.

to carry out an exorcism. Samuel Wilberforce's ghost is also said to have materialised at the time of his death to a Mr. Evelyn, at Wooton near Guildford.⁴⁰

From a Whig background, Wood faced the opposition of his family over accepting the position with the English Church Union. He had moved towards Anglo-Catholicism in his teens and stated that his interest in the Union developed considerably while working with Pusey at the Whitechapel hospital of Lydia Sellon (born 1821, died 1876), a prominent figure in the revival of female religious communities,⁴¹ during the cholera outbreak of 1866.⁴² By 1867 he had been elected to the council of the E.C.U. Although a young man at the time (he was only twenty-seven) this is not surprising considering his connections. Wood had been a companion of the Prince of Wales at Eton and later became the Groom of the Bedchamber. On learning of his son's election to the E.C.U. presidency Lord Halifax saw his dreams that his son would become an MP, and eventually a member of the Cabinet, fading. Along with Lady Halifax and Charles' sister Emily, he wrote to his son making his feelings clear, stating that it would,

be very painful for me to see you in the position of President of a Society which in my opinion is endangering the existence of what I believe to be the best Church in the world, in seeking what I equally believe to be a chimerical idea the union of all Christendom on any such principle as you hold.⁴³

⁴⁰ C.L. Wood, *The Ghost Book of Charles Lindley, Viscount Halifax* (London, 1994). There is certainly scope for further research into the links between Anglo-Catholicism and strong interest in the supernatural. Beresford Hope certainly thought that this was a connection worth comment with regards to John Mason Neale. See p.322.

⁴¹ See Chapter Three for more on Lydia Sellon and the foundation of female religious communities.

⁴² J. G. L. Lockhart, *Viscount Halifax* 2 vol. (London, 1936) Vol. 1, p. 81.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 149-151.

Such an opinion highlights the contempt that many held for Anglo-Catholicism, it also shows that it was not only daughters who had to deal with the power of the Victorian patriarch. But Wood had come to the conclusion that a parliamentary career would not allow him to defend effectively the National Church and he accepted the presidency.

As president Wood ably conducted a balancing act between the two extremes within the Union. He warned members against the use of provocative language and threatened resignation on more than one occasion when it appeared that a 'gung ho' attitude was taking hold of some of the members. Many in the Union were unhappy with his approach and felt that moderation had no place on the battlefield. But such moderation meant that in the conflict between the E.C.U. and the Church Association the Union came across as the underdog, mercilessly attacked in the press and in the courts. Wood's presidency created an aura of self-awareness, moderation and toleration around the public image of the Union in contrast to the Church Association that attacked it. It also allowed many Anglo-Catholics who did not hold more extreme views to feel contented within the organisation, knowing that ritualism was not a pre-requisite for membership.

The Role of the Union

Unlike the guilds and the Church of England Working Men's Society the E.C.U. did not engage in social activities. It was not an organisation created to support its members spiritually, that was the role of the guilds. From the beginning the English Church Union had clearly presented its aims and those who joined did so only to preserve and strengthen the Catholicity of the Anglican Church. They were defending the Church of England against what they deemed to be an attack on two fronts, both of which involved the State. While the legal trials of Anglo-Catholic clergy were instigated by the Church Association, in the view of E.C.U. members they were facilitated by a State that allowed civil courts to rule on the interpretation of the doctrine of the Church. This situation was exacerbated in 1874 by the passing of the Public Worship Regulation Act.

It was this Act that gave the English Church Union a more clarified role within the Anglo-Catholic movement. The Union became the champion of those prosecuted or imprisoned under the Act and it saw its profile significantly increased. In the years leading up to and after the passing of the P.W.R. Act membership rose substantially. By 1882 the E.C.U. had over twenty thousand members and in excess of a thousand new members were joining every year.⁴⁴ The members were conscious that the E.C.U. did not have the weight of public opinion behind it and that the view it held of the Church was not the norm. Protecting the Anglo-Catholic Church of England meant that the E.C.U. had to be prepared to fight against anyone, including the State, who threatened her.

⁴⁴ See Appendix 2.

The speeches of both presidents are littered with references to battle and there is a definite sense that the E.C.U. conceived its role as that of an army fighting to protect the Catholicity of the Church. The examples for the local branches would perhaps suggest that this militant language was not always prevalent at a grass roots level,⁴⁵ but it was certainly the imagery presented in the official publications and speeches. The Union was to bear witness in the faithless age and the members were called upon to,

testify against the Powers that be, when they oppose the Church, – when they deny her character and position, – when they attack her rights and privileges, – when they trample her hallowed customs, – when they seek to poison the sacred foundations of our Church with the seed of deadly heresies, and an indifferent morality, discharging its pestilential vapours over the green pastures of our Church.⁴⁶

Even before the P.W.R. Act was mooted in the House of Commons there was a realisation that in order to defend the Church they would come up against a legislature which regarded them with disdain. For Wood, the disregard for the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England was another example of an Erastian approach which regarded the role of the Anglican clergy and bishops as a form of internal government with no spiritual claims to authority. This approach, for Wood, considered the sacraments as pious ceremonies which possessed 'no inherent efficacy'⁴⁷. Lindsay and Wood were both expressing a sentiment that was to become a recurring theme in the publications of the Union. The organisation was all too aware of the fact that the relationship between the Church and the State

⁴⁵ See above.

⁴⁶ C. Lindsay, *Rise and Progress*, p.6-7.

⁴⁷ C. L. Wood., *Reasons for Union*, (London, 1868) p.9.

was no longer an equal partnership and that the government, whether Whig or Tory, could no longer be relied upon to defend the teachings of the Established Church. For this reason, in the years before the backlash from the passing of the Public Worship Regulation Act, the Union found itself chiefly occupied with the organisation of protests and petitions against proposed measures that went against the values of the Anglo-Catholic movement.

The Deceased Wife's Sister Bill was a recurring problem and the Union fought its passing for years. Attempts were made to enable the marriage of a man to his deceased wife's sister in the Church of England from 1847 until its eventual success in 1907. Anglo-Catholics found the bill particularly offensive because they maintained that scripture specifically forbade such a union. Marriage to the sister of a deceased wife was not an uncommon practice in Victorian Britain. Upon the death of a wife it was considered ideal for a single female sibling to enter the home and take care of domestic duties, especially if there were young children involved. That such an arrangement could, and often did, lead to marriage is not hard to fathom. For the Anglo-Catholics it was another example of the State sanctioning laws which were opposed to the moral teaching of scripture.

The Deceased Wife's Sister Bill, and the reaction of the E.C.U. to the proposed measure, encapsulated the problems that were inherent in the Church and State relationship by this time. Measures proposed in the Houses of Parliament were leading to conflicts between the civil and ecclesiastical laws. The Union continued to protest against the bill which was brought forward numerous times and was thrown out of the House of Lords on more than one occasion. There was enthusiasm at a local branch

level and in 1879 seventy-five of them sent petitions to the head office of the Union declaring their opposition to the measure.

The Burials Bill also met with continued resistance from the Union. First proposed in 1857, the bill would have allowed dissenting churchmen to conduct their burial services in parish churchyards and had the support of the leaders of the Liberal Party. High Churchmen felt that such an action would eventually lead to nonconformist use of their church buildings and amounted to an invasion of their sacred burial places. Opposition to the bill in its various manifestations over the years was also bound up in the question of disestablishment.⁴⁸

In the years preceding the 1870s the attacks on Anglo-Catholic values, while considered to be threatening to the Church, did not have the directness of the onslaught that was to come. The Deceased Wife's Sister and Burials bills were not designed to attack the standpoint of the Anglo-Catholic movement. They were measures that reflected the changes taking place both in society as a whole and in the make up of a House of Commons that no longer required its MPs to be members of the National Church. The actions of the Union did, however, ensure that further attention was brought to these issues and part of the role of the organisation as a whole was to stir up the 'stagnant waters of indifference.'⁴⁹

This was a role that the local branches could take on and their reports illustrate that, while they may not have appeared to be the great army of the Church, the members were trying to raise awareness. The Oxfordshire

⁴⁸ G.I.T. Machin, *Politics and the Churches in Great Britain 1869 to 1921* (Oxford, 1987) p.98-100.

⁴⁹ C. Lindsay, *Past and Future*, p.6.

branch report for 1865 reveals that they passed resolutions concerning the increase of the episcopate, the Association for Amending the Law of Final Appeal, the opening of churches for private devotion, the conscience clause of the government education grant, and the promotion of the free and open church system in Oxford.⁵⁰ The report from Great Yeldham revealed that 'some stir had been made towards influencing the local members of Parliament in matters of legislation affecting ecclesiastical interest.' The member for North Essex was reported as having satisfactorily answered 'certain important questions addressed to him.'⁵¹

The role of the Union in the years before the P.W.R. Act therefore comprised a continued protest against the nature of the Church and State relationship, as reflected in proposed bills that contravened, or so the members of the ECU felt, teachings of the Church. It also included raising awareness at a local and national level on the plight of the Church of England and the need to retain her Catholicity. This period was crucial as it allowed the Union to fortify the branch system and mature as an organisation. Numbers rose steadily and at the end of the year 1872-1873 there were 20 district unions, 167 branches, and 23 parochial associations. Interest in the Anglo-Catholic cause was gaining ground and the *Church Times*, the extremely partisan publication which supported the movement, was selling an average of 13,368 copies a week for the same year.⁵² The well-connected Charles Lindley Wood was at the helm of the Union and battle was about to commence in earnest.

⁵⁰ *Circulars*, p.8.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.11.

⁵² B Palmer, *Gadfly for God. A History of the Church Times* (London, 1991), p. 331-332.

The E.C.U. and the Public Worship Regulation Act of 1874

In the early 1870s it became apparent that Ritualist clergy who were brought before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council were ignoring its judgements. Clergy continued to operate within their parishes and neglected to remove ornamentation that had been deemed too ritualistic by the courts. In May of 1873, sixty thousand members of the Church of England petitioned the Archbishops with the request that they act on the matter of Ritualism. When one considers the numbers who petitioned the hierarchy of the Church and parliament on other matters this does not seem a large number. Over one million put their names to the petition opposing the Maynooth Grant and over four million felt sufficiently moved over the educational clauses in Graham's Factory Bill of 1843 to petition parliament.⁵³ In the context of petitions of the nineteenth century the number of signatories complaining about Ritualism seems a relatively small number. Its significance lies in the fact that sixty thousand exceeds by twenty thousand the total membership that the Union managed to achieve in this period.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Archibald Tait, set to work designing a Public Worship Regulation Bill that proposed to set up lay/clerical courts in every diocese for the trial of Ritualists. Appeals against the judgements delivered were to be made to the Archbishop. In setting out the bill in this manner Tait recognised the fact that clergy were much more likely to challenge the spiritual authority of civil court than they were to challenge

⁵³ S. J. Brown, *The National Churches of England, Ireland, and Scotland 1801-1846* (Oxford, 2001), p. 343, 376.

that of an Archbishop and the Diocesan Courts.⁵⁴ If Tait's draft had been accepted the next twenty years could have been very different for the Anglo-Catholic movement but its provisions were unpopular in Parliament. Shaftesbury instigated the crucial changes, replacing the diocesan courts with a lay judge, and transferring final appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. These modifications reflected Shaftesbury's desire to have both civil and ecclesiastical matters dealt with through the same judicial process.⁵⁵ However, a clause remained that was to prove important in disabling the Act: the bishop of the diocese could veto the process at any time. Of the twenty-three attempted prosecutions under the Act, the diocesan bishops involved vetoed seventeen.⁵⁶

Although membership of the E.C.U. was high by the time the amended bill was travelling through Parliament, its lack of representation in either House meant that the organisation could do little to halt the progress of the measure. There was also the fact that both Queen Victoria and the Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli, supported further action against Ritualism. The latter remarked in the House of Commons that the purpose of the Bill was to destroy 'the Mass in Masquerade.'⁵⁷

The Act did not change the law regarding worship but it did change the manner in which the law was enforced by merging the courts of Canterbury and York under a lay judge. In order for a clergyman to be brought before this court, three male parishioners, a churchwarden, or an archdeacon were required to make a complaint to the bishop that there had

⁵⁴ J. G. Lockhart, p. 195

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

⁵⁶ B. Palmer, *Reverend Rebels*, p.12.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 11 .

been an illegal infringement of the ceremonial of the Church of England. Possible infringements were classified as 1) the introduction of ornaments or furniture during the preceding five years without lawful authority; 2) the use of unlawful ornaments within the last year; 3) Failure during the past year to adhere to the performance of services as set out in the Prayer Book or additions being made to those services.⁵⁸ Matters were made worse for the Anglo-Catholics in the form of Lord Penzance, the man appointed to be the judge of the new court, who had formerly presided over the Divorce Court. In addition, Penzance refused to take the canonical oath or subscribe to the Thirty Nine Articles because he maintained (rightly so) that his appointment was not an ecclesiastical mandate.⁵⁹

The English Church Union had to decide how it was going to counteract the introduction of the new Act. In 1874, after Tait had introduced his draft bill in the House of Lords, the E.C.U. had presented a memorial to both Houses of the Convocation of Canterbury,

We, the undersigned, venture respectfully to submit to your House that a Bill has been introduced into the House of Lords by his Grace, the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, entitled the "Public Worship Regulation Bill" which not only affects the disciplinary administration of the laws ecclesiastical as regards the beneficed clergy, but also affects the rights of the laity.

Your Petitioners pray that your House will take into consideration before further proceedings are taken in Parliament, in order that a matter so gravely affecting the present administration of the law of the Church may be considered by both Houses of Convocation in each province; and that Parliament should not be called upon to legislate

⁵⁸ L. E. Ellsworth, *Charles Lowder and the Ritualist Movement* (London, 1982) p. 130-131.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

before the opinions of the clergy should be ascertained on a matter so vitally affecting their position.⁶⁰

The manner in which the Union approached the issue is interesting. The fact that they requested that the opinions of the clergy be obtained through Convocation makes the E.C.U. seem reasonable rather than extremist. Calls for moderation were also scattered through the speeches of Wood, Pusey, and other prominent Anglo-Catholic figures such as T. T. Carter.⁶¹

When it came to prosecution of the clergy the E.C.U. was pledged to 'afford counsel and protection to all persons, lay or clerical, suffering under unjust aggression in spiritual matters'.⁶² But the president and council made it clear that where their advice was sought it was their duty 'not to commit the Union to any expression of opinion upon the policy or practices or upon the details of observances for which others alone were responsible.'⁶³ This was a sensible course for the organisation to take. Their stance on the prosecution of the clergy (both before and after the implementation of the Act) was that a lay, civil court did not have the authority to judge on ecclesiastical matters. They refused to accept that a temporal court could invade the realm of the spiritual, but there was never any blanket guarantee of support for the actions of clergymen who were called to stand trial.

The caution of the president and council meant that they declined to 'commit the Union' to any opinion on the actions of specific clergy and they were equally careful in the use of language when presenting their case for

⁶⁰ G.B. Roberts, p.160-161.

⁶¹ The tensions that such calls caused within the Union will be examined later in the chapter.

⁶² G. B. Roberts, p.12.

⁶³ *Report of the President and Council of the English Church Union, December 17th, 1872* (London, 1872) p.9.

not accepting the authority of a civil court. They put forward their argument in an address given in 1874, and it amounted to a reassertion of some of the basic principles of the Anglo-Catholic movement. The address stated that the Christ died for all and not for one specific nation. By virtue of this fact the Church (meaning the assembly of all who partake in Christ's nature) could not be limited by accidental geographical boundaries.⁶⁴ The Church of England was more than merely a human society and, in Anglo-Catholic opinion, could not be created, destroyed, or moderated by Acts of Parliament.⁶⁵ The problems with this approach are obvious. The post-Reformation Church of England was the national Church by law established. The Church was bound to the nation and it is easy to see why detractors of the Union, and the Anglo-Catholic movement as a whole, read into their refusal to accept the rulings of a civil court the implication of a support for disestablishment. The severing of the Church from the State appears to be the logical conclusion to the argument that the Church cannot be bound to a particular state and time.

The president and council showed an awareness of this interpretation and the harm that it could inflict upon the work of the Union. More moderate supporters might well disagree with the prosecution and imprisonment of clergymen, but it did not mean that they had a desire to see an end to the Church and State partnership. In 1886, the president Charles Lindley Wood (by now the second Viscount Halifax) circulated a letter to the members and associates of the Union in which he warned against 'ambiguous language', stating that words 'may betray the very position they are intended to support, and among traitors of that sort, none I venture to

⁶⁴ *Substance of an address delivered at the ordinary meeting of the English Church Union on December 10th, 1874* (London, 1874) p.5-6.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

think, is so great a traitor as the word "Disestablishment" as popularly understood.'[Sic]⁶⁶

The president was also mindful of the manner in which the actions of the E.C.U. could affect their relationship with the Episcopacy. Apostolic Succession was the key to their claims to an authority beyond the State and they could not allow themselves to be perceived as demonstrating disloyalty towards the bishops. In an address of 1874, Wood therefore enforced the fact that no one within the Union had refused to obey the spiritual authority of a bishop,

We may have said, we may have done, intemperate things. Some things that have been said I, for one, deeply regret; but after all, the bishops must know that, at bottom, they have no more devoted children than ourselves; that they are as necessary to us as I believe we are to them, and that in the day of trouble, if such a day should ever arise for the Church of England, their heartiest, their warmest, their most earnest and devoted followers will be ourselves.⁶⁷

The president and council frequently stressed the moderation of the E.C.U. and their language contrasts with the more extremist Church Association. The publications of the English Church Union would have been widely available and one cannot help thinking that Wood's comments are often an exercise in public relations. According to the president, although the motto of the Union was reform, all that they wanted with regards to ecclesiastical reform was greater clerical representation in Convocation and that conferences be established in each diocese to concentrate on the expression of

⁶⁶ C. L. Wood, *A Letter the Members and Associates, from the Viscount Halifax, President of the English Church Union* (London, 1886) p.2.

⁶⁷ C. L. Wood, *Substance of an Address...* (London, 1874) p. 10-11.

Church feeling and then act upon public opinion.⁶⁸ It is a much more passive stance than that of their detractors who were engaged in prosecutions which saw clergymen imprisoned.

This level of self-awareness is apparent in the majority of the English Church Union's dealings with the effects of the Public Worship Regulation Act. Before the act was passed the President and Council recognised that the prosecutions handled by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council had in fact advanced the cause of the Anglo-Catholic movement by drawing public attention to the plight of the Ritualist clergy. Their report of 1872 reviewed the activities of the year and noted that they had,

every reason to be contented with the course which, after most careful consideration, was pursued by the Union...It appears now to be pretty generally admitted that the position of what is termed "the ritual party" is *actually* stronger than it was though in some few respects *nominally* weaker, in consequence of the doubtful gains resulting from those adverse decisions of the Judicial Committee which themselves are acknowledged by competent authorities to open to the gravest questionings.⁶⁹

By 1875 the E.C.U. had been brought into the spotlight by the Public Worship Regulation Act and it was time for action. It was therefore important for them to define exactly what they were fighting for. Wood did so in an address to the Union in 1875,

We are not fighting for the success of this or that political party. It is not the interest of any class for which we are struggling. Our aims are not limited to our own countrymen, or to our own race. Our objects are holier, higher than all of these, for they are

⁶⁸ Ibid., p.23.

⁶⁹ *Report of the President and Council 1872* (London, 1872) p.10.

none other than the interests of the Church of Christ – that supernatural society, which is confined to no place and to no time, and upon whose destinies...all human affairs really depend.⁷⁰

While it would be extremely difficult to argue that there was no party spirit in the Union, it was certainly not party spirit related to a political group or social class.⁷¹ The president was also keen to elucidate that what was at stake was not simply a question of more ornate ritual. The power of civil courts to rule on matters of the Church could leave the clergy with no more power than a schoolmaster. A time could come when the members of the E.C.U. would have to suffer for the sake of conscience in order to testify to a belief in the inherent authority of the Church of England and the existence of the Church as something more than a creature of the State.⁷²

But what action did the E.C.U. actually take? A large part of its role in relation to the P.W.R. Act was the raising of funds and the provision of legal advice to those clergymen called upon to stand trial. In 1877, Wood addressed the Union on their position in relation to the Act. He stated that the members had a duty in view of the position held by the Church in relation to the State,

If she [the Church] has never consented to the position in which she finds herself, if she has nowhere admitted the right of the secular power to suspend a priest from his sacred

⁷⁰ C. L. Wood, *The President's Address to the Ordinary Meeting of the English Church Union* (London, 1875) p. 13.

⁷¹ While the Anglo-Catholic movement was certainly dominated by the upper classes it demonstrated that it had appeal across the social spectrum through organisations such as the Church of England Working Men's Association and the Guilds. Traditionally the High Church had found its political expression through the Tory party with its old adage of Church, Tory, and State. This was becoming less relevant to the Anglo-Catholic movement, especially since Disraeli had so avidly supported the Public Worship Regulation Act.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p.11-12.

office, then if a priest is so suspended, and priest in the exercise of his discretion sees fit to disregard that suspension, I do believe it is our duty to support him to the best of our power.⁷³

In making the above statement the president was not expressing an opinion on what the duty of individual clergy might be regarding the court established by the P.W.R. Act. Wood acknowledged that the duty of one man was not necessarily the duty of another and that the Union was 'neither a congregation of Rites nor a director of consciences.'⁷⁴

Wood maintained that on the issue of the Public Worship Regulation Act he wished 'to be distinctly understood that this Union is committed to the legality only of the six points of ritual⁷⁵ which have been declared legal by the late Dean of Arches.'⁷⁶ This point was central to understanding the way in which the E.C.U. dealt with the Act and the president was here drawing the boundaries. The organisation had a duty to protect clergymen who were suspended by a civil court which had ruled on spiritual matters. The objectives of the Union as set out in 1860, stated that it was the duty of the organisation to 'afford counsel and protection to all persons, lay or clerical, suffering under unjust aggression in spiritual matters.'⁷⁷ There would not, however, be any declaration of blanket support for Ritualism and certainly no claims to the legality of anything beyond the six points. The

⁷³ C. L. Wood, *An Address Delivered at the Special Meeting of the English Church Union...Tuesday, January 16, 1877* (London, 1877) p. 11-12.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* p.12.

⁷⁵ The six points were those that the Dean of Arches had ruled to be legal. These were Eucharistic vestments, the eastward position, candles on the altar, mixture of water and wine in the chalice, incense, and wafer bread.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p.12.

⁷⁷ G. B. Roberts, p.12.

Union denied the secular court any authority on spiritual matters but readily acknowledged its right to judge on the temporal.

As the battle continued through the 1870s some of the caution evident earlier in the decade waned as frustration at the situation increased. Only a month after Wood had carefully chosen his words over the position of the Union with regards to clergymen facing prosecution, he delivered a far more fiery speech at the Freemason's Tavern in London. In an expression of frustration at the condition of the relationship between Church and State the president proclaimed in 1877, 'that we had rather be a Church in earnest separate from the State, than a counterfeit Church in professed union with the State...it is possible to pay too heavy a price for Establishment.'⁷⁸

What more could the Union do? If Parliament could not be persuaded to rescind the Public Worship Regulation Act, what further course of action could be taken? Fortunately for the E.C.U., and for the clergy who faced prosecution, the tide of public opinion began to change towards the end of the 1870s. Viscount Halifax's biographer, J. G. Lockhart, makes the interesting point that such a *volte face* by a public 'which demanded energetic action against the Ritualists, but directly Ritualists began to go to prison, demanded their release, which was all quite illogical and very English.'⁷⁹ The reasoning behind the change perhaps lies in the relationship between the Church Association and the Union.

In June 1879 Rev. Sidney Fairthorn Green was found guilty of Ritual offences by Lord Penzance and was suspended from his parish for three

⁷⁸ C. L. Wood, *Substance of an Address Delivered by Hon. Charles L. Wood...Freemason's Tavern, Feb 27, 1877* (London, 1877) p.9.

⁷⁹ J. G. Lockhart, Vol. 1, p.237 – 239.

months and ordered to pay costs. Upon investigation of his legal bill Green discovered that he had been charged for meetings between Lord Penzance and the prosecution in which Penzance had instructed them on how to avoid technical irregularities. Recent cases had been abandoned on technicalities and the Church Association was determined that this Ritualist would be stopped. Green refused to pay the costs and was imprisoned from 21 March 1881 to 4 November 1882.⁸⁰ In order to meet the bill his property and possessions were auctioned off and the E.C.U. mounted a campaign to buy them back. Their fundraising was successful and the items were returned to Green upon his release. The case was a rallying point for the Union and, when Green had been in prison for nineteen months, Wood clarified the opposition of the president and council on the matter. He stated that those engaged in the prosecution of Green could not persuade themselves 'that a Clergyman who is ready to sacrifice his prospects, his family, his liberty, on behalf of what he believes to be right in the Church of England, is likely to be a traitor to his obligation as a Priest of the Church.'⁸¹ He also raised an issue which the public likely had picked up on by this point, that the E.C.U. had only ever desired peace 'and the best proof of this is to be found in the fact that, under circumstances of the greatest provocation, we have never, even in self defence, attempted to retaliate upon others the treatment that they have inflicted upon us.'⁸²

The English Church Union had become a large organisation that had increased in influence. Pusey said of the P.W.R. Act in 1874 that, 'People do not break a butterfly on a wheel or destroy a gnat with a sledgehammer. It is

⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 227 - 229.

⁸¹ C. L. Wood, *An Address Delivered at the Twenty Third Annual Meeting of the English Church Union* (London, 1882) p. 4.

⁸² Ibid., p. 3.

a testimony to our strength that the Imperial Parliament has been invoked to crush us...we were to be crushed with all speed, lest we should have time to grow.'⁸³ But despite this they continued to be the underdog. The Church Association still had greater funds, greater membership, and the legal system on their side. As stated above, the leaders of the Union portrayed an image of greater moderation than its staunchly Protestant counterpart. Often members of the E.C.U. felt that Wood was too geared towards peace and not enough towards the fight, but this approach contrasted nicely with the extremism of the Church Association.

This extremism is illustrated in the case of Rev. Richard W. Enraght and a series of events which gained the Church Association little support. On 9 February, 1879, in the church of Holy Trinity in Bordesley, near Birmingham, a man took a consecrated wafer on the pretence of communicating. The consecrated wafer was one of the six points which the E.C.U. supported and which the Dean of Arches had ruled to be legal although subsequent actions had since overturned this ruling. The wafer was taken to the churchwarden, a Mr. Perkins, for use as evidence in his prosecution of Enraght and was filed as an exhibit to be produced in court. Some members of the council of the Union managed to obtain the wafer and took it to the Archbishop of Canterbury who consumed it in his private chapel⁸⁴. There was general disgust at the whole affair, not least because removing the consecrated wafer was considered sacrilegious. The drawn out case which followed against Enraght resulted in him being found in contempt and he spent fifty-one days in Warwick gaol⁸⁵. He was released

⁸³ *Report of the Speeches Made at the Meeting of the English Church Union, June 16, 1874* (London, 1874) p. 6.

⁸⁴ Lockhart, p. 226-227.

⁸⁵ B. Palmer, *Reverend Rebels* (London, 1993) p.14

after the investigations of the Union proved that the initial writ had not been properly issued. Despite the fact that the clergyman had already spent well over a month in prison the Church Association applied for a new writ.⁸⁶ Enraght was not re-arrested but the whole affair contrasts sharply with the approach taken by the E.C.U and one would not be surprised to learn that the public had become tired of the entire struggle. One writer of Church Association tracts appeared to think so,

The whole thing appears to many people to be a mere trumpety childish dispute, and they cannot understand going to the law and making such a fuss about it. They would have both silly children let alone. They do not pretend to understand who is right, and they have no doubt that all earnest hard-working clergymen are very good fellows.⁸⁷

The fight against the Public Worship Regulation Act had enabled the English Church Union to raise its profile and that of Anglo-Catholicism as a whole. In the years 1870 to 1880 membership of the E.C.U. increased by nearly 10,000. Weekly readership of the highly partisan *Church Times* (which took a much more extreme stance than the Union) had increased by over 8,000 in the same decade.⁸⁸ While the Union could do little to prevent the prosecution and possible imprisonment of clergymen when the Act was first passed, the level of support and funding which they provided became a deterrent to potential prosecutors. The size of the E.C.U. by the mid-1880s meant that they achieved representation in Parliament and had the ability to organise demonstrations regarding any Church matter that they chose.

⁸⁶ J. G. Lockhart, p.227.

⁸⁷ Canon Ryle, *What Practical Courses of Action Should Now be Taken to Give Effect to the Various Judgements on Disputed Points of Ceremony in the Church?* (1877) p.10-11.

⁸⁸ B. Palmer, *Gadfly for God*, p.331-332.

The development of the Union in the years surrounding the passing of the P.W.R. Act is indeed impressive. The opportunity to rally around a single issue encouraged the moderate and extreme wings within the organisation to work together. The reaction of the E.C.U. to the Public Worship Regulation Act of 1874 had transformed the Union. The organisation had dramatically increased its membership and had made the public aware of its presence. The trials and imprisonment of Ritualist clergy had been front page news and the Union had achieved a greater level of recognition within Victorian society.

The Role of the Union after the Public Worship Regulation Act

The English Church Union had been founded in order to protect the doctrines and discipline of the Church of England and the organisation therefore found it hard to move beyond a defensive role. Once the clamour to prosecute Ritualist clergy had died down some attempt was made to involve the Union in evangelical work but little appears to have come of these attempts. In 1884 a resolution was passed by the E.C.U. which committed it to promoting the evangelisation of the masses and a committee was subsequently set up by the president and council to address the matter.⁸⁹ Two years later the committee reported back on the suggestions that had been sent in from the local branch unions. Emphasis was placed on the recommendation that greater interest would be generated in the E.C.U. if people were made aware that the organisation was not simply about resistance to attacks on the Church, but that it also promoted knowledge of the faith.⁹⁰ There is little to suggest that the Union as a whole heeded this advice and for the latter part of the nineteenth century it continued to engage in issues of defence.

In the late 1800s the Union focused its attentions on what it viewed as the continued and increased Erastianism of the State and the effects that it was having on the morality of the nation. Considerable time was devoted to changes that were made to the divorce and marriage laws, especially the Deceased Wife's Sister bill. This bill continued to come before parliament and was consistently met with fierce opposition from the Union. While it

⁸⁹ G. B. Roberts, p.276.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.295-296.



caused outrage among the members of the organisation it could not arouse the passions in the same way that an imprisoned priest could. Petitions were signed and duly sent off, resolutions were passed in E.C.U. meetings, but it simply was not as engaging an issue as the prosecution of Ritualist clergy. The fact that the Union made two donations of £100 to the Marriage Law Defence Union⁹¹ suggests that they were happy to delegate to a body which devoted all its energies to the problem.

A similar approach was taken towards voluntary schools. The Union discussed the matter frequently in this period and was committed to supporting the continuation of voluntary schools and the role of the Church of England in education. At a meeting in 1888 the members of the E.C.U. were called upon to use the power of the organisation to maintain the voluntary schools of the Church of England. How was the Union to exert this power? By signing the petition of the Church Extension Association.

It does seem that Union was aware of the need to define its role within the Anglo-Catholic movement once the attacks on Ritualist clergy became less frequent and less effective. At a meeting in Folkestone on 30 January 1890, a resolution was passed which stated that the history and present position of the E.C.U. 'point to this organization as the nucleus around which all should rally who desire to take their part in defending the spiritual authority and rights and liberties of the Church of England.'⁹² Later that year, in November, a resolution was again passed which identified the English Church Union as the only rallying point for united action within the

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 337.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p.327.

Church.⁹³ It does seem that the manner in which the organisation acted as a rallying point had changed from the early days. The Union was now able to assist other groups who were engaging with specific issues by handing out donations and boosting the number of signatories on petitions.

Despite its size and the influence which the Union could exert as the century drew to a close its president continued to be aware of its limitations. This was demonstrated in the controversy which arose over the publication of *Lux Mundi*. Edited by Charles Gore, *Lux Mundi* was a product of the developing views of the more liberal wing of the Anglo-Catholic movement. Many within the Union felt that the views espoused by it went too far and sought to have the organisation protest against what it termed 'the New Criticism'. Archdeacon Denison moved a resolution at a special meeting of the council on 11 May, 1892 which stated that the council of the Union recorded its protest 'against the denial of the Integrity and Divine Authority of the Scriptures...and against all affirmation that the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ in respect thereof was a limited knowledge.' During his presidency Wood had always tried to ensure that the Union did not make theological pronouncements and proposed an amendment to the resolution which asserted that 'the questions which are supposed to be raised by the "New Criticism" are not such as can be discussed under present circumstances with advantage by a body such as the Union.'⁹⁴ Archdeacon Denison felt compelled to resign from both his position on the council and the organisation over the matter.

⁹³ Ibid., p.338-39.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p.357-359.

The New Criticism came to the attention of the Union again in 1894 and once more Wood refused to let the organisation be drawn into theological pronouncements which it was ill qualified to make. A motion was proposed at a special meeting of the E.C.U. on 4 July, 1894, which repudiated and condemned all criticism of scripture which cast any doubt on its historical validity. An amendment was then proposed which sought to declare adherence to specific teachings of the Church on the question of the inspiration of scripture. Wood declared that the council had to object to the amendment commenting that,

As regards authority, this Union has no authority whatever to condemn writings or individuals, and if it should attempt to do so, there would be only one possible result – it would make itself supremely ridiculous. And I will venture to add too, of you are going to reply by criticism, who will say the Union is a competent body to put out a critical reply to the very difficult question now being put before the public? What this Union can do, and ought to do, is to assert its adherence to the traditional view of the Church...⁹⁵

Wood was never afraid to rein in the members of the Union when he felt that they were veering towards extreme view points or addressing matters which demanded authority beyond the capabilities of the organisation. His desire to steer the middle ground was not always received gladly within the E.C.U. and tensions were often rife.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p.387-89.

Tensions within the Union

The Anglo-Catholic movement was home to a wide range of opinion. Not all Anglo-Catholics, and certainly not all members of the Union, were Ritualists. The presidency of Wood was characterised by a desire for both moderation and peace and this was a popular enough sentiment to see him re-elected year after year throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth century. In order to achieve these objectives Wood conducted a balancing act and it is clear from the records of meetings, and the reports of the president and council, that many were unhappy about the direction that the Union had taken. Some felt it had gone too far towards Ritualism, others that it had not gone far enough. Both Wood and Pusey (who was a vice president from the mid-1870s) threatened resignation over what they viewed as extremist responses on the part of the organisation.

Despite his conservative approach to Anglo-Catholicism, Pusey was consistently portrayed as the leader of the Ritualists. He wrote to Bishop Tait (later to become Archbishop of Canterbury) in April, 1860, that, 'I am in this strange position that my name is made a byword for that with which I have never had any sympathy.'⁹⁶ The Anglo-Catholics were not, and never had been, a united movement led by Pusey. The differences of opinion within the movement as a whole were reflected in the tensions that were present in the English Church Union. In his history of the organisation, published in 1894, G. B. Roberts (himself a district union president) noted the diverse nature of membership to the Union, remarking that,

The net has been cast wide, and no doubt has gathered in various sorts and conditions of men. Some when they join

⁹⁶ Liddon, Vol.4, p.211.

are already intelligent and devout Catholics; some only need closer contact with the Catholic spirit of the Union to become such as these; some have a comparatively imperfect grasp upon Catholic principles; some, a very small number, should perhaps never...have joined.⁹⁷

When Colin Lindsay made his call for united action through his circular of 1859 several of the church unions declined to reply. No delegates from the church unions of Coventry, Gloucester, Norwich, South Church, and Yorkshire were sent to the February meeting which instigated the formation of the E.C.U. There is little information on these organisations so we cannot determine the extent of their Anglo-Catholicism or their take on Ritualism. It is interesting that that the London Union also chose not to become involved, perhaps because it considered itself to be a relatively large and autonomous organisation that did not need to join forces with parochial groups. As mentioned above Pusey was a member and they organised the large public meetings to discuss the Gorham Judgement. Those unions that did affiliate, along with the local branches that emerged were often dissatisfied with the decisions made at the level of the council. The E.C.U. Circular for 1864 opens with a reminder of the need for donations to the Scripture Defence Fund. It is pointed out that the fund for the heretical Bishop Colenso⁹⁸ had already collected upwards of £4,000 and that the president hoped to receive a communication from each member on the matter.⁹⁹ Unions that had been used to operating under their own steam before affiliating with the E.C.U. must surely have found such demands somewhat controlling.

⁹⁷ Roberts, p. 392.

⁹⁸ Colenso was the Bishop of Natal who was deposed by the Church from his bishopric for what were regarded as heretical writings on the Old Testament.

⁹⁹ *E.C.U. Circulars*, p.2.

The new District Union scheme, which was put forward by the council for the Metropolitan area, proposed an alteration to the boundaries and organisation of the Unions in the capital and encouraged local unions to join together at a district level. It met with opposition from the branches at Marylebone and Paddington, St. Pancras, and St. George's, Hanover Street. The Marylebone and Paddington branch stressed that, while it understood the need for a more efficient structure within the Metropolitan area, it felt that the plans for re-organisation were premature.¹⁰⁰ The London branches seem to have wanted to retain some kind of autonomy and were unhappy that the council had taken it upon itself to change their structure and boundaries. The Malton branch also took issue with the council, this time over the issue of subscriptions. The Reverends Parr and Cooper brought forward a motion at the Annual Branch Meeting of 1864 'that this Branch expresses its great regret at the increase in the amount of annual subscription required from new Members of the Union, believing that this step will seriously discourage the joining of new members.'¹⁰¹ The secretary who highlighted the poor membership numbers had already mentioned the unsatisfactory conditions of the branch in the meeting. The members obviously felt that the council was doing them no favours by ordering that their subscriptions be increased. The fact that the branches were more than willing to record their dissatisfaction at the decisions made at the level of the president and council also gives insight into the way the organisation operated. The branch unions elected the office-holders and expected them to listen to their grievances.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 120-22.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p.121.

There was far more for the president to worry about than tensions over structure and subscription. As early as 1860 Colin Lindsay was addressing the differences within an Anglo-Catholic movement that, although it agreed upon doctrine and discipline, was 'far from being at unity with itself.' He asked 'is high ritualism so absolutely necessary...so essential to the existence of the Church that they should virtually excommunicate all who do not agree with them?' Lindsay had admiration for ritualism 'but with many others, I am free to confess that the prejudices of the people should always be considered. Lest through over zeal in this direction some of the flock should be scattered.'¹⁰² The first president demonstrated here the kind of self-awareness that was to characterise Wood's time in the role. The Union needed as broad a base as possible if it was to flourish. It needed to be welcoming to the older more traditional High Church men as well as the vibrant, rising ritualists. Those who had been the innovators in the 1830s, men such as Keble and Pusey, joined the Union, but were not members of the Ritualist section of the movement. They were of the time before Anglo-Catholicism left the academic environs of Oxford and went out into the parishes. The obituary of the Anglo Catholic clergyman R F Littledale noted that by the time of his death, in 1890, Anglo-Catholicism had 'ceased to be a mere "Oxford" Movement –an academical speculation, a luxury of culture, an entertainment of colleges and country parsonages, the possession of priests and clerical laymen – and [had become] the property of the crowd.'¹⁰³ But that was not the Anglo-Catholicism of the 'old guard', and it is no surprise that this side of the movement often clashed with the extreme Ritualists.

¹⁰² C. Lindsay, *Union and Unity*, p.23-24.

¹⁰³ Quoted in J. S. Reed, *Glorious Battle* (Nashville & London, 1996) p.63.

In 1864 the tensions within the English Church Union were extremely evident. In the March Colin Lindsay was engaged in correspondence with a Mr. John Cutler regarding a body called The Members' Committee which had been formed with the purpose of 'promoting the efficiency of the ENGLISH CHURCH UNION, and maintaining the rights and privileges of its MEMBERS.'¹⁰⁴ Lindsay felt that this committee, established by Cutler, had been formed in opposition to the president and council of the Union.¹⁰⁵ Cutler asserted that this was not the case and that the Committee was anxious to co-operate with the president and council. He stated that those who had opted to join the Members' Committee had done so because they perceived the president and council of the union to be acting in a most uncooperative manner.

This schism, which saw members expressing their lack of confidence in the leaders of the organisation, had grown out of their belief that information was being held back regarding the state of the E.C.U.'s financial situation. There were additional matters which had irked some members. One of these was the tone taken by the *Church Review* which Cutler stated had 'ceased to be the organ of the Union only to become that of a clique,' and had 'misrepresented our motives, misreported the speeches at the meetings, and admitted statements...which degrade the columns of a religious paper only to a less [sic] extent than they disgrace the character of the writer.'¹⁰⁶ But it was the accounts of the organisation which the Committee really desired as they maintained that they had every reason to believe that the Union was heavily in debt. Lindsay admitted that this was indeed the case

¹⁰⁴ Capitalisation from original letter.

¹⁰⁵ *Correspondence between the President of the English Church Union and John Cutler, Esq., 'Chairman of the Members' Committee'* (London, 1864) p.1.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p.3.

but that such financial woes were not unusual for religious societies and were certainly no reason to produce dissension within the E.C.U.¹⁰⁷

The president of the Union met the schismatics within the organisation head on and did not try to disguise the fact that a mutiny had taken place. The Members' Committee had sent letters to the local branch presidents and Lindsay clearly felt that he needed to reassert his authority within the Union. He insisted that the correspondence taking place with Cutler be published. Each point made by the Chairman of the Members' Committee was counter-argued with extensive reference to the rules and constitution of the Union. Lindsay was especially keen to emphasise the problems caused by discord in an organisation such as the E.C.U. He asserted that unity in principles and a strict conformity to law and order were fundamental and essential rules that were necessary if the society was to carry to effect the objects which they sought to promote.¹⁰⁸ The '*manly and straightforward*' course for dissatisfied members to pursue was to choose new officers in whom they had more confidence. Cutler and his associates were accused of adopting a method which 'no Society, if it has any respect for itself, will tolerate.'¹⁰⁹

After over a month of frequent correspondence Lindsay ended the debate with the curt assertion that, 'it will answer no purpose to prolong this correspondence, which I have neither the time nor the inclination to do'¹¹⁰ and nothing more was heard of Cutler and his Committee. The disagreement had centred on the administration of the Union with the Members'

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p.7.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. p.1.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. p.9.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. p.15.

Committee under the impression that the president and council were refusing to inform paid up members exactly what was being done with their subscriptions. But tensions within the Union also centred around varying opinions on how radical the organisation should be.

In June 1864, letters appeared from Rev. James Skinner (1818 – 1881), Rev. William Gresley (born 1801, died 1876), and Rev. Dr. Biber complaining that the Union had become an instrument for the promotion of the views of the Ritualists. In light of his dissatisfaction with the E.C.U. Dr. Biber resigned from the organisation forcing the president and council to define their position on Ritual. A statement was made at the Annual Meeting the following month,

That neither the Council nor the Union has ever expressed any views whatever of ritual; and moreover, has never contemplated adopting this subject as an object or principle of the Society, further than by using its influence to maintain that liberty of action which is legally accorded to both clergy and laity in the Prayer Book and the Canons of the Church of England.¹¹¹

While Skinner and Gresley were to remain in the Union after it outlined its approach to Ritualism, the issue continued to trouble the organisation. One year later, at the Annual Meeting for 1865, the matter was high on the agenda. The vice-president called for party politics to be thrown aside for fear of the damage that it could inflict upon what was still a young and relatively small society,

¹¹¹ Roberts, p.58.

Many persons wish to advance the ritual of the Church very extensively; others do not go quite as far as that, but still may be good Churchmen, and anxious for the interest of the Church. Therefore I say very emphatically that we ought to avoid such questions, for fear of retarding the advancement of our Society, particularly in numbers, one of our great objects being to get Members in every large town in every part of the country.¹¹²

The statement gives the impression that the extreme Ritualists considered those who were more moderate to not be wholly committed to the Church or the cause.

At the same meeting Rev. Thomas Walter Perry criticised the Anglo-Catholic movement for its tendency to depreciate the Reformers. He called for a more balanced understanding of their actions, declaring that he felt,

there is a tendency to overlook that they had to fight a great battle in their day, as we have to fight a great battle in our own day. But I do not think that we make sufficient allowances for the difficulties with which they were surrounded; and we are apt to think that their purpose was to get rid of everything Catholic in the Church...nobody who will take the trouble to read the writings of that period can come to that conclusion...¹¹³

This was in stark contrast to a comment in the *Church Times* that the party had not lost sight of the principles of the Reformation. 'We do not lose sight of the principles of them at all. We are busy hunting them down, and have no intention of foregoing the chase until we have extirpated them.'¹¹⁴ The gulf between these two approaches highlights the vast difference of opinion

¹¹² *English Church Union Circulars*, p. 127.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

¹¹⁴ J. S. Reed., p. 63. No date is given for the quotation.

that existed within Anglo-Catholicism as a whole, and within the English Church Union as a microcosm of that movement.

At the Annual Meeting the next year tensions within the organisation again had to be addressed along with the Union's stand on Ritualism. The president tackled the fact that there were members who felt that the E.C.U. needed to spend less time talking and more time acting. He stated that there 'are some, I know, who are dissatisfied with our past action. They admit that we have ably debated questions of interest, that we have passed many excellent resolutions, and drawn up many useful petitions and memorials; but say that is all...'¹¹⁵ Lindsay also had to make the point that the Union was not a 'useless society', making one wonder at the attitudes of some of the members to the organisation of which they were a part. There was also cause for him to define the position on Ritual. Given the reaction of mainstream society to Anglo-Catholicism, and the strong opposition to it throughout the period, it seems fair to assume that the president's words were for those who stood before him, the members. He admitted that the Ritual law of the Church of England was indeed an integral part of her system but that it was not the place of the English Church Union to comment further,

...we have been frequently asked whether we, as a Union, are pledged to promote a system of what is called minute Ritualism. The best answer that I can give is, that it forms no part of our object to determine that mode or manner of performing or celebrating Divine Service. To do so would invade the sanctuary, and interfere in matters which belong exclusively to the priestly office. Our position is one of defence, not aggression. We defend our fellow Churchmen when attacked; we do not meddle with those who

¹¹⁵ C. Lindsay, *English Church Union Past and Future*, p.3.

notoriously break even the plainest rules of the Church, though, what we may hereafter be compelled to do in self-defence, I leave for the future to determine.'¹¹⁶

The president's statement appears to offer a little something for everyone. It reaffirmed that the promotion of Ritualism was not an aim of the Union, yet made no promises as to what the organisation might be compelled to do in defence of the clergy who did promote it.

In June 1874 the E.C.U. organised a meeting to discuss possible responses to the P.W.R. Bill. The speeches and comments made at the gathering give an insight into the wide range of views that were present within the Union. Some of the leading clerical figures within the movement were keen to stress that the course of action that the organisation opted for had to be rooted in the defence of the liberties of the Church of England. The promotion of Ritualism, as we have seen, was not an aim of the Union and this was reiterated. The message was to act with haste and to understand that there were many members of the Anglican Church who were eager to defend her doctrine and discipline but did not desire or understand Ritualism. These were people, stated T. W. Perry,

who have never been accustomed to see [the doctrines of the Church] set forth under the outward forms which we think are lawful, and who are disturbed and perplexed by the ceremonial they complain of; these are the class of persons who have to be tenderly and considerately dealt with, and under no circumstances to have this forced upon them.'¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹¹⁷ *Report of the Speeches made at the Meeting of the English Church Union, June 16, 1874* (London, 1874), p. 71.

Pusey put his point across forcibly stating that 'what is revived should not be revived as a matter of private judgement.'¹¹⁸ The veteran of the Anglo-Catholic movement was uncomfortable with many of the developments which the Ritualists had initiated, declaring that 'a good deal of the panic under which we are suffering, and from which we may suffer more, has been owing to ill-chosen language or the advancement of misunderstood principles.'¹¹⁹ Pusey had been here before, he had seen the extremists within a movement take it beyond what he was prepared to accept and he had stark words for any potential Newmans or Wards within the Anglo-Catholic movement of the 1870s,

There has been too much guerrilla warfare of late – everyone doing what was right in his own eyes. One secret of our movement was union. What one thought all thought; what one said all said...Other days came; and extreme articles were written in our common organ...The storm was raised as now. People were maddened...I trust those who think themselves advanced in this day will profit by experience, and, retiring into the main body, will neither expose themselves, nor us, nor the Church, nor what we hold dearer than life – the truth of God, to perils the extent of which they cannot well estimate: but by union give strength to the whole.'¹²⁰

The force of Pusey's warning suggests that the extreme side of the Union was prevalent at this time. The admission of Prebendary Irons at the same gathering that it 'requires courage in an assembly like this for anyone to rise and avow that he is a moderate man still,'¹²¹ would seem to support this. The gulf between the views of the of E.C.U. members was further highlighted by the Rev. E. A. Hilyard of Norwich who stated that the passing

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 9.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p.10.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 10-11.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 30.

of the Public Worship Regulation Bill would result in one mighty work. 'It will,' he averred, 'have welded together those two sections who have looked on each other with mutual suspicion and interchanged such epithets as "extreme" on one side and "Anglican" and "moderate" on the other. It will have united them in the common defence of a common faith if it does nothing else.'¹²² One can only wonder at the extent of tensions and divisions that existed within the Union, and the Anglo-Catholic movement as a whole, if members felt it required something as drastic as the P.W.R. Bill to force the opposing sides together.

The prevalence of Ritualism within the Union made it easy for its detractors to lay the charge of unfaithfulness to the Church of England at its feet. Wood was not afraid to admit that some members of his organisation had gone too far and that mistakes had been made. The president stated that 'in zeal for restoration there may not have been sometimes more haste than prudence. I do not deny that claims, legitimate in themselves, may have been unwisely pressed, in some cases perhaps unduly strained.'¹²³ The injudicious pressing of claims was often a source of tensions within the Union. Officially the E.C.U. supported the six points of Ritual which they considered to be the legitimate interpretation of the ornaments rubric in the Prayer Book. But there were clergy who went beyond these that wanted and needed the legal and financial support of the Union.

At a special meeting called in January of 1877 this point was reinforced with regards to Arthur Tooth of St. James', Hatcham.¹²⁴ Tooth was the first clergyman to be sent to gaol under the P.W.R. Act. He had

¹²² Ibid., p. 42-43.

¹²³ C. L. Wood, *Substance of an Address* (London, 1874), p.12.

¹²⁴ For a full description of his case see Joyce Coombs, *Judgement on Hatcham* (London, 1969), and B. Palmer, *Reverend Rebels* (London, 1993), Chapter 4.

arrived at Hatcham in 1868 and it soon became apparent that he had strong Ritualist leanings. This was particularly evident after he installed a continental style confessional in St. James'.¹²⁵ The president of the E.C.U. declared that 'Mr. Tooth must be well aware that there are many in this society who sympathize with him *not on account of his ritual, but in spite of his ritual.*'¹²⁶ Almost twenty years later, in 1895, the extent of the Ritualism practised by clergymen continued to cause problems within the Union. The Rev. Robert William Dolling of St. Agatha's, Landport, Portsmouth, was supported by the more extreme wing of the organisation but the moderate members felt that the clergyman had gone too far. Dolling proposed using one of the altars in new church for the specific performance of Requiem Masses which had yet to gain full legal status within the Church of England.¹²⁷ The moderates won out in this case, as the E.C.U. did not commit itself to supporting Dolling, who resigned his living in 1896, although he had already intended to take this course of action before the Bishop of Winchester took issue with his conduct of worship.¹²⁸

During his presidency Wood very much wanted the organisation to tread the middle ground. This was not an approach that was supported by all the members but it did mean that, more often than not, the moderate wing won out. The council of the Union also discovered on several occasions that an attempt to carry out more excessive measures would not be tolerated by the president. When the wedding of Princess Louise was scheduled to take place during Lent in 1871, the E.C.U. passed a resolution to send an address to the bishops detailing the unsuitability of Lent for such a celebration.

¹²⁵ J. Coombs, *Judgement on Hatcham* (London, 1969), p. 27.

¹²⁶ C. L. Wood, *An Address...January 16, 1877* (London, 1877), p. 12.

¹²⁷ B. Palmer, *Reverend Rebels*, p. 184-185.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.* p.159.

Wood once had close links to the royal family, being both a companion to the Prince of Wales in his youth and later head of his bedchamber¹²⁹. If the Union had pursued the matter it is clear that it would have caused considerable social embarrassment to him. Despite the fact that the constitution of the organisation stated that 'all power is vested in the entire body'¹³⁰, the president forced the council to back down with the threat of his resignation as his trump card.¹³¹

An incident which took place in 1897, demonstrated how far some within the Union, Wood included, would go on a matter of principle. The president of one of the northern district branches of the E.C.U. also acted as chaplain to the mayor of the branch town. In recognition of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee the mayor presented his chaplain with a peal of bells for the parish church. At this time it emerged that thirty years earlier, the mayor had married his deceased wife's sister and a complaint was now lodged with the council of the E.C.U. regarding the relationship between the district branch president and the mayor. Wood felt that the council should ignore the complaint since the mayor, who was not a member of the Church of England, did not seek any religious privileges from his chaplain, but the person who lodged the complaint continued to press the issue. Wood was unhappy to take the matter any further but agreed to have the vicar questioned after a council member pointed out that failure to act could be viewed as condoning the situation of the mayor. The vicar however, decided to end his involvement in the affair by resigning both from the Union and from his position as chaplain, which Wood viewed as a great injustice. The

¹²⁹ A position he chose to resign from when it became clear that it was incompatible with his role as president of the Union.

¹³⁰ G. B. Roberts, p. 13.

¹³¹ J. G. Lockhart, p.180 – 81.

president also offered to resign unless the council dropped the investigation. Both sides in the E.C.U. eventually backed down and Wood continued to hold office, although the vicar and chaplain were not so lucky. While the act of marrying a deceased wife's sister was considered abhorrent in Anglo-Catholic circles, one can only wonder at the local politics that led to this state of affairs.¹³²

Pusey was also not afraid to threaten resignation when he felt that the council was about to sanction a measure that he felt went too far. In contrast to the popular perception of Pusey at the time, he was no radical and certainly no Ritualist. At an E.C.U. meeting in 1874 when the P.W.R. Act was being discussed he criticised this 'love of Ritualism for its own sake.'¹³³ Of the various Anglo-Catholic societies in existence from the 1850s he was the member of only the E.C.U. and the Society of the Holy Cross. There has been some suggestion that Pusey only became involved in the English Church Union in 1866 as an 'act of piety' towards Keble who had been an influential member and had recently died. The prominent Anglo-Catholic layman Robert Brett convinced Pusey to replace his friend and colleague.¹³⁴ If he did join the organisation out of some sense of duty towards Keble one wonders why he tried so hard to persuade Charles Wood to accept the presidency the following year. Perhaps he was aware of the stabilising effect that he would have upon the Union; perhaps he was afraid that he himself would be persuaded to accept the burden. Whatever the motivation behind his membership of the E.C.U., Pusey was not prepared to stand by while proposals which he deemed to be reckless were accepted. He was not afraid

¹³² J.G. Lockhart, *Charles Lindley Viscount Halifax. Part Two 1885-1934*, (London, 1935) p. 122-24.

¹³³ P. G. Cobb, 'Leader of the Anglo-Catholics?', in *Pusey Rediscovered*, ed. P. Butler, p. 359.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 354.

to threaten resignation and he appears to have been more than aware that the Union did not wish to lose him or the prestige that came with his presence.

In December 1876 the following resolution had been adopted at an ordinary meeting of the E.C.U.,

Any sentence of suspension or inhibition pronounced by any court sitting under the P.W.R. Act is *spiritually* null and void, and that, should any priest feel it to be his duty to continue to discharge his spiritual functions, notwithstanding such sentence, he is hereby assured of the sympathy of this meeting, and of such support and assistance as the circumstances may allow.¹³⁵

For Pusey this was simply too much. He was not prepared to accept such sweeping terms and sent his letter of resignation to Wood in which he underlined the fact that the purpose of the E.C.U. was clearly set down in its objectives. The role of the Union was to defend the oppressed and Pusey felt that the organisation had started to go beyond this, stating, 'I think we have been giving ourselves airs for some time, laying down the law in matters where we have no call.'¹³⁶ In a demonstration of the power of the 'old guard' within the movement, the resolution was drastically re-phrased to state that the 'English Church Union, while it distinctly acknowledges the authority of all courts legally considered in regard to all matters temporal, denies the secular power has authority in matters purely spiritual.'¹³⁷ The revised resolution was adopted at a Special Meeting held in January 1877 and Pusey's resignation was withdrawn. The fact that the first resolution had passed shows how far the majority was willing to go, as it sanctioned blanket

¹³⁵ J. G. Lockhart, Vol. 1., p. 200.

¹³⁶ P. G. Cobb, 'Leader of the Anglo-Catholics?', in *Pusey Rediscovered*, ed. P. Butler, p. 360.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 201-202.

support of clergy charged under the P.W.R. Act. However, the extent to which it was re-phrased demonstrates how little the president and vice-president were willing to concede to them.

Opposition

The intense dislike and distrust of the Anglo-Catholic clergy, which had begun in the 1830s with the Tractarians, reached its peak in the P.W.R. Act of 1874. The widespread suspicions about the Tractarians had seemed to be confirmed by the secession of Newman in 1845. For many the Anglo-Catholics appeared to be Roman Catholic in all but name. The Roman Catholics were seen at least to be *honest* about their religious persuasion, however reviled that persuasion was. In a society where anti-Catholicism was so prevalent, the clandestine Catholic was to be feared, and none more so than the Romanist who cloaked his allegiance in Anglicanism.

Opposition to the E.C.U. was part of this wider criticism of Anglo-Catholicism and involved themes that were also found in the attacks on the Anglican sisterhoods and the parish guilds. Detractors of the movement portrayed Anglo-Catholicism as founded on deception and assumed that there must have been some element of trickery to lure people into the movement. There was also the constant fear that the whole movement was heading towards Rome. The English Church Union was an important force within Anglo-Catholicism and because of the assumptions made by those outside the movement no distinction was made between the members of the E.C.U. and the Ritualists. In Church Association tracts 'Ritualist' seems to have been used as a blanket term for all Anglo-Catholics. With this in mind the eagerness of the presidents to reinforce the distinction between the two is understandable.

The Church Association was the main source of organised opposition to the E.C.U. It was established six years after the Union, in 1865, to

counteract what it viewed to be an assault on the principles of the Church of England by Romanists. Much as the Anglo-Catholics felt that the Church was under attack and mobilised under the Union, the Protestant wing came together in the Church Association. This is reflected in the statement of its aim,

To promote and spread the Doctrines, Principles, and Order of the United Church of England and Ireland, and to counteract the efforts being made to pervert her teaching on essential points of the Christian faith, or assimilate her services with those of the Church of Rome, and further to encourage concerted action for the advancement and progress of Spiritual Religion.¹³⁸

To the Church Association the Union appeared to be instrumental in working towards what they conceived to be the ultimate aim of Ritualism – that is, to undo the work of the Reformation.¹³⁹ In an Association tract of 1875, for example, the Rev. George Warburton Weldon described the reasoning behind the foundation of the E.C.U., stating that ‘the avowed object of this institution was not only to advocate and uphold the Ritualists in their illegal practices and their insubordination to the Bishops, but to promote and spread of those very ceremonies and practices which the highest Court of Judicature has condemned.’¹⁴⁰ This was not, of course, the official line of the Union but it is not difficult to see how their actions could be interpreted as such.

¹³⁸ *Church Association Tracts*, Vol. One (London, n.d.) p.1.

¹³⁹ W. F. Taylor, *The Present Tactics of the Ritualists and How to Meet Them* (London, 1875), p.1.

¹⁴⁰ G.W. Weldon, *The Past Action of the Church Association and the Importance of Maintaining it in Increased Efficiency* (London, 1875), p. 5.

Weldon's tract also presented the E.C.U. as a powerful organisation which could match the financial resources of any Bishop in a court of law. The E.C.U. at the time Weldon was writing was not an influential society and membership figures were below 2,500. When Weldon asks 'what chance then had a Bishop, – single-handed against such a formidable combination?',¹⁴¹ it would seem to be a justification for the actions of his Association, rather than proof of the overbearing power and influence of the E.C.U. It was beneficial to present both the Union and the Ritualists as strong forces because it provided justification for the existence of an aggressive organisation like the Church Association.

While the Church Association tracts portrayed the E.C.U. as more influential in the early years than it actually was, others emphasised the weakness of the Union and the Anglo-Catholic movement. Writing in 1868, the evangelical Dean of Carlisle, Francis Close, painted a more realistic portrait of the Union at this time. He noted the low rates of membership, mentioning that the Clapham branch had only ten members and £21 in its defence fund.¹⁴² However, Close had ominous predictions for its future, suggesting that if the branch unions were ever to live up to their potential the E.C.U. could turn out to be a formidable agency.

The Dean of Carlisle also suggested that those who had joined the Union had been deceived into doing so. He declared that the E.C.U. invited 'persons to join them under the pretence of being strong defenders of the Church of England; and then it turns out that their Church of England is not

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p.6.

¹⁴² Francis Close, "*The English Church Union*" *A Ritualistic Society* (London, 1868), p.13-15.

our Church of England.'¹⁴³ This was precisely the case. Those who criticised the E.C.U. conceived of the Anglican Church largely as the institution established by law in the sixteenth century. The Anglo-Catholics, on the other hand, demanded that recognition be given to a wide range of practices and doctrine in existence before the Reformation in the Church of England. Areas of agreement existed between them such as the two Eucharistic sacraments, the Thirty Nine Articles, the Book of Common Prayer and the historic Episcopacy but it was easier for both sides to exaggerate the differences. Moderate members of the Union often disagreed with the extent of the Ritualism displayed by others within the organisation. It is therefore not hard to comprehend why men such as Close could not believe that a member of the Anglican Church would knowingly support an organisation that seemed to promote pre-Reformation Ritualism. He stated that, beyond all question, 'a vast number of these new members [of the E.C.U.] have not the least idea of the character of the society to which they have given their support, and it is hoped that many soon may be undeceived.'¹⁴⁴ The tensions within the Union demonstrate that this was not the case and that the rank and file of the organisation were often straining at the leash.

Ten years later, in 1878, the E.C.U. had become a more formidable organisation, and the Dean of Carlisle's 1868 fears about the potential of the society had effectively been realised. But despite the large numbers on the books by this point there was still a belief that some kind of deception was afoot, or that only the foolish would support the Anglo-Catholic movement. One pamphleteer, operating under the moniker of 'Presbyter Protestans', declared that 'the English Church Union party in our Church are

¹⁴³ Ibid., p.10.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p.11.

endeavouring to sap the very foundations of our holy religion, and...are leading astray the simple-minded both old and young, to the great injury of souls and to God's no small dishonour.'¹⁴⁵ He also perpetrated the myth of power of Pusey by describing him as the 'subtle mouthpiece' of the organisation and the movement as a whole.¹⁴⁶

By the late 1870s alarm had grown over the motives of the expanding movement and its largest organisation. The increase in their influence surely meant that the Church of England was growing dangerously close to Rome. The detractors of the movement could not comprehend that there was no desire for a return to Rome and Presbyterian Protestants demonstrated this by commenting that in 'the "English Church Union" there exists a well spread, well-organized, and numerous body, whose purpose is to restore Popery, little by little, until finally the supremacy of the Pope supersedes that of our Protestant Sovereign.'¹⁴⁷ But again, the approach of the pamphleteer is understandable. Throughout his presidency Wood championed the idea of the reunion of Christendom. This did not include the restoration of the power of the papacy in the Anglican Church, but the instigation of a dialogue with Rome was more than enough to arouse suspicions.

The 1880s saw increased tensions over what was to be done with Ireland. Gladstone introduced the first of his Home Rule bills and the Home Rule Party of Charles Stewart Parnell held the balance of power in the House of Commons in 1885 before the election. Anti-Irish and anti-Catholic sentiments were pronounced in this period, and it is no surprise that this had

¹⁴⁵ Presbyterian Protestants, *The "English Church Union" Proved from its Official Publications and other Documents to be a Romanizing Confederacy* (London, 1878), p. 36.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.10.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

repercussions on the way that some viewed the English Church Union. In 1889 the pamphleteer James Inskip compared the Union to the Irish Separatists. Seizing on the tone of public opinion on such matters he asked, 'is there not a family likeness? Sympathy with transgression of the law in Ireland is matched in England. Condemnation of the Courts by our Ritualist neighbours is but duplicated by similar proceedings in Ireland.'¹⁴⁸ This highlights the tendency to make general condemnatory statements about all aspects of Catholicism; Roman or Anglican.

By the last decades of the nineteenth century the Anglo-Catholic movement had increased dramatically in both numbers and influence. At an address to the Bradford Liberal Club in 1898, a Mr. Frederick Wood summed up how far the E.C.U. and the movement as a whole had come. He stated that 'when we hear in public the bold defiance of Lord Halifax on behalf of a large organisation, and contrast that with the cautious secrecy of the early Tractarians, we can only conclude that the growing boldness is due to a sense of growing power. Every year that power is increasing.'¹⁴⁹ Early in 1899 the MP Samuel Smith brought up the issue of the influence of the Anglo-Catholic movement and its organisations in the House of Commons. He believed that a 'schism of the most violent kind has arisen between an immense body of the clergy, aided by a limited number of earnest, and sometimes wealthy laymen, and what I may call the great body of the nation who are, and I believe will always remain, Protestant in their conviction.'¹⁵⁰

No matter how influential the Anglo-Catholic movement became, no matter how many members the E.C.U. boasted, there was reluctance, as on

¹⁴⁸ James Inskip, *The English Church Union at Clifton* (London, 1889), p. 7-8.

¹⁴⁹ Frederick Wood, *The Church of England and Ritualism* (Bradford, 1899), p. 8.

¹⁵⁰ Samuel Smith, *Lawlessness in the Church of England* (London, 1899), p. 3.

the part of Smith above, to accept that there were congregations that welcomed the development of Ritual and Church members ready to defend their right to practise it. The common assumption remained that the Union was an organisation that operated through deceiving those who would otherwise be law-abiding members of the reformed National Church. This kind of critique of the E.C.U. was tied up in the popular concept of Anglo-Catholicism that had existed since the emergence of the Oxford Movement. Those who opposed the Union viewed the Anglo-Catholics as Romanists who did not even have the good grace to own up to their true persuasion, and could not conceive of the organisation as anything other than an organisation for the promotion of Ritualistic practices and the full reconciliation of the Church of England with Rome. Specific criticism of the E.C.U. is hard to come by largely because attacks on the Ritualists are intended to encompass the Union. The organisation was seen as the legal and financial wing of the movement, prepared to defend Anglo-Catholic clergy without question. Presbyterian Protestants declared that the Union was 'viewed by the Romanizing Party as being their counsellor and treasurer, the law-breakers thus having little to fear in the shape of personal consequences.'¹⁵¹

It is important to remember that the clergy who used highly developed ritual were breaking the law. Those who believed firmly in the National Church as by law established did not take such actions lightly. The E.C.U. supported clergy in the firm belief that the civil court did not have the right to rule on matters spiritual because the authority of the Church of England was granted through Apostolic Succession and not the law. The

¹⁵¹ P. Protestants, p. 15.

Protestant wing of the Church disagreed with this and to them the clergy were simply acting illegally and had to be stopped. In an address to the Church Association conference of 1875 Rev. G. W. Weldon stated that his fellow Protestants desired every creed and religious denomination to be able to operate in perfect freedom as long as they obeyed the law. It was this provision which the Ritualists 'persistently and defiantly rejected,' and 'though we may give them credit for great activity and zeal they cannot expect to be regarded as loyal and true to the Church they are doing all they can to break into pieces.'¹⁵²

The English Church Union was an organisation which was created with the singular purpose of defending the Catholicism of the Church from those who opposed it. The attempts of its presidents to tread the middle ground and keep Ritualism at arm's length meant nothing to those who refused to believe that it was not trying to affect a return to the fold of Rome. The assumptions that were made about the Union were those of a society that did remain largely Protestant and which was fervently anti-Catholic. It is worth remembering that, regardless of the progress made by the Union during the nineteenth century, its membership figures were overshadowed by the number who signed the petition of 1873 in which 60,000 members of the Church of England requested the Archbishops to deal with the problem of Ritualism. The Church Association was as fervently devoted to maintaining the Protestant character of the Church as the Union was to maintaining its Catholicity.

¹⁵² G. W. Weldon, p.13.

Conclusion

The framework devised by Lindsay and the early council members for the English Church Union meant that the society had to achieve support at a grass roots level if it was to have any success. In this way the Union reflected the developments inside Anglo-Catholicism after it moved beyond the academic confines of Oxford. It was not an organisation that debated the more theological points of Anglo-Catholicism (in fact on many occasions the theological understanding of speakers is fairly limited) but instead tried to be a practical force. There was a realisation that discussion was not nearly as helpful to the clergy that faced prosecution as was cash.

The approach the Union took to the problem of the prosecution of the clergy is interesting because of the level of self-awareness that those at the top of the organisation demonstrated. From the beginning it was a constant aim of the E.C.U. to obtain as much support as possible for their cause, to draw in those who were not ready for advanced Ritualism and doctrine. It was easier for a churchman to agree with the Union that civil courts should not have the right to judge on spiritual matters than to agree on the six points of ritual. Agreeing that a civil court did not have the right to rule on matters of doctrine did not require support for Ritualism, and the organisation was keen to stress this. It could not however, disguise the fact the E.C.U. was home to many who did wish to advance Ritualism.

The Ritualists were both a blessing and a curse to the organisation. Without the issue of P.W.R. to rally around the Union would never have achieved the level of influence that it did by the end of the nineteenth

century. It was Ritualism that gave the Union a role within the Anglo-Catholic movement. Yet their extremism caused rifts within the organisation and was clearly at odds with the more moderate members. The tensions within the Union illustrate the conflicts that were taking place on a wider scale within Anglo-Catholicism. The moderation of the old guard, such as Pusey, was too much for the more advanced Ritualists who felt that they were being encouraged by their congregations towards more advanced ceremony. At a meeting of the Union to discuss the P.W.R. Act in 1874 one lay speaker insisted that 'the laity were now those who urged matters upon quiet and easygoing clergymen.'¹⁵³

It was the job of the presidents to maintain the equilibrium of the organisation and it seems to have been no easy task. The tensions that existed within the Union were symptomatic of an organisation, and a movement, which was new and still developing. Anglo-Catholicism was pushing the boundaries within the Church of England. The Union was part of that advance and some were happy to go further than others. Charles Lindley Wood was a crucial figure in ensuring that the E.C.U. did not go beyond the limits of acceptability for the moderate members. Wood realised that this was fundamental to the strength and development of the organisation and was determined to make it clear that there was a distinction between members of the E.C.U. and the promoters of Ritualism. Membership of the former did not automatically mean adherence to the latter. Membership figures do not reveal who was and who was not a Ritualist. It would be reasonable to speculate that the outrage caused by the P.W.R. Act encouraged many more moderate men into the Union. Whether

¹⁵³ *Report of the Speeches...June 16, 1874* (London, 1874) p.12.

they stayed beyond the 1870s is a difficult question to answer as membership figures rose throughout the nineteenth century. G. B. Roberts, who chronicled the rise of the English Church Union, provided information on the membership figures from 1860 – 1894 along with details of the number who joined each year. These figures reveal that while 2,150 joined in 1878, the total number of members increased by only 925 meaning that 1,225 left the organisation in that year. Obviously one has to factor in causes such as death but this is still a considerable figure. 1880 is another example of a year with considerable losses. Roberts gives us a figure of 1,180 new members but the total membership increases by only 80. The numbers leaving the Union each year from 1878 – 1888 remain around the 1,000 mark. From 1889 onwards the figure is close to, or exceeding 2,000 a year with between 2,500 and 5,900 new members annually in this period.¹⁵⁴

The English Church Union thrived in an atmosphere of persecution and opposition. The society was created to protect the doctrines and discipline of the Church of England and took extremely seriously the war that it was waging. The devotion of the Union to its cause should not be underestimated and was as strong as those clergymen who went to gaol on a point of principle. Meetings drew huge crowds and at the gathering to discuss the Public Worship Regulation Bill so many turned up that another hall had to be found to house half the attendees. It should not be assumed though, that all members agreed with each other, or the stance of the president and council, on all issues. The organisation was open to both lay and clerical members and both were vocal. Unsurprisingly, the majority of motions passed at a national level appear to have been proposed by clerical

¹⁵⁴ See Appendix 2.

members. The very nature of Anglo-Catholicism, with the revered position given to the clergy, meant that they held considerable sway within the society.

The Union represented the move that the Anglo-Catholics had made away from the academic environs of the 1830s and 1840s. Rather than sit back and wait for the attacks upon them to begin, they prepared themselves to respond in a pragmatic manner. By the 1870s the Anglo-Catholic movement had the numbers and the funds to formulate a rejoinder to the attacks mounted against them. Throughout the 1880s and 1890s the organisation was able to lend its influence to causes with which it was sympathetic such as the defence of the marriage laws and the campaign to maintain the role of the Church of England in education. The Public Worship Regulation Act was the nemesis of the Union more than the Church Association which championed it. The E.C.U. opposed nothing as strenuously as it had done this and, once the P.W.R. Act had effectively become obsolete, there is a sense that the Union did not quite know what to do with itself.

Chapter Two

The Church of England Working Men's Society

Laborare est Orare

Introduction

The theological reasoning behind the Catholic revival had been developed in Oxford by men who had little or no experience of parish life and little attempt was made in those early days to take Tractarianism to the masses, or even to consider how this could be done. The masses in Victorian England were, in any case, unimpressed by attempts of the National Church to win their affections. A movement which advocated a return to pre-Reformation ritualistic practices surely stood little chance of winning over a working-class which was at best indifferent to the Church of England and renowned for its anti-Catholicism.

It is this setting which makes the Church of England Working Men's Society so intriguing. The level of involvement in the society certainly does not suggest that there was wholesale support from the working classes for the Anglo-Catholic movement: membership figures hit just over 10,000 in the period up to 1901, compared with nearly 40,000 for the English Church Union. A comparison in the context of working-class organisations could also be made with the trade unions which boasted membership figures of over half a million by the mid-1870s. The existence of the C.E.W.M.S. does not therefore suggest that Anglo-Catholicism and Ritualism had any particular appeal to the working man. The prevalence of the so-called 'slum priests' in the literature of the movement has perhaps led to an assumption

that Anglo-Catholicism won over the working classes where other sections of the Church of England had failed. However, hard facts to support this assumption are few and far between and the movement had a far greater appeal among the middle and upper classes.¹⁵⁵ Slum priests such as Charles Fuge Lowder (born 1820, died 1880) and Alexander Heriot Mackonochie (born 1825, died 1887) are perhaps better viewed as an example of the shift in focus within Anglo-Catholicism from academic to pastoral concerns.

The C.E.W.M.S. is of interest because it is unexpected, not because it suggests a special attraction to Anglo-Catholicism by the working man. Its existence poses the question of why those involved developed an interest in a movement which their fellow working men seemed predisposed towards rejecting. The working classes had little affection for the bishops upon whom the Anglo-Catholics rested their claims for the spiritual authority of the Anglican Church. Working-class agitation around the 1832 Reform Bill had been directed against the episcopacy on several occasions with bishops' palaces targeted.

The members of the C.E.W.M.S. were the exception rather than the rule and they were the first to admit to this fact. Anglo-Catholicism did hold some appeal for the working-class but this was not rooted in an understanding of the finer points of doctrine. This chapter will examine what it was that motivated the labouring man to become involved with the C.E.W.M.S. It will also look at the type of works that they carried out and their relationship with the clergy and hierarchy of the Anglican Church. The chapter will also detail the role of General Secretary Charles Powell and how

¹⁵⁵ See Reed, *Glorious Battle*, p.174.

his financial mis-management led to extreme tensions within the society and played a part in its eventual demise.

The Church and the Working Classes

Unlike the middle and upper classes who swelled the ranks of the E.C.U., the sisterhoods, and the Anglo-Catholic clergy, the working men who made up the C.E.W.M.S. were not natural church attendees. The issue of the lapsed masses was one which had concerned the Church since the Ecclesiastical Commissioners of the 1830s highlighted the need for more churches in the populous districts of England. Extensive church building programmes were implemented, most notably under Blomfield's direction as Bishop of London, but the numbers occupying the pews did not reflect the increasing numbers of the population who resided in urban areas. There was a strong feeling within the Church of England that, as it was the church of the nation, it was duty bound to lead the working people back into the fold. It was also apparent that other denominations, such as the Methodists, were having a greater success with the working-classes than the national church. It would not be an easy task; the working classes to a large extent continued to view the Church as 'Old Corruption' and harboured especial resentment of the episcopacy.

Historians have offered several reasons for the failure of the Church to win the support of the labouring classes. Hugh McLeod makes the important point that the very structure of Victorian society, with its strict class divisions, made it difficult for Protestant denominations to appeal to more than one social stratum. The nature of the relationship between the Church and the State meant that the Church of England was directly linked to the systems of authority and social control. This led lower social groups to

feel alienated and unwelcome.¹⁵⁶ There were also simple and practical factors that kept the working classes away such as their lack of appropriate Sunday attire and the distinctly unwelcoming pew system which many churches continued to operate. The pew rental system served to reinforce the feeling among lower social groups that the church was not the place for the likes of them.

The image of the national church as a bastion of privilege, within which who you knew continued to be of more relevance than what you knew, persisted. This is illustrated in the comments of Thomas Wright in his 1868 work *The Great Unwashed*,

It may be depended upon that the working classes will never be brought to believe in the purity or earnestness of a church which leaves many of its best and truest servants to struggle through life on miserably insufficient incomes, while it passes all kinds of incompetents over their heads to the loaves and fishes at its disposal, simply because the incompetents have political or family influence.¹⁵⁷

Some clergy, such as Dolling¹⁵⁸ felt that if the Church wanted to win back the lapsed masses it would have to give them a positive role to fulfil, something which he felt it had hitherto failed to do. The Rev. J. Foxley agreed. 'The Church of England gives the working man nothing to do.' He lamented in a 1895 sermon on church reform, 'He feels he forms no integral part of her, that

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p.1.

¹⁵⁷ From Journeyman Engineer (pseud.), *The Great Unwashed*, quoted in ¹⁵⁷ H. McLeod, *Religion and Society in England, 1850-1914*, p. 17.

¹⁵⁸ Dolling was involved with the mission church of St. Agatha's, in the Landport area of Portsmouth from 1885 until his resignation in 1896.

he is no vital connexion with her, that he is not built into her structure but is left, a loose stone, lying about for anyone to tumble over.¹⁵⁹

The failure of the working classes to attend church did not mean that they had no religious beliefs or that Christianity was not important to them. The majority of working-class children between five and thirteen attended Sunday school and only those parents who were overtly opposed to religion did not send their offspring.¹⁶⁰ So while the parents chose not to attend church they ensured that their children did because such attendance was still important to working-class notions of respectability. Another decisive factor was that sending children to Sunday school meant that parents did not have to watch over them for at least some of what was often their only leisure day.

The absence of the working classes from the churches did not affect the fact that nineteenth-century notions of morality were profoundly Christian and in Victorian society they remained Protestant in character. Many working men had made a conscious decision not to frequent the Anglican Church and they were happy to vocalise the reasoning behind this. One working-class man who did attend the Church of England detailed the reasons behind many of his contemporaries choosing dissent rather than the national church. In a letter to the *Church Times* he stressed the political considerations that often lay behind the decision. The working man watched as bishops chosen by the government spent their time dealing in political

¹⁵⁹ K.S. Inglis, *Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England* (London, 1963), p.59.

¹⁶⁰ McLeod, p. 79.

matters rather than watching over their dioceses in which livings were bought and sold like any other kind of property.¹⁶¹

In February 1873, a conference of working men took place in Gainsborough under the presidency of the Bishop of Lincoln. The working-class communicants who attended were only too aware of the reasons for the Church's loss of influence among their class. Mr Goldsmith, a machine tool fitter, observed that secularist literature always seemed to find its way into the public reading rooms. Such pamphlets and tracts detailed the apparent moral difficulties of the Bible and instilled doubts in the minds of men who had not read enough material to the contrary to provide a balanced view of the issues. He too brought up the topic of the bishops in the House of Lords and stated that, to the working man, state patronage and control were repugnant practices. 'The very presence of the Bishops in the House of Lords renders them personally unpopular,' he explained, 'Many believe...that it would be far better for them to spend their time in spiritual work in their own dioceses, rather than give colour to the idea put forward by one Roman Catholic writer, that the Church is a department of the Civil Service, for the promotion of good morals.'¹⁶²

All sections of the Church of England were interested in winning over the working classes and the Anglo-Catholic clergy were no exception. They took up the task with a gusto that was in keeping with the move towards more pastoral concerns. The prime exponents of this approach being men such as Charles Fuge Lowder, Alexander Heriot Mackonochie (born, and Arthur Henry Stanton (born 1839, died 1913), the so-called slum priests. But

¹⁶¹ *Church Times*, Vol. 9., (29 September, 1871) p.415.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, Vol.11, (21 March, 1873) p. 139.

it was not just the clergy who were keen to gain the support of the working man. The correspondence in the weekly Anglo-Catholic newspaper, the *Church Times*, frequently focused on the best methods for securing working-class attention. The Anglo-Catholic clergy in the towns and cities had started to form working-men's clubs and there was certainly little effort made to force ritualism upon those who frequented such clubs, or to promote an overtly religious agenda which might have put working people off. In this way they were similar to the groups organised by the sisterhoods, and in some cases the sisters were actively involved with them.

Stanton formed such a club at St. Alban's in Holborn and, in a letter to the *Church Times* in November 1871 appealing for funds, he revealed his aims. Working men were to pay 3d a week to be allowed use of the facilities. These included a billiard table, bagatelle board, card table, books and papers. He anticipated objections to the provision of both spirits and cards at the club but stated that, 'as a matter of principle, I contend that if they are right at a club in Pall Mall, they are right at a club in Holborn.' There is no mention of persuading the members to attend the church and Stanton was not pushing a religious agenda on to these men but attempting to meet a genuine want. By providing activities at his working-men's club he was supplying an alternative to the public house, for 'what are the many working lads and men to do after a long day's work these long winter evenings?'¹⁶³

Others were more inclined to take the traditional paternalistic approach. A Mr H. Willis Nevins suggested that the High Church clergy should form a society with the object of uniting themselves with the newly

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 9 (3 November 1871) p.482.

created working-men's clubs. Such action would 'let the working men see that we are not, as other men, afraid of the power working men are getting, but that we desire to head the movement and direct it.'¹⁶⁴ Such an approach, however, was likely to meet with a hostile reaction from a class that often viewed the national church as an instrument of social control. At a time when the trade unions were gaining dramatically in power and influence, the working-class saw no need to be led by clergymen. This was a point raised in a reply to Mr. Willis Nevins by someone who appeared to be resigned to the fact that the clergy had no chance of gaining the endorsement of the working man. 'To establish themselves as political friends of the working man,' suggested a correspondent identified only as E.R.J., 'the clergy must advertise themselves as converts to his pet theories – equality in social matters as well as spiritual. They must acknowledge his claim to assist in the government of the country. They must be prepared to take his side against his employers in the struggle of Labour against Capital. They must in short, be Trade Unionists. And who shall urge the English clergy to do this?'¹⁶⁵ But for the group of men who became the C.E.W.M.S. this was not the case at all. The efforts of Mackonochie and Stanton at St. Alban's in Holborn to provide for the working men of their district, without forcing their religious views upon them, gained them respect. When the implementation of the P.W.R. Act led to the prosecution of Mackonochie, the working men of St. Alban's made their feelings of loyalty clear.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. 9 (29 September 1871) p.415.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. 9 (6 October 1871) p.424.

Formation

Alexander Heriot Mackonochie is a renowned figure within the Anglo-Catholic movement. Much has been written about his efforts in the parishes of St. Alban's, Holborn, and St. Peter's of the Docks, and rightly so. It is not the intention of this study to play down the role of the clergy in the Catholic revival, but if research into the movement is to continue to prove fruitful it is necessary to examine the effects that the work of the clergy had on those around them and so place them more fully in the context of Victorian society. Mackonochie has been credited in the past with the foundation of the Church of England Working Men's Society. This is indeed the case. Without his influence and the respect which he had gained from the working men of the parish of St. Alban's it is unlikely that the C.E.W.M.S. would ever have existed.

On 2 July 1875, a letter appeared in the pages of the *Church Times* from a Mr Charles Powell on behalf of the working men of St. Alban's, Holborn. It informed the reader that a number of them had joined together in a committee in order to protest at the suspension of their vicar, A. H. Mackonochie.¹⁶⁶ The following protest was addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury and reveals the level of appreciation felt by them for the sustained efforts of their vicar,

We, the poor, are of all others the persons most interested in this matter, To the poor the Church was consecrated for ever; and we cry for justice now that an attempt is being

¹⁶⁶ Mackonochie had been at the centre of legal wrangling since 1867 when, in the case of Martin vs. Mackonochie, the Dean of Arches had ruled that elevation, altar lights, incense, the mixed chalice and the Eastward position were not legal. Mackonochie's continual use of these practices led to further suspensions and prosecutions until 1882 when he resigned from his position at St. Alban's, Holborn.

made to rob us of the same. We live in the midst of the work. None know better than we the ministrations of the Rev. A.H. Mackonochie, and his band of devoted priests...Therefore we do most earnestly protest against the injustice the clergy are now suffering, and plead for their freedom from persecution and liberty for us to worship God according to our belief, in peace and quietness...Your Grace, this Protest emanates from working men, and is perfectly spontaneous, and is an honest expression of our disapproval with these persecutions. We are not able to embody our ideas in high flown language, or even grammatical terms, but in plain honest language, which alone we understand.¹⁶⁷

So began the organisation which was to develop into the C.E.W.M.S. It is interesting to note that these men had recorded no previous protest. They had not formed a committee to fight the Public Worship Regulation Act or to register disapproval at prior judgements which had directly affected the Anglo-Catholic movement and its clergy. Once their initial protest had been made they did begin to voice their opinions on other matters which received the attention of the movement as a whole such as the proposed changes to the marriage and burial laws. But it was the desire to protect one man that motivated the committee that banded together in Holborn. The protest which they wished to present to the Archbishop of Canterbury did not take as its focus arguments about civil courts not having the authority to decide on spiritual matters. The English Church Union came into being because a group of men realised that the political and social climate increased the chance of a sustained attack on their modes of worship. The working men of St. Alban's did not, however, approach their founding with plans to defend the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England, although this would later become an objective. Through the efforts of one man, whom they

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., Vol. 13 (2 July 1875) p. 332.

greatly respected, they had been introduced to forms of worship that they had come to regard as their own. They wanted to be able to continue to worship in this manner under the direction of their vicar and they took his prosecution very personally.

So personally, in fact, that they requested an audience with the Archbishop of Canterbury to discuss the matter and present their protest in person. Tait's response upon meeting the deputation was reasonable. Mackonochie's suspension and the issues surrounding it, he explained, fell under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London, in whose diocese the events had taken place, and it was not the place of the Archbishop to interfere. Tait could not, therefore, receive the protest. He further observed that, just because the court where the judgement had been made against Mackonochie was in his name, it did not mean that he could reverse the decision.¹⁶⁸ For years afterwards the C.E.W.M.S. would credit these actions by Tait as the catalyst for the foundation of the society. They obviously felt that he could have over ruled the judgement if he wanted to – for after all he was the Archbishop of Canterbury. But Tait was right when he commented that one would not take a protest to the Queen over a decision made in a civil case by the Chief Justice of the Queen's Bench. The working men took very personally something that was merely a statement of fact.

Encouraged by the fact that they had at least been received by Tait, the committee from St. Alban's directed their attention to John Jackson (consecrated 1869, died 1885), the Bishop of London. Charles Powell, the leading figure among the working men and later the General Secretary of the

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., Vol. 13, p.371.

C.E.W.M.S., now wrote to Jackson asking for an audience, but was informed that the bishop would not meet with them unless he was informed of the topic on which they sought his advice. Powell, however, refused to reveal the reason behind the deputation and made the point that, as working men, they had no time to engage in a lengthy communication. Jackson again refused a meeting without prior presentation of the facts leading Powell finally to list their grievances. This was not before he had stated that 'we cannot but think that your lordship has taken an unfair advantage of us; and considering our position, it is the more unkind, as it is forcing us into a correspondence which we were from the first anxious to avoid.'¹⁶⁹

Once he was aware that the committee wished to discuss the Mackonochie case Jackson refused to meet with them on the grounds that he felt nothing beneficial could come from receiving the deputation. This was probably the response that the men of St. Alban's were expecting and hence their reluctance to provide the Bishop of London with all the facts. The correspondence was forwarded on to the *Church Times*, which had adopted the cause of the St. Alban's Committee, and to the more partisan reader it appeared the poor working men of Holborn had been scorned by the episcopacy. But what else did they expect from Jackson? The Public Worship Regulation Act permitted him to use his veto on cases being brought against clergy in his diocese and he had not used it in the case of Mackonochie. Everything had been carried out in accordance with the law and, as far as he was concerned, a judgement had been passed which his clergyman was bound to obey and the case was closed.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., Vol. 13, p.397. Letter dated 26 July 1875.

It was not closed for the St. Alban's committee of working men, who now changed tack. It had become clear that they were going to receive no assistance from the episcopacy and so they turned to their fellow working men. What they wanted to make clear was that they had been drawn to the national church because of men like Mackonochie, who they felt were being unfairly persecuted. They were aware that they were a minority among their class and they were also aware of the desire of the Church to win over the working man. Perhaps they felt that this leverage would work where the English Church Union had failed. After all, middle-class church goers were ten a penny, whereas the working-class attendee was a far more valuable commodity.

Charles Powell spearheaded the effort and began travelling all over England attempting to garner support from working men. The *Church Times* helped the cause by publishing supportive editorials and details of Powell's destinations as well as reporting on recently formed committees who had joined the fight. This was crucial to spreading the word about their activities since the weekly readership of the newspaper in 1875 averaged 15,360.¹⁷⁰ A leading article on 10 September 1875 included an interview in which Powell defined the 'bona fide working man'. This was deemed to be any man on a weekly wage rather than a salary. This definition included skilled artisans, foremen and managers of works, as well as small shopkeepers, clerks and warehousemen. The working men were exactly that – gainfully employed. Respectability among this social stratum was gained through the ability to provide for one's family. The men involved were not, therefore, the poorest of the poor.¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ B. Palmer, *Gadfly for God*, (London, 1991) p. 331.

¹⁷¹ *Church Times*, Vol. 13, (10 September 1875) p. 450.

Such articles were always keen to elucidate that the men had banded together of their own accord and were not under the control of any clergy. They made a point of not asking for clerical advice in order to avoid such charges.¹⁷² But accusations were frequently made that they were controlled by Ritualist clergymen. This is unsurprising since the prevailing sentiment in Victorian society regarding Anglo-Catholicism was that it was, at all levels, controlled by 'sneaky Puseyites'. In a pamphlet of 1873, the Devon magistrate G. W. Soltau suggested that the Ritualist clergy had entered into a pact with the upper classes to regain the power lost through the Reform Acts of the nineteenth century. The clergy acted as their agents in order 'to obtain perfect dominion over the working classes.'¹⁷³ The true goal of the Ritualist clergy, stated Soltau, was power and they were motivated by the desire to crush the freedom of the working classes.¹⁷⁴ With such literature readily available to the labouring classes it is no wonder that the men of St. Alban's were constantly stressing the spontaneity of their foundation and denying Mackonochie's hand in the proceedings.

Over the weeks and months that followed the initial protest, groups of men all over the country met together and resolved to form working men's committees in conjunction with the organisation at St. Alban's. In Manchester, Oxford, Bristol, Southampton and Winchester, to name but a few, men from a class which was presumed to have no interest in the fate of the Church of England joined together to register their anger at the treatment handed out to one of its clergymen. By November 1875, 800 were involved

¹⁷² Ibid., p.450.

¹⁷³ G. W. Soltau, *A Letter to the Working Classes on Ritualism* (London, 1873) p. 14.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p.15-16.

and delegates met at a conference in London to discuss their efforts.¹⁷⁵ By May 1876 the petition to both Houses of Convocation detailing their case had 14,000 signatures. The organisers had tried to ensure that only genuine working men had lent their names and some were crossed off because there were doubts about their social status. 11,000 of the signatories were also communicants.¹⁷⁶ In August, after the petition had been handed over, the delegates met again and resolved to adopt the name Church of England Working Men's Society.¹⁷⁷ The chairman of the meeting was William Inglis of the Leeds branch who would later become the president of the C.E.W.M.S. He spoke of how the time had now come for them to work together to tackle other works within the Church, such as ensuring that the P.W.R. Act was repealed. Mr. Alfred Crave, a clerk from Bradford, agreed. He felt that it was also time to 'let the outside world see that it is not the priests who are striving to override the people, but it is we who are egging on the priests to do their duty, and carry out to the full the Catholic teaching of the Church of England.'¹⁷⁸ What drew these men to the cause of Mackonochie at Holborn, and to the movement as a whole, to the extent that they resolved to engage in permanent work for the Church?

¹⁷⁵ *Church Times*, Vol. 13, p. 568.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol.14, (12 May 1876) p. 241.

¹⁷⁷ Charles Powell had requested that they remain the St. Alban's Working Men's Society until the petition regarding Mackonochie had been delivered and they began other works not associated with the parish.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 404.

Motivation

In the early stages of the society, when meetings were being held across the country to pledge allegiance to the St. Alban's cause, those who attended seemed keen to justify their involvement. Reports from these gatherings reveal that they would speak very personally about why they backed their fellow working men at Holborn. A *Church Times* reporter remarked upon this in an article on the Working Men's Conference in November 1875. The speeches were, he noted, 'occasionally somewhat discursive and... in several instances that took the form of personal experiences. They were, however, none the less interesting and useful on that account.'¹⁷⁹ These accounts give an insight into why men of a class deemed to be uninterested in the Church pledged their time and effort to its defence and propagation. Large numbers of the labouring classes failed to frequent the national church but this did not mean that they were atheists. Church attendance may have been viewed as the luxury of the middle and upper classes but Christian morality permeated all of society. Education, and to a large extent politics, were moulded by its influence and the working classes did not inhabit a religious vacuum. The men who joined the C.E.W.M.S. had a religious frame of reference and their testimonies reveal that they often stayed away from the Church simply because what was on offer did not appeal to them.

At a meeting of the Soho branch in 1875 a printer by the name of Gibson¹⁸⁰ described the course of events that had led to him speaking before them. He had been brought up as a Baptist and had been taught to despise Roman Catholicism. He had given up attending any church. The Ritualist

¹⁷⁹ *Church Times*, Vol.13, (12 November 1875) p.567.

¹⁸⁰ No first names are given in this report.

movement within the Church of England seemed ridiculous to him and he admitted to laughing at those involved. But after hearing tales of what went on at St. Alban's his curiosity got the better of him and he went to investigate along with his daughter. He was surprised to find a reverent and attentive congregation that displayed none of the listlessness he had observed in the Baptist chapel. He had pledged to become more involved once he saw the good that Ritualism had achieved.¹⁸¹ Mr. Gibson was a man interested in religion who had turned his back on the Baptist chapel because it left him uninspired. The fact that he was curious about the Ritualism which he ridiculed suggests that he was still open to Christianity, but it had to be presented in a way which interested and inspired him.

That the national church was still linked to ideas of respectability by the working classes is also clear. The secretary of the Oxford branch at St. Barnabas' revealed that he had been born and raised a Church of England man but confessed that he had dreaded the church until he discovered Ritualism.¹⁸² Mr. Price was a labourer who had, like Mr. Gibson, been raised a Baptist but had turned to the Church of England because he 'thought that was the proper place for everyone to go.'¹⁸³ The men who became a part of the C.E.W.M.S. had often been uninterested in the forms of worship in which they had been raised, but they found inspiration in Anglo-Catholic ritual. It is important to note that they retained preconceptions about the respectability of Anglicanism as well as a sense of the significance of Christianity. They were not godless men, but they needed to have their interest reawakened. The testimonies at the working men's meetings, of which these are but a sample, suggest that those who were involved with the

¹⁸¹ Ibid., p.557.

¹⁸² Ibid., p. 569.

¹⁸³ Ibid., p. 569.

C.E.W.M.S. had a history of some church or chapel attendance and did not come to Anglo-Catholicism blind. Instead they chose it over the other forms of worship available to them.

There were several factors behind this choice. K.S. Inglis has suggested that where working-class people attended Anglo-Catholic services it was 'more out of respect for the personality or secular opinions of the clergyman than out of appreciation for the doctrines or symbols of his party.'¹⁸⁴ Respect for the clergy involved was, as we have seen, an important consideration but there was an attraction in the kind of service these men provided and in the principles of Anglo-Catholicism. At a meeting in Stoke on Trent, Thomas Fifoot of the parish of St. Alban's remarked that the High Church party clearly wanted to bring the working man into the Church because instead of talking about human depravity and damnation, its clergy preached of angels and heaven.¹⁸⁵ It may not be the most advanced understanding of Anglo-Catholic doctrine but Fifoot demonstrated the desire of the working man to be met with something more uplifting when he entered the church. After a long week of work he did not want to be told that, at the end of it all, there was a fair chance that all he had to look forward to was eternal damnation. Henry Gosling, a factory worker from Claydon in Ipswich, also appreciated the service and atmosphere of the Anglo-Catholic church. He remarked that to 'many amongst us working men who labour in the towns and cities the only glimpse of beauty and freshness we get...are [the flowers] in our churches – aye, and sometimes the

¹⁸⁴ Inglis, p. 45.

¹⁸⁵ *Church Times*, Vol. 13, (15 October 1875) p.522.

only words of encouragement and hope and love that fall to our share we hear here too.'¹⁸⁶

They were encouraged by Anglo-Catholicism and for more than just its services. The system of renting pews which had effectively closed off many churches to the working classes was vehemently opposed by the movement. In the later Victorian period the working-class was finding its feet politically. The rise of the labour movement had led to demands for equality and further political rights. The trade unions were expanding rapidly and boasted hundreds of thousands of members. In this new political climate, in which men like Keir Hardie were striving to obtain independent labour representation in Parliament, why could they not walk into any church service in the land and sit in any seat? Why would working men want to be part of a supposedly national church which denied them this?

The Anglo-Catholics campaigned vigorously for free church sittings and this did not go unnoticed by the men who eventually joined together in support of Mackonochie. The themes of equality and fairness were often discussed at C.E.W.M.S. meetings such as when Thomas Fifoot asked why they could not have a free church when 'it was the boast of the Englishman that their country was the freest in the world.' The pew system had held the church in bondage for years and had to be defeated. Ritualism had worked against it and 'had brought all men to a level in the church.'¹⁸⁷ At a meeting in Leeds the secretary of the Manchester branch claimed back the church for the working man when he declared that their movement had 'shown that the

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., Vol. 14, (11 August 1876) p.405.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., Vol. 13, (5 November 1875) p.557.

working men do care, and that they not only know themselves, but want to teach others that the old Church of England was meant for working men as well as all classes of Englishmen.¹⁸⁸ Such talk of freedom led on more than one occasion to attendance by dissenters and others who had come along under the impression that disestablishment was to be discussed.

In the petition that was sent to the Houses of Convocation in 1876 regarding the suspension of Mackonochie, it was stated that the signatories did not believe the issue to be a theological one. To them it was a 'simple question of justice and fair play.'¹⁸⁹ For them Anglo-Catholicism advocated fairness and equality in a national church which still largely made their class feel unwelcome. As working men they were prepared to accept and support the Church of England but only the Anglo-Catholic concept of the national church, as they understood that idea. That meant a church of clergymen who listened to and respected them, services that provided a break from what was often the daily drudgery of their lives, and the idea that the Church of England was free and open to all men.

The C.E.W.M.S. therefore, largely comprised of men who already had some religious background. The continuing association of the Church of England with respectability was also appealing, especially when they discovered that the church presented by the Anglo-Catholics saw them as equals with all other men in the house of God. The concepts of respectability and self-improvement were important to a working-class that was striving for better and fairer political representation and working conditions. The men who became involved in Anglo-Catholicism felt that a positive influence

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. 14, (24 March 1876) p.145.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 13, p.568. Quoted from copy of petition.

had come into their lives. One declared at an 1875 Conference of Delegates that it had made them 'better husbands, better citizens, and better Christians.'¹⁹⁰

It is in this context that we see that, although they were both concerned with the defence of clergymen, the C.E.W.M.S. was a very different kind of organisation from the E.C.U. The Working Men's Society incorporated themes of self-improvement and active evangelical work and ceased to be wholly concerned with the fate of the clergy. Once their interest in the cause had been ignited they seem to have given of their time in very practical ways. This meant that, unlike the Church Union, they were able to branch out into areas beyond the defence of the Church of England. While this remained an important cause they were determined to press on with other matters and demonstrate that not all working men had turned their backs on the Anglican Church.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., Vol. 13, p. 568.

Work

The C.E.W.M.S. quickly shifted the focus of its efforts away from the defence of Anglo-Catholic clergymen after the Mackonochie case. The defensive element never left the society but it was keen to stress that there were far more important matters for the organisation to address. The desire to become active in home mission and general evangelical work appears to have been strong and it was one which the English Church Union did not seem to share with any great enthusiasm. But the members of the E.C.U. moved in circles in which church attendance was commonplace. The working men of the C.E.W.M.S. were surrounded daily by those who had little interest in attending church. Edward Thornton, of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, even went so far as to say that it was 'a novelty to meet a religious man in a factory.' So much so that 'a new man starting a factory for the first time is sure to have someone say to him (on a certain person passing) "there goes our religious man"'.¹⁹¹

Taking Anglo-Catholicism to those around them became the goal of the C.E.W.M.S. because, after all, what was the point of fighting to protect the priest if you were not going to heed his message? For the working men the defence of the clergy did not hinge upon the rights or wrongs of a case in a certain court. It was about preserving a message and a method that had appealed to and inspired them. The objects of the society were not couched in negative or defensive phraseology. For its members, the purpose of the society was 'the spreading of Church Principles among the Working Classes; and securing Freedom of Worship and the Preservation of the Rights and

¹⁹¹ *Church Times*, Vol.33, (15 February 1895) p. 161.

Liberties of the Church on the Basis of the Book of Common Prayer and the Usages of the Primitive Church.’¹⁹²

The society was happy to pledge its support for clergymen who were facing prosecution but it did not present this as its main work. Its members were proud of the way in which the society had carried out the task in the past but, as one member wrote in 1884, in ‘the future it should not be a fighting or party society, but a home missionary, and make this its chief object and aim.’¹⁹³ When the Rev. J. Bell Cox faced trial in 1885 the speakers at the annual meeting made it clear that the clergyman should be supported but not to the detriment of the missionary work which should be carried on as the main work of the society.¹⁹⁴ When an 1892 editorial in the organisation’s newspaper, *The Church of Our Fathers*, suggested that the cessation of hostilities had led to a drop in enthusiasm several members let their disagreement be known. Joseph Allan wrote that he viewed the Ritualistic Controversy as ‘but the preliminary skirmish which will prove a material help in enabling others to understand and appreciate the deeper meaning which we at least believed in.’¹⁹⁵

It was at the Sixth Anniversary Meeting in 1882 that the president, William Inglis, declared that the time had come to devote their energies fully to the lay mission. The lull in prosecutions gave the society time to consider the positive role that they could now play within the Church of England. Inglis rightly highlighted the fact that the sheer volume of the ‘lapsed masses’ meant that the clergy could not successfully address the task and

¹⁹² C.E.W.M.S., *Third Anniversary. Authorized Report of the Speeches* (London, 1879), p.1.

¹⁹³ *Church Times*, Vol.22, (22 August 1884) p. 616. Letter from J. T. Widgery, Aug 22, 1884.

¹⁹⁴ C.E.W.M.S., *Ninth Anniversary* (London, 1885), p.17-18.

¹⁹⁵ *The Church of Our Fathers*, Vol. 1, (December 1892) p.63.

that lay co-operation was essential.¹⁹⁶ The society claimed this role and felt that its 'unique constitution' made it ideal for taking the message of the church to the working classes. The members were able to carry out some kind of missionary role every day, suggested Inglis, by working 'in our spheres of labour, and among our fellows, in whose company we are thrown daily; so that we can, by consistent example and precept, speak a word for the Master.'¹⁹⁷ This approach was valued by the society and the president and council often reminded members that one of the most effective ways to encourage their fellow working men into the church was to lead by example from within their legitimate sphere of work. They wanted to ensure that there was an honesty about their work that had, they felt, been lacking from many of the Church's attempts to evangelise the working classes, and they did not want C.E.W.M.S. members to resemble a badly trained 'cross between a City Missionary and a Deacon.'¹⁹⁸

The leaders of the society were also convinced that, by its sixth and seventh year, the organisation had reached a level of maturity and the initial excitement surrounding its formation had passed. In the annual report for 1883 Charles Powell articulated this in familiar terms to the working man,

The seventh year is the time when the artizan...completes his apprenticeship, and emerges from the workshop skilled in the art or trade to which he has been put. May not our Society be understood as having this year completed its apprenticeship, and be considered to have entered upon the more practical and responsible part of

¹⁹⁶ C.E.W.M.S., *Sixth Anniversary*, (London, 1882) p. 5.

¹⁹⁷ C.E.W.M.S., *Seventh Anniversary* (London, 1883) p.5.

¹⁹⁸ *Church of our Fathers*, Vol. 1 (July 1892) p.9 .

the great work itself...that of spreading the blessed Truth of the Gospel among the working classes of England.¹⁹⁹

The body of the society accepted and welcomed the shift in focus, and one member at the annual meeting even stated that he wished they had not spent so much time talking about Lord Penzance and his court. Mr. Shutt spoke up to suggest that the members needed to refrain from 'persecuting entanglements' in order to devote all their time to saving their fellow man.²⁰⁰ The delegates went back to their branches to begin the evangelical effort to which the society was now pledged. They were encouraged by the president and council to meet local wants with local efforts and in so doing they could engage in the daily and persistent conflict between holiness and unholiness.²⁰¹

The evangelical work took two different forms. The members of the C.E.W.M.S. could be engaged in winning over their peers or in home missionary work. The latter often involved a lower social group than those involved with the Working Men's Society. H. McLeod draws attention to these different strata within the working classes that came into contact with the Church of England. Missions were supplementary to the parish church and provided a more simple service and approach. They also often provided free meals and tea as well as cheap clothing, and a divide existed between those who accepted such charity and those who did not²⁰². One gets the impression that the men of the C.E.W.M.S. had perhaps graduated to the parish church although some, such as the general secretary Charles Powell, had started out at the mission. If they could afford the subscription to the

¹⁹⁹ *Seventh Anniversary*, p. 9.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.* p.30.

²⁰¹ *Ninth Anniversary*, p.6-7.

²⁰² McLeod, p.24-5.

society, even though it was small, one can assume that they were not in need of free breakfasts. While the society was always keen to stress the 'bona fide' nature of their claim to be a working men's society the men involved were clearly well educated and calls at the annual meetings for them to consider the policies of election candidates on church matters demonstrate that many of them had the franchise. Within the labouring classes the ability to work and provide for one's family was the key to respectability and the families that accepted the charity of the mission were often regarded with some degree of contempt by others within their class.²⁰³

Many branches were active in attempts to bring this group to the church. Three hundred members were involved in the East and West London Missions to the slums in 1884 and 1885.²⁰⁴ By 1888 there were a total of sixty branches across the country carrying out missionary work under the sanction of the parochial clergy in mission halls, school rooms, and often outside when there was no where else to gather.²⁰⁵ This missionary work must have been appealing to the working men who made up the C.E.W.M.S. They were engaging in an important task for the Church of England and they could carry it out on their own terms. They were not expected to explain doctrines or theology but were taking simple services in a language that they understood and that was also comprehensible to other working men. The evangelical mission was also not about Ritual. The methods of worship in the mission houses were simple and they were aware that unfamiliar dress coupled with bowing and chanting would only scare the working classes away. This was why they felt that the church needed their language and their methods. G.H. Thomas suggested in an 1885 article that their methods

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

²⁰⁴ *Ninth Anniversary*, p. 13.

²⁰⁵ *Twelfth Anniversary*, p. 5.

were those that the earliest Church was founded upon. 'We are told in Scripture,' he explained, 'that the people flocked to hear the Gospel preached in their own tongue wherein they were born; but the Gospel preached in the language of the West End, in the language of Oxford and Cambridge, is not the language of the toiling masses and creates no enthusiasm.'²⁰⁶ The piety of the C.E.W.M.S. members seems, in this context, to have been more evangelical than high church.

The home mission activity was only one strand of the work which members associated with the organisation. They seem to have responded in a very practical way to their pledge to support the Church of England and were extremely pro-active. The Maidstone branch responded to the need for clergy by raising the £100 needed to provide for an additional curate for the year in their parish. When the members at Bath learned that they were being described as a 'Romanizing confederacy' they held a series of lectures in the guild hall on Church doctrine and discipline at which discussion and questions were encouraged. The members of one branch put the skills of their trades to good use and repaired the church roof and floor as well as painting the porch. They also put gas fittings in the infant school room and painted and furnished the parish room.²⁰⁷

Branches would usually hold around two meetings a month with additional public meetings throughout the year at which the work of the branch could be showcased. Members would also attend the meetings of other organisations in order to put forward the view of the C.E.W.M.S., such as the Hammersmith branch members who attended secularist and open air

²⁰⁶ Church of England Working Men's Society, *How to Recover the Lapsed Masses to the Church of England* (London, 1885) p. 13.

²⁰⁷ *Twelfth Anniversary*, p.6.

meetings with the express purpose of arguing.²⁰⁸ In cases where a venue could not be found (usually because the branch did not have the support of the local clergy) the men would sometimes meet on the Queen's highway.²⁰⁹ Attendance was not always high at public meetings and the Plaistow branch, rather ominously, reported very low numbers for their lecture on 'How to get the Working Men to attend Church.'²¹⁰ When the president of the society (by this time E. M. Ingram) attended the Chislehurst branch in the winter of 1892 to deliver a talk on 'The Bible and the Church' the low attendance was blamed on the entertainments being held that evening in the village hall.²¹¹

The entertainments and the social activities that the branches held fared somewhat better and it would be fair to assume that, for many, this was the attraction of the C.E.W.M.S. The *Church Times*, and later the *Church of Our Fathers*, carried reports of these which were sent in by the local secretaries. In contrast to the poor figures that sometimes turned out for the public meetings the reports for the social activities regularly cite attendance in the low hundreds. At the summer social in 1892 the Lavender Hill branch boasted that nearly two hundred were present for an evening of songs and entertainment. They were treated to 'a pretty novelty entitled "The Flag Song" given by some friends from St. Matthew's Church; the sailor costumes, evolutions, and singing in this "novelty" giving much pleasure.'²¹² The absence of any religious tone to such proceedings was common. The popular monthly social evening at Clerkenwell was described in the *Church of Our Fathers* at which one could 'partake of the "free and easy" style, games, songs

²⁰⁸ *Church of Our Fathers*, Vol. 1, July 1892, p. 12.

²⁰⁹ *Seventh Anniversary*, p.11.

²¹⁰ *Church of Our Fathers*, Vol. 1, Jan 1893, p.82.

²¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 67.

²¹² *Ibid.*, June 1892, p. 5-7.

and “tripping the light fantastic toe”.’ Such activities were apparently successful in ‘kindling kindness and banishing shyness.’²¹³

At Kennington they reported that their annual musical and social gathering was eagerly anticipated by the entire parish and was extremely well attended. The naval theme was obviously a popular one in the early 1890s, and at their 1893 event they indulged in some sea songs of a jovial nature.²¹⁴ Branches were clearly very proud of these events and reports often went into great detail about who had sung what and how delightfully the branch president’s daughter had performed her solo on the pianoforte. The social evenings were an important part of the branch life and of the society as a whole and they encouraged the participation of members’ family and friends who were not eligible for membership or who chose not to join the C.E.W.M.S.

The summer was a particularly busy time in the branch social calendars and they would give notice of the destinations of that year’s outings weeks in advance. These were particularly popular with the London branches who took advantage of the expanding rail network to leave the capital behind for a day in the country. The members from St. Cyprian’s, Marylebone, journeyed to the town of St. Albans in Hertfordshire with their families and began the day with the ladies challenging the gentlemen to a game of cricket before taking in a wagon ride and a tour around the Roman ruins. Tea and a dance were had on the green before heading back to London for half past ten in the evening.²¹⁵ Many branches were also keen on

²¹³ Ibid., Oct 1892, p.42.

²¹⁴ Ibid., March 1893, p.104.

²¹⁵ Ibid., June 1892, p. 13.

more informative visits, with Lambeth Palace, the National Gallery, and the naval college at Greenwich being favoured destinations.

There was a general desire for educational activities and the lectures delivered at branch level often had little to do with the church or Anglo-Catholicism. Popular subjects for such talks included capital punishment; manhood and its responsibilities; vaccinations; and volcanoes and earthquakes. Members could also discuss emigration and be put in touch with members who had left to begin lives in North America, Australia, and New Zealand.²¹⁶ The president and council encouraged such talks and an editorial by the General Secretary in the Society's newspaper highlighted the importance of lectures and instruction on social and economic issues.²¹⁷ The Dover branch took heed with their lecture entitled 'Nature's Friends and Foes' which was presented by a medical practitioner complete with a lantern slide show. The origins and development of diseases were explained with particular emphasis on consumption. Those who attended were given printed copies of the lecture complete with details of how to prevent the spread of various contagious diseases.²¹⁸

The lectures provided members with valuable information but there were also more frivolous topics. Lantern slides were very popular and branches would exchange lectures that had proved to be of particular interest. Scientific matters drew attention and geology and geography were favourite topics. Mention was always given in reports to any interesting instruments or machines that had been demonstrated. The lectures were not intended to address religious issues, there were separate meetings to discuss

²¹⁶ *Eleventh Anniversary* (London, 1887), p. 32-33.

²¹⁷ *Church of Our Fathers*, Vol.1, (June 1892) p. 10.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, (April 1893) p. 118.

Church matters, and the most religious example is found in a report from the Westminster branch who had the privilege of using a powerful microscope to read the Lord's Prayer 'written within a space smaller than a proverbial mite.'²¹⁹

The social and educational opportunities that the C.E.W.M.S. afforded its members were as important to them as the evangelising that they had pledged to carry out. This demonstrates the broad role that the society played in its members' lives. Their missionary activity could be carried out purely through example and their religious beliefs permeated their everyday lives. It was a consideration in their politics and in the way that they socialised. Members were urged to raise up their homes and to make their lives godly. 'Let us seek to make our class the ruling class of the future – at least religious, true and pure – and then our rule will be a blessing to the world' urged an editorial in the society's newspaper.²²⁰ The working men who joined the C.E.W.M.S. did not do so because they were happy with the way in which the Church of England operated; they saw Anglo-Catholicism and the organisation as a means by which they could help to change the church and make it more appealing to the working classes.

Some were undoubtedly attracted by the social aspects but something more must have appealed to them for them to become fully fledged members. Working men's clubs and unions were plentiful in the late nineteenth century and it is doubtful that the entertainment value of the C.E.W.M.S. was so great that men became communicants and regular church attendees for it. Members had to be communicants and be prepared to give

²¹⁹ Ibid., (March 1893) p.108.

²²⁰ Ibid., (June, 1892) p. 2.

of their time, effort, and money for the defence, extension, and improvement of the Church. The working classes may not have been flooding back to the Church of England and the missionary work may not have been hugely successful, but the C.E.W.M.S. demonstrated that there were some working men for whom the national church still held meaning and importance. The Society came to be a significant feature in their lives and provided the framework for their charitable acts, social activities, and self-improvement. The Church of England Working Men's Society was much more than simply the poor relative of the English Church Union.

Relations with the Clergy

The society developed relationships at several levels of the Church of England. Through its work in the home missionary field it mingled with the lost sheep and came into close and constant contact with the parish clergy. The evangelical aspect of the C.E.W.M.S. soon drew the attention of the episcopacy which was keen to encourage working-class interest in the national church. The insistence of the organisation that its main object was home missionary activity, rather than church defence, made it a more palatable prospect for episcopal support than the English Church Union. The members of the C.E.W.M.S. respected the position of the bishops as keepers of an authority passed down through the Apostolic Succession but refused to be in awe of them as men. The working classes were not traditionally great supporters of the episcopacy and, although the organisation was not hostile towards the bishops, it was willing to take grievances straight to the hierarchy and to voice disapproval with the methods by which bishops were appointed. Its members were equally vocal in their opinions on the state of the Church of England past and present and were not afraid to broach subjects such as disestablishment. The society was not content, moreover, simply to record its views through the many pamphlets and tracts it published and from the early 1880s it sent delegates to the Church Congresses and various diocesan conferences. Its members became involved in committees discussing the evangelisation of the masses and advocating a greater role for the laity in the national church.

As working men the members of C.E.W.M.S. were well aware of the improvements required in order to make the church more appealing to their class. Their testaments as to why they joined the society frequently reveal

that they had done so in spite of the general state of the church, and that they had largely been drawn in by the efforts of individual clergy. The society felt that its special position and ability lay in the very fact that it was composed of working men who understood why their fellow workers did not attend church and who felt that they could peel away the resentment that had built up over the years. In 1884, the then president of the C.E.W.M.S., Inglis, declared that a lay agency was needed to bring the working classes back to the church because the confidence between the working man and the clergy had been destroyed by 'sad mistakes in the past, and the misleading statements of political agitators, joined to the misrepresentations of the leaders of the sects.'²²¹

The society identified the state of the parochial system as the main problem hindering the spread of Anglicanism among the masses. In an article in 1885, G.H. Thomas, a member of the society branded the parochial system an absolute failure in the poorer parts of the great cities. 'It is only here and there, where men of exceptional ability or of large private means are to be found,' he surmised, 'that the Church can hold her own at all.'²²² The general secretary, Charles Powell, also felt that the system as it stood could not hope to support the rapidly increasing and shifting population.²²³ This, coupled with the unfavourable light in which the Church of England was held, created an almost hopeless situation for the clergy.

These were problems that had been identified in the 1830s by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and yet after fifty years working men had seen

²²¹ *8th Anniversary* (London, 1884), p.7.

²²² Church of England Working Men's Society, *How to Recover the Lapsed Masses* (London, 1885) p.10.

²²³ C. Powell, *The Sequel to a Parochial Mission* (London, 1884) p.28.

no real changes. It was all very well to build fancy new churches in the poorer areas, but if no one would attend them what was the point? The members of the C.E.W.M.S. were not content simply to complain about the state of their church and then sit back and hope that the hierarchy would come up with the answers. As far as they were concerned, the hierarchy had failed abysmally to address the effects of industrialisation on the urban centres of England. They felt that they had the solution, or at least knew how to begin addressing the problems. Powell commented that in order to meet the altered state of the population,

the Church must be willing to unlearn a good deal; to cast off some of her stiff and useless old-fashioned machinery, and adopt new ideas to meet the wants of the times. I believe we are on the eve of great and important changes in this respect, and the heathen masses whom the Church is powerless to reach in all our large towns tell us plainly that this change ought to have taken place long ago.²²⁴

In his contributing chapter G. H. Thomas suggested what some of these changes should be. Thomas was keen to see the restoration of the minor order of Church Diaconate to a permanent office. He also disagreed with the building of large and expensive churches as he felt that these simply served to intimidate those who were unused to attending services. Instead Thomas advocated the construction of simple mission buildings in which simple services and preaching would be undertaken. These methods served to make the organisation more approachable as there were none of the complications associated with highly Ritualistic services with their elaborate

²²⁴ Ibid. p. 29.

learned responses. Thomas also highlighted the fact that the success of the Salvation Army among the poor had been achieved through simple means.²²⁵

The focus on missionary activity by the C.E.W.M.S., and the desire to remedy the ills of the parochial system, was apparently not as appealing to the wealthier Anglo-Catholic churchmen as the more defensive work of the organisation had been. The approach taken by some within the Anglo-Catholic movement angered members of the C.E.W.M.S. who had worked hard in times of persecution and by the early 1890s they felt that they had been abandoned by what they considered to be their group within the Church. An editorial in the November 1892 issue of *Church of Our Fathers* claimed that the C.E.W.M.S. was still very much relevant and that the working classes still preferred the meeting house to the Church of England. While they continued to labour for their church there seemed, however, to be some who felt that the battle for the faith had been, 'including some of those very Catholic Clergy in the defence of whose principles our Society first sprang into being.'²²⁶

Their circumstances did not improve and by February 1893 Powell, the General Secretary, felt compelled to place a comment in the society's newspaper lamenting the failure of wealthier members of the movement to aid attempts to evangelise the working classes. He drew attention to the fact that when the organisation had been fighting for Ritual 'money was not wanting to wage the battle,'²²⁷ yet by 1893 monetary troubles were

²²⁵ Church of England Working Men's Society, *How to Recover the Lapsed Masses*, p. 13-14. These simpler methods were also advocated by other organisations, such as the Church Guilds Union, that engaged in hands on efforts with the poorer working classes in urban areas.

²²⁶ *Church of Our Fathers*, Vol. 1, No. 6. November 1892, p.49.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, No.9, February 1893, p.89.

threatening to overwhelm the society.²²⁸ Powell believed that if he asked for a thousand pounds to purchase a jewelled mitre for the Archbishop of Canterbury the amount would have been raised three times over. Why then was a deaf ear turned to a request for £500 to aid the C.E.W.M.S.? Powell pointed out that there were 'many Churchmen who, in the fighting days of the C.E.W.M.S. have given ungrudgingly in aid of more aggressive work. Is it too much to appeal to them on behalf of its later and, may one say, more practical development in its work and method?'²²⁹ At a time when the society was gaining greater support from the hierarchy of the Church, as well as the parochial clergy, it obviously angered the leaders of the C.E.W.M.S. that the very people that they felt should be supporting their cause appeared to be disinterested. This anger also emphasised the seriousness with which they regarded their missionary work. They were determined to have a definite role within an improved parochial system and not be merely regarded as bodies for hire in the cause of church defence.

It was church defence which had resulted in their foundation, but only because Anglo-Catholic clergy had managed to win back the trust of some of the working classes. For the members of the organisation the ideal of the parish priest was forever exemplified in Alexander Heriot Mackonochie whose efforts in Holborn had impressed the working men to such a degree that they felt compelled to protest when he was prosecuted. At the Third Anniversary Festival in 1879, the president remarked that,

²²⁸ However, the monetary troubles of the society were not just down to a lack of funding as will be examined later in the chapter. It would be reasonable to suggest that some churchmen were holding back from donating to a society which demonstrated that it was not capable of adequate management of its accounts. But the C.E.W.M.S. had been making desperate pleas for funds which went unheeded before the scandal regarding their finances broke and it seems that there was a genuine lack of interest in their non-defensive activities.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.89.

others have followed after, whom we respect, and feel a duty to defend, but he has led the way, and has borne all so meekly... These are the class of Priests that working men can appreciate and admire, and whose words reach the innermost recesses of their hearts. Had the Church of England in the past been filled with such men, we would never have heard of the alienation of the working classes.²³⁰

The standard had been set early on by men such as Mackonochie, Lowder, and Stanton and it was high. These clergy were appreciated not because of their ritual but because they exhibited qualities which working men respected. They were hard working, frugal, self-denying, and prepared to live among the labouring people. Through their crusades they were able to dispel the preconceptions among some of the working class. One of the founders of the Manchester branch commented in a letter to the *Church Times* that it was not so long ago that no one cared for the working man, when he lived in drunkenness and uncleanness without interference. But things had changed and pious and self-denying priests had come to the front and taught the working man the faith, 'not in vain words, not in pulpit preaching alone, but in all the fullness of truth, in act and in deed, in love and in self-denial, and in all the beauty of holiness which the Church of England has provided.'²³¹

One of the things that had so turned the working classes against the national church was the hypocrisy that they felt characterised it. The C.E.W.M.S. was therefore perturbed by the reaction of some of the Anglo-Catholic clergy to the imprisonment of Sidney Fairthorne Green. Inglis asked why all the clergy who taught similar doctrines and used similar ritual

²³⁰ *Third Anniversary*, p.5.

²³¹ George Ryan in *Church Times*, Vol.17, (3 January 1879) p.6.

to Green did not speak out and demand his release or to share in his punishment. 'Silence from such clergy,' he warned, 'does not strengthen the Catholic cause, and it makes the efforts of the laity much more arduous.'²³² The working man was all for supporting the Anglo-Catholic movement but he still expected a spirit of sacrifice among its clergy.

Although especially supportive of the Anglo-Catholic clergy, the society aimed to work with clergy regardless of their stance on ritual. The task of members was to assist the clergy wherever opportunity presented itself without discriminating against a parish because the incumbent did not practice ornate ritual. Members were instructed to give hearty support to all clergy who displayed zeal and earnestness. The president reminded them that their place was 'not only to defend the clergy when attacked, but also to assist them when we see and know they need help.'²³³ Greater lay involvement in the parochial system was a key aim of the society and this required co-operation with the parish clergy.

In the president's address of 1886 he highlighted the necessity of working in a mutual partnership with the clergy, whose office meant that they should lead the lay work in their parishes. They would be able to train the men of the C.E.W.M.S. and single out those who were not suitable for work in other fields.²³⁴ Such work required the trust of the clergy and this could be difficult to achieve. One council member, J. T. Widgery, remarked that there were clergy who were unhappy to engage with an organisation when they had no control in its administration or meetings. Widgery was perplexed by this and asserted that 'by this time they ought to be convinced

²³² *Fifth Anniversary*, p.6.

²³³ *Third Anniversary*, p. 7.

²³⁴ *Church Times*, Vol. 24, (6 August 1886) p. 589.

that we are loyal to them.'²³⁵ G. H. Thomas also observed that many within the church did not welcome the work of lay evangelists, working-class or otherwise. He attributed this to the 'grandmotherly government' which existed within the national church and insisted on doing everything for the people instead of training and educating them to manage their own religious concerns.²³⁶ The advent of a working-class political movement indicated that many were growing weary with the prevalent paternalism in their society.

While the C.E.W.M.S. was convinced of the need for guidance from the clergy it was the failure of the church to engage properly with the working classes that had led the organisation to the conclusion that only the working man could evangelise the working man. Victorian society was very much divided along class lines and many clergy would have had relatively little interaction with those outside of the traditional church-going demographic. A member from Portsmouth expressed this point at the annual meeting in 1883 when he accused many clergymen of an inability to relate to those outside of their own social class. 'They have not the power to enter the minds of those people whom we know and feel for. We know our wants and theirs. We should be the proper people to speak to them', he remarked. At the same meeting Mr. Tyson, a Southwark labourer, stated that his branch of the C.E.W.M.S. had proved very successful but that the members did not feel comfortable approaching the local clergyman whereas they had found it easy to approach Tyson.²³⁷ The working classes were rightly suspicious of those clergy who, in their desire to win them over to the Church of England, frequently fawned and pawed around them. Such an

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. 22, (22 August 1884) p. 616.

²³⁶ *How to Recover the Lapsed Masses*, p. 15.

²³⁷ *Seventh Anniversary*, p. 26-27.

approach simply convinced them that the clergy wanted something, rather than that they had something appealing to offer.²³⁸

The fact that the C.E.W.M.S. was not aggressive and was prepared to work with the clergy who did not hold their views made the organisation more palatable to those outside of the Anglo-Catholic movement. They were still accused of being under the thrall of the 'Puseyites' by more extreme Protestants but their approach certainly gained a greater level of acceptance within the church. By the early 1880s C.E.W.M.S. delegates were regulars at the diocesan conferences and the Church Congresses. In 1883 members attended the diocesan conferences at London and Winchester along with the Salisbury diocesan synod. At the London conference a special committee had been appointed to report on the most effective means of evangelising the masses and the C.E.W.M.S. delegates were called upon to discuss their home mission work.²³⁹

A year later the society was again a presence at London and Winchester, as well as attending the diocesan conferences in Oxford and Rippon. The president and general secretary accepted an invitation to speak at the Church Congress in Cardiff on the methods being employed to win over the working classes. The work of the society was being noticed in the Church and the Salisbury Diocesan Synod's Committee on Infidelity declared in favour of the C.E.W.M.S. as an antidote to 'infidel propaganda'. The committee were of the opinion that 'no means would be so likely to be successful in coping with the advance of unbelief among the less educated as

²³⁸ *Eighth Anniversary*, p.7.

²³⁹ *Seventh Anniversary*, p.14.

the establishment of branches of the Church of England Working Men's Society.²⁴⁰

The society had made an impression with its work on those both within and without the Anglo-Catholic community. In 1884 over three hundred and fifty churches held celebrations of the Eucharist for the intention of the work of the organisation on its eighth anniversary.²⁴¹ The next year the figure increased to five hundred along with additional services across North America. Expectations of the C.E.W.M.S. by others within the movement were varied, and inevitably some felt that their true position was as a useful aid to the work of the English Church Union. This was a view expressed by one editorial in the *Church Times*.²⁴² Such a role was never an object of the society which was keen to stress its working-class credentials and its autonomy from the clergy as far as its administration was concerned. Once evidence of their missionary work had been produced the *Church Times* changed its approach and admitted that society members had 'shown themselves to be quite able to take care of themselves, and to manage their own concerns.'²⁴³ The role that the newspaper had envisioned for the organisation was a partisan one and others in the church felt that the C.E.W.M.S. should ensure that it did not succumb to that fate. When opening the library of the Ely branch in 1886, Canon Lubbock stated that 'he was most desirous that the Society should not be confined to any one particular party; it was established for one common benefit; he should be sorry if Liberals or Radicals would be excluded.'²⁴⁴

²⁴⁰ *Eighth Anniversary*, p. 13-14.

²⁴¹ *Church Times*, Vol. 22, (25 July 1884) p.564.

²⁴² *Ibid.* Vol. 13,(10 September 1875) p.451.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 14, (12 May 1876) p.241.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. 24, (16 April 1886) p.309.

At a meeting in 1877 the president had threatened support for disestablishment if the bishops persisted in enforcing the Publish Worship Regulation Act. He asserted that,

If freedom can only be obtained by paying that exorbitant price, then we say let the price be paid, and the Church be freed from her fetters. (Cheers) We do not look for Disestablishment with delight, but if need be and it be inevitable, we will not shrink from it; and if the results be disastrous, upon the archbishops and bishops be the onus of the deed.²⁴⁵

Such overtly political language was toned down over the years as the leadership perhaps realised that the essential support from the parish clergy may not be forthcoming for a society that advocated disestablishment. By 1884 the annual meeting of the Cardiff branch saw the chairman stating that it was necessary for the C.E.W.M.S. to oppose the attacks of the disestablishmentarian Liberationist organisation. He admitted that, although the society remained neutral on the topic, it was necessary that earnest churchmen unite for the systematic defence of the church.²⁴⁶ The Welsh situation was different to that in England – here the threat of disestablishment was real and pressing.

The adoption of a position of neutrality on the disestablishment question meant that the C.E.W.M.S. could continue to appeal to those working men felt that the separation of church and state was essential while not letting it affect the society's relationship with the episcopacy. This relationship had developed as the missionary activity of the C.E.W.M.S.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., Vol. 15, (27 February 1877) p.106.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., Vol. 22, (11 January 1884) p. 34.

came to the fore in the early 1880s. Before this there had been a tendency for rather vehement outbursts against the hierarchy of the church. In 1876, Inglis had asked members at a meeting in Leeds to 'put a bridle on our lips when we speak of our right reverend fathers in God...Do not let us use hard names and say unkind things of them.'²⁴⁷ But the president forgot to bridle his own lips in 1877 when he deemed the episcopacy to be dozing over the attempts in Parliament to alter the rubrics in the Prayer Book. He demanded that they awaken from their dreams of security and declare themselves on the side of fair play. Their failure to awaken to the situation led Inglis to remark that he had 'lost all faith in the promises made by the episcopacy.'²⁴⁸

The general secretary, Charles Powell, was certainly not intimidated by the position and authority of the bishops and seemed keen to communicate his opinions to them. In 1877 the organisation forwarded a collection of circulars and resolutions passed at the annual meeting to the Bishop of Bath and Wells. The Bishop felt compelled to write to the society regarding the 'flagrant mis-statements' contained in the material. He had taken offence at the resolutions which had branded the Court of Arches secular and had questioned the integrity of English judges. The implication of the correspondence appeared to be that the Bishop felt the society had taken liberties in deeming itself qualified to pass comment on such matters. Charles Powell engaged in the argument at length by post and was eventually informed by the bishop that he was calling a halt to all further correspondence as he could not see what good it was achieving.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. 14, (11 August 1876) p. 404.

²⁴⁸ *Third Anniversary*, p.5-8.

²⁴⁹ *Church Times*, Vol. 15, (28 September 1877) p. 538-9.

In 1879, Powell engaged in prolonged arguments with James Fraser, Bishop of Manchester 1870 to 1885, and Archibald Campbell Tait, the Archbishop of Canterbury. In April the former had been sent the resolutions of the council regarding the decisions taken against S. F. Green of Miles Platting²⁵⁰. The Bishop dutifully replied saying that he regretted that action had to be taken but that his requests to Green to abandon the illegal ceremonial used in his services had gone unheeded. The general secretary declared that 'instructed' members of the Church of England did not recognise the judgements of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, or of Lord Penzance's court, on such matters and therefore Green's use of a mixed chalice and lighted altar candles were not considered illegal. The Bishop of Manchester then pointed out to Powell that the judgements on the above had not been made by either of the authorities mentioned but by Dr. Lushington and Phillimore respectively. The Bishop had said all he had to say on the matter and announced the termination of the correspondence. Powell, however, had not said all he had to say, but his letter disputing the interpretation of the judgements made by Lushington and Phillimore received no reply.²⁵¹

Such correspondence between the C.E.W.M.S. and the episcopacy reveals that the working men felt that they had every right to approach the hierarchy of the church, even the Archbishop of Canterbury, and make

²⁵⁰ In June 1879 Rev. Sidney Fairthorn Green was found guilty of ritual offences by Lord Penzance and was suspended from his parish for three months and ordered to pay costs. See p.44.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 17, (2 May 1879) p. 284-5. Stephen Lushington (1782 – 1873) judged on the case of *Martin vs. Mackonichie* in 1867, ruling against the elevation of the Eucharist, the use of incense, altar lights and the ceremonially mixed chalice. His successor in the position of Judge of the Consistory Court was Robert Phillimore (1810 – 1885) who, in the *Purchas* case of 1871, confirmed the above judgements and in addition ruled against the use of wafer bread and Eucharistic vestments. For a detailed account see Robert Phillimore *The Ecclesiastical Law of the Church of England* (London, 1873 – 76) and J. H. Baker *Ecclesiastical Law Journal* 4 (1996 – 1997).

demands of them. They believed that they had as much of a claim upon the national church as the episcopacy.

As the society became less focused on defensive work and concentrated on home mission activities they began to draw more support from the hierarchy. In 1883 the Bishop of Ely, J. R. Woodford, conducted a service for the local branch in the cathedral, and the Bishop of Bedford conducted a special service for the organisation.²⁵² The following year episcopal interest had reached such a level that it was remarked in the society's annual report that it was 'with thankfulness that the Council have watched the gradual disappearance of prejudice against the C.E.W.M.S., and more frequent desire on the part of our Spiritual Superiors to know more of its workings and principles.'²⁵³ Special mention was given to Woodford for his endorsement of the society in his diocese. When the Hampshire branches came together to celebrate their annual festival they were in possession of a letter from the Bishop of Winchester in which he stated that he welcomed the union of working men in the defence of the church and greatly rejoiced that 'so many of them often take an active and intelligent interest in Church Work and Church Teaching.' He offered them his sympathy, regard, and esteem.²⁵⁴

The annual report for 1885 revealed that the relationship between the episcopacy and the C.E.W.M.S. continued to develop favourably. Several bishops, including eighteen American bishops, expressed their appreciation of the society as an 'Evangelical agency of practical utility to the Church.'²⁵⁵ Inglis was keen to stress to the members the credibility which this afforded

²⁵² *Seventh Anniversary*, p. 3.

²⁵³ *Eighth Anniversary*, p.12

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.12.

²⁵⁵ *Ninth Anniversary*, p. 13.

their organisation in his presidential address. He recalled a time when their actions were 'criticized severely, and our motives questioned, and were ticketed as aiders and abettors of disloyal and turbulent law breakers.' The support of the bishops illustrated that things had changed, and those who had once been suspicious now welcomed their efforts. They had once been accused of being railers against the episcopacy, Inglis surmised, and now the episcopacy welcomed their presence.²⁵⁶

The fact of the matter was that the C.E.W.M.S. had supported clergy who were breaking the law but their image overhaul in the early 1880s, and their focus on evangelisation, was enough to convince the episcopacy that they were a useful agency within the church. They would often feel the need to stipulate, as in the statement of the 'practical utility' of the society, that the support they bestowed was purely down to the work of the organisation in the missionary field. By 1885, however, it appeared that they had gained respectability in the eyes of the episcopacy when they were invited to Lambeth Palace. The Archbishop of Canterbury at this time was E. W. Benson but the road had perhaps been paved by the mellowing of Tait's approach in the later years of his life. He came to the conclusion that if congregations were happy with the level of ritual used by their clergymen then they should be left alone, even if that level stretched the law.²⁵⁷ The C.E.W.M.S. appreciated this and commented on the change in Tait's attitude. Due to his high church leanings, Benson was from the beginning more sympathetic towards the C.E.W.M.S.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²⁵⁷ J. Bentley, *Ritualism and Politics in Victorian Britain* (Oxford, 1978), p. 113.

Archbishop Benson took the step of inviting some of the members of the society to visit Lambeth Palace in early 1885. When the delegates arrived at the palace they were overwhelmed to find that they were greeted by Benson himself who, according to one of the members present, shook hands 'with every jack man of us as if we were peers of the realm.' The men were shown points of historical interest by the Archbishop who spent an hour in their company before leaving them in the care of his chaplain. The tour continued with a visit to the library and all present were apparently amused to discover that the box bearing the label 'Memorial against the legalization of the Vestments and the Eastward Position, 1875', actually only contained waste paper.²⁵⁸ Benson's support for the society was further illustrated when he furnished the general secretary with a letter of introduction to present to the Bishop of New York on his journey to America later that same year.

Throughout the last two decades of the nineteenth century the episcopacy was involved with the society in supporting their efforts in the missionary field. George Ridding, the Bishop of Southwell (consecrated 1884, died 1904) presided over the annual festival services of the Derby branch in 1884 and 1885 and the next year was presented with a silver medal as a token of appreciation. On receiving this he remarked upon 'the spirit of brotherhood upon which they acted, and trusted that they would go on increasing in numbers and in strength.'²⁵⁹ In 1888, the principal speaker at the inauguration of the Halifax branch was William Walsham How, (nominated 26 May 1888, died 1897²⁶⁰) the Bishop of Wakefield, which demonstrates the C.E.W.M.S. had achieved some degree of recognition in

²⁵⁸ *Church Times*, Vol. 23, (March 27 1885) p. 246.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 309.

²⁶⁰ No consecration date is given in *Handbook of British Chronology*.

episcopal circles.²⁶¹ It should be noted that, at the time of their involvement with the Working Men's Society, both of these bishops had only recently been consecrated. Bishops from overseas were also interested in the work of the society and at the twenty first annual meeting in 1897 both the Bishop of Colorado and Bishop Blyth, the Anglican bishop in Jerusalem, were present.²⁶²

There were some who were not happy about the involvement of the episcopacy with the society. Archbishop Benson had to make clear to one disgruntled correspondent that his support was only for the evangelical work of the C.E.W.M.S. Mr. W. C. Gwynne wrote to the Archbishop in 1886 complaining about the fact the general secretary of the society had been given a letter of commendation to take to America, citing the links the society had with the English Church Union as the basis of his concerns. Benson obviously felt that the Working Men's Society had proved itself less partisan than the Union and for this reason was content to support its home mission efforts.²⁶³

But in 1889 the Archbishop became concerned by the agitation of the society in connection with the case brought against the Bishop of Lincoln, which was heard by Benson in his own court rather than by Lord Penzance. The Archbishop wrote to Charles Powell questioning the action of the C.E.W.M.S. 'When we first became acquainted,' he recalled, 'you were at much pains to assure me that the C.E.W.M. Society had ceased to be polemical. "That was when we were young" you said "we have given up party."' Benson stated that he had high hopes for the society as a non-party

²⁶¹ Ibid., Vol. 26, (7 December 1888) p. 1071.

²⁶² Ibid., Vol. 38, (6 August 1897) p. 151.

²⁶³ Benson Papers, Vol.39, 346-49 and 353-4.

organisation that would be open to the whole church and that it was on this understanding that he recommended them to the Church of America. In spite of this assurance they had made a judgement as to what the outcome of the case involving the Bishop of Lincoln should be. 'You press home your own decision as a sound religious belief,' the Archbishop noted, 'whilst the proper authority has still not heard the case.'²⁶⁴

Benson continued to monitor the activities of the society as the collection of newspaper articles contained in his correspondence reveals. However, as the financial irregularities of the organisation began to unfold²⁶⁵ he chose to take no action, and his final correspondence with Powell was the above letter of 29th March 1889.

While there was a large amount of episcopal support for the organisation there were often warnings, such as that delivered by Benson, against involvement in politics or matters which were felt to be beyond the sphere of the society. The relationship that developed between the hierarchy of the Church and the Working Men's Society was mutually beneficial and it afforded each of them a degree of credibility. For the episcopacy it served to demonstrate that they were determined to bring working man back into the national church, and it allowed the society to market themselves as a serious home missionary enterprise.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., Vol. 70, 182.

²⁶⁵ See p.132.

Scandal and the General Secretary

From the beginning of the C.E.W.M.S. in the St. Alban's Working Men's Committee Charles Powell was a prominent figure. A night watchman by trade, Powell was one of the early group of men who decided that enough was enough and gave voice to the concerns of the working men in Mackonochie's congregation. He took it upon himself to be the public face and leader of the society and it was a role that he was reluctant to relinquish or share, causing tensions with presidents and council members. His determination to hold the reins of power through his position as general secretary led to conflict between members, a financial scandal which crippled the society, the resignation of a president, and threats of litigation and libel. Unlike many of the prominent figures within the Anglo-Catholic movement, lay and clerical, Powell comes across, in many respects, as a rather ordinary man. It is his vulnerability which makes him a historical figure worthy of investigation. He did not remain uncorrupted by the power which he wielded within the society and his new acquaintance with men of influence. For all his faults Powell was a man of action, and without his efforts it is doubtful whether the C.E.W.M.S. would ever have come into being. Yet his actions as general secretary led to the near destruction of the organisation he helped to create.

There is little information on the background of Charles Powell. He was a night watchman who, before occupying the property which came with his position as general secretary, resided in Baldwin's Gardens in West London. He revealed how he came to be involved in the Anglo-Catholic movement in a speech to the Church Congress of 1884. Like many of the men who joined the C.E.W.M.S., it was through personal contact with a

clergyman that his interest was aroused. As a young man he attended a mission service out of curiosity and was treated kindly by those conducting proceedings. On leaving he was met by the missionary 'who gave his hand in such a cordial, loving manner' that he felt compelled to return the following week, and again until he was baptised and confirmed and became a regular church member and communicant.²⁶⁶ Interestingly, Powell's father was the founder of one of the largest trade unions in the country, the Amalgamated Society of Engineers.²⁶⁷ One can only speculate as to Powell's upbringing but if it is assumed from this that his father was himself an engineer it would be reasonable to suggest that the family were not among the poorer section of the working classes. Powell's contributions to the annual reports and his predilection for corresponding with the episcopacy are evidence of his education and literacy. He was also disabled, having only one arm²⁶⁸ which may be the reason why he did not follow in his father's footsteps and become an engineer.

The *Church Times* reveals much about the early days of the society and the initial efforts of Powell. George Josiah Palmer (born 1828, died 1892), the founder of the paper, was a keen supporter of the working men's movement within the church and specifically of the committee founded at St. Alban's, Holborn and Powell. Powell was one of the five men who formed the deputation to the Archbishop of Canterbury and although the other four are named they are conspicuous by their absence in later reports.²⁶⁹ The *Church Times* was keen to report on the activities of Powell but it does seem that he

²⁶⁶ C. Powell, *The Sequel to a Parochial Mission* (London, 1884) p. 27.

²⁶⁷ *Church Times*, Vol. 23, (26 June, 1885) p. 500. This fact was revealed in an interview that Powell gave to the *Brooklyn Union* newspaper during his 1885 visit to North America.

²⁶⁸ A letter in the *Church Reformer* revealed that, in the days before he was General Secretary of the C.E.W.M.S., Powell was known as 'Charley the one armed watchman.' *Church Reformer*, Vol.5, p.224 (London, 1886).

²⁶⁹ The other men present at the meeting with Tait were F. Powell, Rudd, McDermott and Matthews.

was the driving force behind the group and a crucial factor in the support which the Committee of St. Alban's garnered across the country. It was Powell who wrote to the Bishop of London when Tait revealed that he would not receive the protest of the men of St. Alban's regarding Mackonochie and then forwarded the correspondence to the *Church Times* for publication. Powell also gave interviews to the paper in the early days and was, from the beginning, the figure that the readership associated with the C.E.W.M.S.

Between October 1875 and November of the following year Powell was tireless in his journeys across the country speaking at meetings of working men who were interested in events at Holborn. As a working man who had been drawn into the movement he was aware of the message that his peers wished to hear. His speeches were rarely about the ceremonial used by Mackonochie and others like him. Instead he spoke passionately about the liberty of the Church and the freedom of English men to retain the forms of worship to which they had grown accustomed. The focus was not on the doctrines behind the ritual but on the freedom of choice.

During the last two weeks of October 1875, he visited three large meetings at which he explained the policy which the St. Alban's Working Men's Committee intended to follow. One of the meetings in Oxford was attended by over three hundred and Powell emphasised the danger that what had happened to Mackonochie could happen to any other parish where the clergy practised the same kind of ritual. No one was safe to worship in peace.²⁷⁰ In early 1876 Powell oversaw meetings in Hertfordshire, Brighton, Winchester, St. Leonards-on-Sea, Southampton, Oxford, Leeds, and St.

²⁷⁰ *Church Times*, Vol. 13, p. 519, 521, and 545.

Peter's, London Docks. At these gatherings signatures were collected for the petition protesting at Mackonochie's treatment and new branches were often inaugurated.²⁷¹ At the meeting at St. Peter's the churchwarden, Mr. Martin, commented that 'the St. Alban's movement is spreading, it is like the Trade Unions. When working men combine they mean something, the working men have taken the movement in hand, and it will go ahead.'²⁷²

Charles Powell was instrumental in the initial dissemination of the message of the Working Men's Committee and after the society was up and running he took on the position of general secretary. This was an office for life which guaranteed him a seat on the council. Unlike the role of president, the general secretary was safely at the helm of the organisation without the worry of yearly elections. The position was also salaried and earned the holder £200 a year.²⁷³ In addition it entitled him and his family to occupy a substantial set of rooms in the house which the society rented for use as an office and meeting place at a cost of £120 a year. Powell's new position meant that he no longer had to work as a night watchman or pay in rent on a property and he could therefore busy himself with the work of the society.

The general secretary was not only in a secure position financially, he also got to carry out some of the more interesting tasks connected with the C.E.W.M.S. In 1885 Powell was invited to America by the working men's clubs and guilds of Philadelphia and set off furnished with a letter of introduction from the Archbishop Benson to present to the Bishop of New York. According to the *Church Times* (which was admittedly prone to

²⁷¹ Ibid., Vol. 14, p. 55, 97, 121, 135, 145, and 159.

²⁷² Ibid., p. 159.

²⁷³ This was a labourer's salary by the late nineteenth century. The only other salaried position was that of treasurer but the holder could not be a member of the C.E.W.M.S..

exaggeration) the bishop could not believe Powell was in possession of such a letter and mistook him for a tramp. The letter came in useful in more ways than one and upon his return Powell revealed at the annual meeting that he had run out of money in New York and gone into the bank with a letter of credit from his London bankers. Unfortunately he was without the necessary documentation to prove his identity and was refused a withdrawal unless someone would vouch for him. Powell produced the letter from Benson and the problem was solved, with the bank manager remarking, 'Well, I reckon the Archbishop's worth £50 anyhow.'²⁷⁴

The general secretary was well received in America and was made an honorary member of the Guild of the Iron Cross in Philadelphia which had initially invited him. He spoke for over an hour at the city's central Organisation of Working Men's Clubs explaining the objects and methods of his own organisation. During his stay Powell was received by the bishops of New York, Pennsylvania, Long Island, and Northern New Jersey. Before leaving New York City he gave an address to a mass meeting on the topic of encouraging working men to become more involved in the Episcopalian Church.²⁷⁵ Powell then travelled north to Canada and visited Toronto and Hamilton, in the diocese of Niagara. In the latter he gave a talk on the C.E.W.M.S. after which those in attendance resolved to form a branch of the society.

The general secretary seemed to carry out the more interesting task while the president was left to organise the activities of the society and encourage the troops. Powell spent a month in America before returning in

²⁷⁴ *9th Anniversary*, p. 16.

²⁷⁵ *Church Times*, Vol.23, (19 June 1885) p. 479 and 500.

time for the annual meeting after which invites were sent out to the lodging houses in which the society had been working to join Mr. Powell and 'spend a day at the seaside with him, and [we] hope you have a jolly good day.'²⁷⁶ At New Year a *Church Times* journalist joined the general secretary in his Hogmanay celebrations with the occupants of a lodging house where 'our energetic friend "Charley" was most enthusiastically cheered on his arrival and voted as a "downright good pal" by all present.'²⁷⁷

The anniversary reports and coverage of the society in the *Church Times*, coupled with the support of the episcopacy for their missionary efforts suggest that all was going well and the organisation seemed to be thriving. The branch reports portray a society hard at work and members incorporating that work into their everyday lives. Powell's praises may have been loudly sung in *Church Times* editorials but, closer to home, members were beginning to ask questions about the conduct of 'Charley' and his control of the purse strings. The evidence in the annual reports suggests that concerns about the financial state of the C.E.W.M.S. were first raised in 1889. In this year the report mentions a 'severe deficiency of funds' and an inability to hold their annual meeting in the usual venue of the Cannon Street Hotel near St. Paul's Cathedral in London. Members were also clearly distressed at the abandonment of plans to erect a ceremonial cross on the spot where Mackonochie passed away, due to the financial dire straits²⁷⁸. The president, by this time E. M. Ingram, laid some of the blame at the feet of the Church public whom he felt had failed to show 'the sympathy with the Society to

²⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 683.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., Vol. 24, (8 January 1886) p. 25.

²⁷⁸ Their inability to find funds to honour the man who had inspired the foundation of their society also demonstrates how far the organisation had moved from its original aim - to protest against the treatment of one clergyman. It is interesting how little is mentioned of Mackonochie once the society moved ahead with engaging in practical work for the church.

which...it was fairly entitled from the past services which it had rendered to the cause.²⁷⁹ Yet there cannot have been a delegate present in the room listening to Ingram who did not know the real reasons behind the Society's monetary difficulties.

In 1886 questions were raised in the *Weekly Churchman and Home Reunion News* about the financial state of the C.E.W.M.S. and the role of Charles Powell in affairs. In October a member wrote to the *Church Reformer*, the Christian socialist paper run by Stewart Duckworth Headlam (born 1847, died 1924), with what he believed to be the answers. The correspondent wrote under a pseudonym for fear of the possible backlash from his revelations and laid the blame firmly at the feet of Powell. He asked if anyone who had known the general secretary when he resided in a single room in Baldwin's Gardens could have imagined that,

he would become the autocratic dictator of a Working Men's Society which could afford him the residence of a dozen rooms in one of the highest rented districts in London, and the means of living at a higher rate than any curate without private means – or, than a majority of the beneficed clergy.²⁸⁰

There is clearly some bitterness in the tone of the letter, and his statement regarding the salaries of beneficed clergy was somewhat wide of the mark. Whether or not the writer felt that 'Charley' had developed ideas above his station, the accusations in his letter turned out to be well founded.

²⁷⁹ *13th Anniversary*, p. 22-23.

²⁸⁰ *Church Reformer*, Vol. 5, (London, 1886) p. 224.

He revealed that the annual address of president Inglis for 1886 was censured by the council which was the reason why it did not feature in the annual report.²⁸¹ The chief complaint of the anonymous correspondent was the secretive nature of the society, or more accurately of Charles Powell, regarding the accounts. This secrecy is illustrated by the action taken against one of the council members for trying to contact the treasurer to discuss the accounts. The treasurer was a non-member and the rules of the society stipulated that financial issues could only be discussed with members. The council member was therefore instructed to deliver a written apology to the council which he refused to do. The story was verified in the next months edition of the *Church Reformer* when J. T. Widgery revealed himself as the council member in question and also made it known that he had been warned against communicating this information to the paper.²⁸²

The correspondent in the October edition complained that not even the chief officers of the society were granted access to the accounts and as such no one knew why the work of the C.E.W.M.S. was so hampered by a lack of funds. An appeal for funds was published in the *Church Times* on 17 September 1886, which stated that the monetary problems were beginning to have consequences on the evangelical work of the society. The correspondent pointed out in his letter that all missionary activity was carried out at a local level and the branches received no financial aid from the council. Therefore, any money that the council received was unlikely to go towards their evangelical endeavours. In order to unravel the financial tangle he suggested the appointment of a committee to control expenditure and 'abolish the One Man Power and secret system.' The local branches had

²⁸¹ Ibid., p. 224.

²⁸² Ibid., p. 260.

lost confidence in the administration of the council and sent as little money into the main coffers as it was possible to do while contriving to retain their privileges as members. Under the current circumstances the correspondent deemed all members, including him, to be members of a 'Society for the Maintenance of Charley.'²⁸³

The mystery member who felt compelled to make this public was not the only one unhappy about the way in which the society was being run. A circular sent out by the Leeds branch proposed that a committee of inquiry make a detailed report into why the C.E.W.M.S. had spent fifty percent more than its total income for the year on salaries and office expenditure. They also proposed a financial committee to take control of all expenditure in branch resolutions which were unanimously passed. A circular sent out from the Leicester branch complained of the 'arbitrary action of the council' and proposed measures of reform to remedy 'this most unsatisfactory state of things.'²⁸⁴ The Leeds branch also resolved to take its proposals to the annual meeting of delegates, but they did not appear in the agenda and nor were they discussed. The official summary of the meeting stated that 'a portion of the Agenda was not dealt with, a general discussion taking place, much of which was of a heated nature. No definite propositions were put to the Meeting, which was prolonged to a late hour, and eventually the President declared the meeting adjourned sine die.'²⁸⁵

The editor of the *Church Reformer*, Stewart Headlam, was well known for his involvement with working men through the Guild of St. Matthew. He had little sympathy with the state of affairs at the C.E.W.M.S. since it was

²⁸³ Ibid., p. 225.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 225-6.

²⁸⁵ Quoted in *Church Reformer*, Vol. 5, p. 226.

entirely the making of the council. That should not mean, he felt, that the hard work of the members should have been in vain. He could not understand why the society felt the need to spend money on repairs and maintenance to their head office when they had a membership of ten thousand enthusiastic workers. He also felt that those who had given their patronage to the society had a responsibility to help them in their current situation,

The E.C.U. has backed Mr. Powell's society with funds; Bishops and Lords and patted it on the back; Church papers have sung its praises with almost sickening iteration...its best friends will now be those who are most earnest in seeking its reform and reorganisation, We have too keen an appreciation of the possibilities of usefulness which lie before a bona fide Society of Working Men to wish to see its destruction: but the alternative is plainly – destruction or reorganisation.²⁸⁶

The paper was keen to stress that Inglis was free from blame in the financial crisis crippling the society of which he was president. 'Part of the complaint is, in fact,' it stated, 'the intolerable treatment to which the president is subjected by the real "boss" of the society, the irresponsible dispenser of the funds.'²⁸⁷ The blame was quite categorically placed with Powell and he did not take kindly to it. The next edition featured a letter from his lawyers demanding that the editor forward him the identity of the member who had written the damning letter and that he also publish a full apology to the general secretary.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 226.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 226.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., p.259.

Inglis and the three vice presidents, Plant, Spalding, and Ingram, released a statement to the *Church Reformer* along with a circular to the branches refuting the allegations that chief officers of the society were denied access to the books. However, they admitted that the organisation of the society was not ideal and added that the necessary steps were being taken towards reform. There was no defence of Charles Powell or any comment on what had undoubtedly been a character assassination.²⁸⁹ Headlam noted that Powell and the *Church Times* had both remained quiet on the matter. He accused the owner of the paper, Palmer, of having allowed the publication to become 'an organ for the glorification of "Charley"' and remarked that he hoped that the silence of the paper was 'due to wholesome shame.'²⁹⁰

The correspondent whose letter had ignited the war of words responded to the official statement from Inglis with a thinly veiled threat. He recommended that the president and vice presidents,

Be careful what statements for publication they attach their names to; for they appear to forget that correspondence has been extensive and varied, and that, regrettable as it might be to publish letters which were not written for publication, should the necessity arise to refresh their memories, their letters to various correspondents on the subject of this 'disclaimer' and kindred subjects may see the light.²⁹¹

His outburst against the state of affairs at head office was supported by other members. One wrote to cast further doubt on Inglis' assertion that the accounts of the society were accessible to the chief officers. 'The President,

²⁸⁹ Ibid., p.258.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 258.

²⁹¹ Ibid., p. 259.

who is a most excellent man though with a weak back-bone must have a very weak memory,' he remarked. 'I have a distinct recollection of hearing him speak feelingly in a totally opposite sense and complain most bitterly of being kept in the dark by the General Secretary as to the finances of the Society.' Apparently the president only discovered that someone had bequeathed £1000 to the C.E.W.M.S. when a friend remarked upon seeing it reported in a newspaper.²⁹²

The distribution of power within the Working Men's Society was clearly causing problems and tensions between members. The situation was exacerbated by the fact that everything appeared to be cloaked in secrecy. Members at a local branch level heard what was going on through rumours and hearsay. The *Church Times* remained silent on the topic and reported the affairs of the society as if there were no problems within the organisation. Proceedings at the annual meetings were apparently censured in the annual reports. The *Weekly Churchman and Home Reunion News* commented on the disgraceful situation caused by the executive of the C.E.W.M.S. They surmised that, 'of this secrecy nothing but want of confidence and evil can come, and for our part we can only wonder that such an excellent society should have been allowed by its Council to be dragged into such a lamentable position by its officers, paid or otherwise.'²⁹³

Charles Powell did, however, end up getting his way and received the requested apology from the editor and publisher of the *Church Reformer*. He wrote to Archbishop Benson, referring to the letters in the *Church Reformer*, stating that he was glad to be 'free to pursue the work which our Socialistic

²⁹² Ibid., p. 260.

²⁹³ Quoted in *Church Reformer*, Vol. 5, p. 261.

friends have so much tried to impair by their attack upon myself.²⁹⁴ Some members felt that Powell had indeed been badly treated and that an apology had not gone far enough. The Reading branch passed a resolution making it clear that they had been willing to support legal action against the paper.²⁹⁵ But there were others who were disappointed that the allegations against the general secretary had not been pursued. In early 1887 the St. Cuthbert's branch in Leeds severed all connections with the parent society on the grounds of the ill management of the council. They remained committed to their missionary work and continued to operate independently, commenting that they could now do their work for the Church 'without having to submit to an arbitrary authority, and remit half its funds for disposal in ways it does not approve.' Other branches across Yorkshire followed suit and some dissolved completely.²⁹⁶

Throughout 1887 and 1888 the society continued its work and Inglis and Powell remained in their positions, although unfortunately one can only speculate at the state of relations between them. Then in the late 1880s and early 1890s the problems within the council and the financial situation became so acute that even the *Church Times* could no longer ignore what was going on and the C.E.W.M.S. appeared to be on the brink of dissolution. In 1889 the Reading branch which had supported Powell in the action against the *Church Reformer* found itself on the receiving end of his litigious nature. The branch printed a pamphlet in which it detailed its dealings with the council over attempts to encourage reform and, when this failed, to wind down its affairs. After they began to agitate for reform they apparently found themselves 'turned against by the clique' which had come to control

²⁹⁴ Benson, Vol. 51, 331.

²⁹⁵ *Church Reformer*, Vol. 6, p. 116.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

the society. The branch felt that this group had all control of the government of the C.E.W.M.S. and was using its powers to 'promote selfish interests' and indulge in lavish expenditure. The pamphlet reveals that Inglis became so frustrated with the poor reception afforded by his fellow council members at his attempts to reform the society that he did not attend the annual meeting for 1889. He declared that he 'could not with honour to himself, be present' and in order to retain his self-respect he felt compelled to resign. E. M. Ingram was elected president at the annual meeting.²⁹⁷

This turn of events led the branch at Reading to resolve unanimously to wind down their affairs, convinced that without Inglis there would be no reform. When they informed the council of this decision, they were surprised to learn that they had already been dissolved by the council. The branch now sold off its property and paid off its liabilities. Even though it had never received any financial assistance from the council, and had sent half of its yearly income to the central fund, they sent the remainder of the money from the sale of property to the head office. The general secretary then contacted the former branch requesting that the full amount gained from the sale of property be sent to the council along with a payment of an outstanding debt. The branch maintained that they had no outstanding account and received a summons demanding the full sum from the sale of the property along with costs.

Such legal action was not uncommon and the Episcopal Church of Scotland Working Men's Society and the Bournemouth branch had both

²⁹⁷ C. Long, *The Church of England Working Men's Society in the Law Courts. A Specimen of it's Recent Work* (n.d.) p.1. It is almost certain that this pamphlet was published in 1889 due to the information contained within. It is also held in the volume of Archbishop Benson's correspondence for 1889.

faced similar action. The irony of such an approach was not lost on the Reading contingent who remarked that 'the clique must have taken lessons from the Church Association and learnt them well.'²⁹⁸ The council of the C.E.W.M.S. was urged by the judge scheduled to hear the case to settle out of court but they refused and went ahead with the action. The judge then ruled in favour of the defendants on 15 March 1889 with no leave for appeal. He explained that the society was not legally constituted and as such had no right to the property of the former branch. The rules of the society were irrelevant because they were not legally binding as no attempt had been made to make them so by registering or incorporating the society.²⁹⁹

The whole situation cannot have reflected well on the council and the general secretary. The former branch at Reading ensured that their pamphlet was well circulated and a copy ended up in the possession of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The financial irregularities of the society and the control of power by a small group headed by Powell were causing extreme tensions within the organisation and it was essential that some action be taken. Inglis, the president since the early days of the C.E.W.M.S., had felt so isolated that resignation was his only option. How could the power be wrested away from the clique and some semblance of order returned to the finances of the organisation?

The annual report for 1889 certainly failed to reveal the whole story with regards to the expenditure of the society, although an attempt was made to draw attention to the issue. The auditor of the accounts was Robert Williams, president of the St. Mary-Church branch in Torquay. He was

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.1.

puzzled to discover that his findings had been omitted from the published version of the annual report. Williams felt that it was his duty to highlight the state of the accounts and their ill management and proceeded to publish a circular detailing the expenditure of the society. He revealed that the general secretary's daughter, Julia, was being paid 15 shillings a week as a clerk in the office as well as residing rent free in the society's house. Mrs. Powell was receiving 5 shillings a week for cleaning the offices and over 4 shillings every time the windows were cleaned. The spouse of the general secretary also claimed 2s. 6 d. for washing a banner and £1³⁰⁰ for sewing ribbons on to badges. Mr. Powell paid himself, on top of expenses and his wages, every time he attended a Church Congress or conference of branches.³⁰¹

Robert Williams paid the price for revealing the financial abuses of the Powell. Unsurprisingly the general secretary commenced a libel action against the auditor. This was then dropped for fear that the legal action would make public the report into the accounts,³⁰² but Mr. Williams was still expelled from the society for publishing the circular.³⁰³ But the report had well and truly let the cat out of the bag and both the *Weekly Churchman* and the *Church Reformer* were filled with letters of support for Williams and condemnation of the council and Powell. The *Weekly Churchman* remarked before the publication of columns of letters that 'owing to the illegal action of the Council of the C.E.W.M.S. in expelling Mr. Williams from the Society for

³⁰⁰ The equivalent of around £65.00 in modern terms.

³⁰¹ Benson, Vol. 51, 186-187.

³⁰² Ibid., 185.

³⁰³ *Weekly Churchman and Home Reunion News*, 25 January, 1890, p. 42.

his exposure of their disgraceful doings, it is no longer safe for members to sign their communications to our columns.³⁰⁴

One correspondent who had been present at the meeting when Williams delivered his audit revealed that Charles Powell had made no protest at the time but had remarked that 'these facts should not be published because it would damage the Church of England! And mar his usefulness to her in the future!'³⁰⁵ Powell's penchant for legal action suggests that he was all too aware of the need to keep the accounts under wraps if he was to retain control of the society. But the game was up and the chairman of the C.E.W.M.S., Dean Hole of Rochester, took control of matters. In a statement published in the *Church Times* on 14 February 1890, Hole explained that a committee of inquiry had been appointed to examine the financial affairs of the society. They had resolved to employ a chartered accountant to examine the books from 1 June 1885 onwards and report on his findings. The committee would then meet to discuss the most appropriate action to take. The statement also revealed that Charles Powell had been asked to leave the room while these resolutions were passed. Matters had certainly moved out of his control.³⁰⁶

In March a sub-committee was appointed to consider the accountant's findings. They unanimously resolved: that more care and economy should have been taken in the financial management of the society; that office expenses needed to be reduced by £150 per annum; that a finance committee should be elected at the annual meeting and should consist of six members and six honorary members; that in future the rules of the society should be

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.* p. 42.

³⁰⁶ *Church Times*, Vol. 28,(14 February 1890) p. 80.

strictly enforced; and that the accounts must be audited annually by chartered accountants.³⁰⁷ The last point proved to be difficult to enforce. The audit for 1889-90 did not in fact go ahead as the accountants were prevented from accessing the necessary information. Things had changed, by the following financial year, and the auditors had cause to declare that 'we cannot but remark upon the wonderfully different reception accorded to us this year, to that which we received when we last attempted to perform the duties.'³⁰⁸ The report left no doubt as to why the council, and Charles Powell in particular, were keen to cloak the accounts in secrecy. Some of the expenditure was remarkable and begs the question of whether those involved had hoped that they would yet again be able to stall the audit.

The scandals surrounding the C.E.W.M.S. had a huge effect on donations and between 1889 and 1891 these fell from £526 3s. 5d. to £97 14s. 9d. In the same period total income fell from £1,227 1s. 6 ¾ d. to £344 6s. 10 ½ d. In the year 1890-91 the expenses of the society continued to exceed its income despite the warnings of the committee of inquiry and the appointment of the financial committee. The auditors drew special attention to several items on the balance sheet. Powell was criticised for claiming travel expenses of 10 shillings for a trip to Rochester when the return fare was only 3s.7d. He was similarly berated for claiming expenses for a trip to the Church Congress as 'not only had he no authority to attend the last Church Congress on behalf of the Society; neither was he an invited speaker thereat; but he knew well that the Society was actually insolvent at the time.'³⁰⁹

³⁰⁷ Ibid., (28 March 1890) p. 317.

³⁰⁸ Re-printed in *Church Reformer*, Vol. 10, (London, 1891) p. 283.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 282.

It was not only Powell who was ordered to repay money claimed as expenses. One of the vice presidents, W. Francis, claimed expenses for the annual meeting which included dinner for him and an acquaintance, cab and bus fares, lodgings and a housemaid. The auditors advised that 'such an Account needs no comment from us, except to say that we consider it should be repaid to the Society by the persons who consumed the provisions, rode in the Cabs and Buses, occupied the lodgings, and tipped the maid.' But it was the general secretary who bore the brunt of the criticisms of the accountants. They remarked that they were unable to comprehend why he needed to employ a woman to move stationery. They also failed to understand 'what a woman found to do for three weeks in packing and unpacking papers etc., which were only being moved from one room to another in the same house.' Similarly suspicious was the inclusion of the amount received from advertising space in the pamphlet *How to Recover the Lapsed Masses to the Church of England*. This pamphlet had been published six years before and the revenue from the advertising had never appeared in the accounts.³¹⁰

It is apparent that the accounts of the C.E.W.M.S. were something of a disaster. What is disappointing is the fact that the society was not able to remedy this situation themselves. Marketed from the beginning as a society of 'bona fide working men', they were unable to control their expenditure and their missionary work was marred by the scandals surrounding the management of their accounts and the conduct of Charles Powell. Those who had donated funds in the past were affected by the revelations, as the auditors' report revealed, and some of the credibility which the society had

³¹⁰ Ibid., p. 283-4.

attained was lost when non-members had to come in to fix the mess. The *Church Times* took the rather condescending view that the C.E.W.M.S. 'has proved its youth, and we must treat it as we do our sons when they have missed the mark for the moment.'³¹¹ The comment simply highlights the fact that the working men would never be considered as equal crusaders for the Anglo-Catholic cause. They were youths who had to be pulled into line and admonished by their elders and betters.

But what of Charles Powell? There were calls for his resignation after the financial scandal became common knowledge. He retained his position,³¹² although for how long is unclear. After the problems of the early 1890s the C.E.W.M.S. and its general secretary are conspicuous by their absence. The *Church Times* ran only brief notices on the annual meetings rather than the previous vast reports detailing every speech and resolution. In 1895, 1896, and 1898 there was no mention of the society at all in the paper. In 1897 a new general secretary, W. T. Taylor, was appointed but there was no evidence or comment on what had happened to Powell.³¹³ The position of General Secretary was one for life and the register of deaths reveals that Charles Powell died in 1908, at the age of 63. It is disappointing that there is no record of Powell's ejection or resignation from his position. The 1901 census reveals that Powell in fact went on to work as a reporter for the press.

The tendency of the *Church Times* to keep quiet on such matters does seem to suggest that something happened to encourage the demise of the C.E.W.M.S. At the twenty fourth anniversary meeting in 1900 the general secretary commented on the fact that many branches which had previously

³¹¹ *Church Times*, Vol. 28, (9 May 1890) p. 461.

³¹² *Ibid.*, p. 570.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 41, (11 August 1899) p.160.

severed ties with the society were now re-affiliating,³¹⁴ yet strangely there are no reports or publications detailing the twenty-fifth anniversary of the society in 1901.

³¹⁴ Ibid., Vol. 44, (10 August 1900) p. 141.

Conclusion

While the society was very much lay led and controlled, the effect of Mackonochie on the working-class men of St. Alban's, Holborn, cannot be ignored. Their defence of Anglo-Catholicism by the Church of England Working Men's Society only began in 1875, after their clergyman at St. Alban the Martyr in Holborn had received several suspensions. They therefore came to the campaign at a late stage. The church unions had been defending Anglo-Catholic principles since the 1840s and the English Church union had been formed in 1859. The involvement of the C.E.W.M.S. in the defence of Anglo-Catholicism does seem to have stemmed from their decision to protest at the treatment of Mackonochie. It would therefore seem that the initial attraction of Anglo-Catholicism, as Inglis has suggested, lay in the personality of the specific clergymen with whom they came into contact.³¹⁵

There were other factors which appealed to the working men who became involved in the movement. The Anglo-Catholic movement opposed the pew rental system which Horace Mann had identified as a key factor in low working-class church attendance in his report of the 1851 religious census. The C.E.W.M.S. presented a vision of an Anglo-Catholic Church of England which extolled the principles of liberty and equality as can be seen in the speeches made in their early campaigns.³¹⁶ The communal aspects of membership of the society also seem to have been popular and the C.E.W.M.S. branches retained something of the character of Arthur Stanton's original working men's club in Holborn. They were a respectable alternative to the music halls and public houses and a place where members and their

³¹⁵ Inglis, p. 45.

³¹⁶ See p. 14.

families could socialise and be entertained. The success of the society lay in its ability to provide a framework through which members could lead more 'godly lives' and provide help to others. It made them 'Better husbands, better citizens, and better Christians.'³¹⁷

There certainly seems to have been an appreciation of the ritualistic features of Anglo-Catholic services but how far the doctrines themselves were understood, and to what extent this was an important reason for joining the society is unclear. In their missionary work the C.E.W.M.S. advocated the use of simple services and an avoidance of overt ceremonial. If these had been factors in encouraging the men themselves to become involved in Anglo-Catholicism then surely they would have utilised them in their missionary efforts. The methods which they used in their attempts to bring the working man back to the Church of England were more Evangelical than Anglo-Catholic. This is one of the contradictions of the society. They professed to believe in a Catholic Church of England and the usages of the Early Church, yet they did not have enough confidence in this to use it as a missionary tool. There was perhaps a class issue at work here though. The men of the C.E.W.M.S. seem to have been of the 'artisan class' with skilled occupations but their missionary work was often carried out among the lower working-class. It may have been the case that they felt that the ceremonial of Anglo-Catholicism would not have appealed to this class in the way that it appealed to them.

It is difficult to assess whether their missionary activities were a success. The C.E.W.M.S. had judged itself to be up to the challenge of

³¹⁷ See p. 15.

encouraging the lapsed masses to return to the national church but there is little evidence to suggest that they increased church attendance. Certainly the reports on the activities of the society mention very little about the progress of their missionary activities and much about social gatherings and general charity work. This could be an indication that their missionary work was a success as it is impossible to measure the effect of a religious movement on church attendance alone. It certainly appears that the defence of Anglo-Catholic clergy facing persecution drew greater support than the evangelising of the working-classes upon which the leaders of the C.E.W.M.S. wished to concentrate their energies. This again suggests that much of the appeal of the Anglo-Catholic lay in the conduct of the clergy, especially the revered slum priests.

The society featured prominently in the pages of the *Church Times* for many years. When Charles Powell's mismanagement of the accounts threatened the existence of the society the whole affair was notable by its absence from the newspaper. There had been a strong desire among the upper and middle classes and the episcopacy to win over the working classes. It was a topic frequently discussed in the *Church Times* before the formation of the C.E.W.M.S. and it seems likely that the paper was guilty of some exaggeration of the importance and role of the society. When the organisation became involved in financial scandal in the late 1880s it had something of a fall from grace.

There would appear to be several factors behind the way in which the C.E.W.M.S. rather unceremoniously faded away as the nineteenth century drew to a close. The society seems to have existed at the tail end of the period when Anglo-Catholicism constantly had to defend its principles and

right to exist in the Church of England. The movement gained more and more respect and adherents within the Church and aggression against the Anglo-Catholics was on the wane. At the same time as these developments were taking place within Anglicanism the issue of respectability within the working classes increasingly became related to politics. Working-class politics were on the ascendancy. The 1884 Reform Act widened the franchise to working men and in 1892 the Independent Labour Party was founded. There was also the degree to which the involvement of key figures in the C.E.W.M.S. in financial irregularities damaged the society. The trust of the local branches in the parent society had been waning since the mid-1880s and it is clear that many (such as the Reading branch) felt it prudent to sever their ties with the head quarters in London. Added to the scandal of the accounts was the embarrassment of their supposed elders and betters coming in to sort out the financial mess of a society which had prided itself on its independence from outside control.

There is little information from which to piece together what happened to Charles Powell and the Church of England Working Men's Society and it does seem that the society simply ceased to be as relevant in both the lives of its members and in the Anglo-Catholic movement as a whole. Their missionary endeavour bore little fruit and Anglo-Catholic clergymen no longer required defending on the scale they had in the 1870s. The C.E.W.M.S. was an important feature in the lives of its members for reasons other than the doctrines of Anglo-Catholicism. The significance of the society lies in the fact that thousands of working-class men resolved to work for a national church which was ignored by many of their class. They did so because the Anglo-Catholic clergy had demonstrated to them that there could indeed be a place in the Church of England for the labouring

man. The spirit of inclusion which they found within the Anglo-Catholic movement allowed them to live out, to an extent, the ideals of the Eucharistic community. The members of the C.E.W.M.S. actively participated in the life of the Church and this was expressed through their evangelical work as well as the use of their skills, as working men, to benefit their church and their community.

Chapter Three

The Sisterhoods

Introduction

The female contribution to the Anglo-Catholic movement has been largely neglected. The early literature is somewhat to blame: in Maria Trench's 1903 biography of the renowned 'slum priest' Charles Lowder, there are but fleeting references to the work undertaken in Wapping by the Sisters of the Community of the Holy Cross. This is despite their extensive contribution to the pastoral work of the area, most notably their effort during the cholera epidemic of 1866. Lowder also came to be seen as the founder of the Community of the Holy Cross, when in fact the founder was Elizabeth Neale (born 1822, died 1901), sister of John Mason Neale.

Where communities received recognition it has often been because of close ties to leading lights of Anglo-Catholicism such as Thomas Thelluson Carter at Clewer, Butler at Wantage, and John Mason Neale in East Grinstead. The treatment of the Anglican sisters in the literature of the movement is a reflection of attitudes towards women in the period. In the second half of the nineteenth century, when the sisterhoods began to emerge, the widespread belief was that men had to be controlling the communities, and mainstream society could not conceive that the initiative could have come from the women involved. There is considerable literature from the nineteenth century that deals with the issue of female religious communities and it reflects many of the commonly held assumptions of the time. Most of this is from the early period of their development, the 1840s and 1850s, and it reflects the anti-Catholicism rife at the time. This was especially fervent after

the Roman Catholic Church re-instated its hierarchy in England and Wales in the 1850s, but anti-Catholic feeling was present throughout the century although fading slightly towards the end of the period. It is easy to understand why the sisterhoods were questioned and criticized in such a climate and the written attacks reveal a strong fear of Roman Catholicism and its possible infiltration of society in an Anglican guise.

It is undeniable that the sisters challenged social norms on many levels and this was seen as antagonistic. What is interesting about the nature of the charges against the sisterhoods is how often writers of such literature were prepared to forgive what they perceived to be the foolishness of women. Pamphleteers insisted that females were recruited by 'Puseyite' clergy who used confession as a tool to gain their confidence. Weak-minded women were allegedly led astray by effeminate and sexually perverted Anglo-Catholic priests with whom they became fixated.

Not all criticism found its origins in anti-Catholic sentiment and the majority of literature on the subject, whether supporting or attacking the communities, shared an attitude towards women. The prevailing opinion on the place of women in society strongly effected the degree to which the sisterhoods could be accepted. Those who claimed to support the sisters often did so on the grounds that the communities could be a refuge for the 'surplus women' in society, the unmarried and unwanted. Their opponents often expressed the paternalistic Victorian view which saw in the sisterhoods a criticism of received social norms about marriage and motherhood.

The sisters were viewed as implying that their way life was more spiritually rewarding than marriage and that they would be duly

compensated in the next life. This was an affront to a society that saw the female ideal in the biological functions of women achieved through union with a husband and subsequently motherhood. There was also a belief that women could not have a spiritual vocation or be 'called' as men were. The existence of female religious communities was explained away in the belief that the women who took vows had been forced to do so, or that they were being held against their will. The reality was very different. Women often waited until their parents had died and there was no longer any role for them within the family home. In contrast to popular belief, the women who joined sisterhoods were women in their late twenties and older, and not young and besotted by priests. The decision to join was not always motivated by spiritual concerns and was often the result of a desire to be involved in social work, although there is no denying that many sisters did feel that they had been called. It is also important to note that sisterhoods did not accept all those who applied could afford to be selective.

The female religious communities which grew up in the second half of the 1800s have much to teach us about the society that nurtured them. They also reveal much about the practical ideals of the Anglo-Catholic movement. They did not exist to carry out the wishes of the clergy and they were in no sense under clerical control. All business of the sisterhoods was subject to votes in chapter and although the leadership of certain Mother Superiors could be authoritarian it was never totalitarian. It was often written into the rules of sisterhoods that the warden (a clergyman) or chaplain had no real authority regarding the running of their community. The sisterhoods had no official status within the post-Reformation Church of England until the twentieth century and the first real discussions in Convocation took place in the last decades of the 1800s. Very few bishops

had real contact with them (the two notable exceptions being Henry Phillpotts and Samuel Wilberforce) and they operated outside of the power of the church hierarchy.

With this in mind it becomes obvious that the sisterhoods themselves chose the nature of their work, and more often than not the communities were formed to address a particular want. Hence we find communities established to offer care to penitents, to teach, or to nurse. Sisterhoods undertook the kind of social work that is now largely taken for granted and directly met the needs of the area in which they operated. Communities would often address the problems of the area in which they were founded and move further afield to more needy parishes, and they existed to carry out works of mercy and not to serve clerical founders.

Criticism of the work that the sisters did had to be theologically based because no one could deny that the services they supplied were badly needed. Thus accusations were made that the orphans in their care were subjected to confession and highly ritualistic forms of worship. The reality was that the sisters rarely forced the spiritual side of their lifestyle on to others. The guilds and clubs that they set up for the working class rarely had a religious slant unless that was the intention, such as with Bible classes. The communities were not devoted to evangelising, they were devoted to carrying out acts of mercy, and this may explain their eventual acceptance by the working classes.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century *laissez-faire* politics fell out of vogue. With the emergence of the Welfare State many of the services that the sisterhoods had provided were no longer required and they began to

devote more time to the spiritual aspects of their life. However, there can be no denying that in the second half of the nineteenth century they provided valuable services to working-class women and children. Anglo-Catholicism provided a strong framework for social works which has long been recognized in men like Lowder, Mackonochie, and the other slum priests. In the destitute areas of Victorian London it seems almost inconceivable that men working with only their curates could possibly carry out the work that has been attributed to them. Credit deserves to be given where it is due, however much the sisterhoods themselves shunned publicity.

Since the 1950s three comprehensive studies of the Anglican sisterhoods have been undertaken. Anson and Allchin carried out their studies in the 1950s³¹⁸ and more recently Susan Mumm has carried out extensive research on the subject which places the sisterhoods in the context of their age rather than simply chronicling their existence.³¹⁹ The purpose of this chapter is not to set out the exact government of the sisterhoods or to examine specific communities in detail, as that would be beyond the scope of this study. Instead it seeks to examine some of the reactions to the Anglican female religious communities and to look at how far such assumptions reflected the reality. The first section of the chapter examines the reality of the sisterhoods in the period 1845-1901, and the manner of work which they undertook. The second section examines the assumptions that made in some of the pamphlet literature of the time. The ideals of Anglicanism are also examined with special reference to the views expressed in the Church Congresses of the period.

³¹⁸ A.M. Allchin, *The Silent Rebellion: Anglican Religious Communities 1845-1900* (London, 1958) and P.F. Anson, *The Call of the Cloister* (London, 1955).

³¹⁹ S. Mumm, *Stolen Daughters, Virgin Mothers* (London, 1999).

Interest in Female Religious Communities

Female religious communities were a strange phenomenon to mainstream Victorian society. Their association with the Anglo-Catholic movement and the relative secrecy that surrounded their activities aroused suspicion. However, interest in the idea of Protestant communities for women had been present from the seventeenth century, and the close proximity of continental Europe, where religious communities had survived the Reformation, meant that the image of the sister remained. Certainly by the nineteenth century the Sisters of Mercy in France and their nursing efforts in the Napoleonic wars had brought female religious orders to the public attention.

The desire for female religious communities in England was certainly not extinguished by the Reformation. In 1696 Mary Astell (born 1666, died 1731) published *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies for the Advancement of their True and Greatest Interest*. In this pamphlet Astell described a community of 'religious retirement' where the ladies would engage in 'the daily performance of the Publick Offices in the Cathedral manner in the most elevating and affecting way, [and] the Celebration of the Holy Eucharist every Lord's Day and Holy Day.' The work advocated the establishment of sisterhoods in order to further the religious and secular education of women. This idea was to gain the support of Queen Anne until Bishop Burnet persuaded her that it was a 'Popish' idea.³²⁰

Two years later Sir George Wheeler, the Prebendary of Durham, published his booklet *The Protestant Monastery: or Christian Oeconomicks*;

³²⁰ P.F Anson, *The Call of the Cloister* (London, 1955), p.16-17.

containing *Directions for the Religious Conduct of a Family*. The Monasteries of the Orthodox Church had made an impression on Wheeler while he had travelled in the East, and he took them as his template rather than the Roman Catholic orders. On female monasteries he commented that convents 'for single women seem convenient, if not necessary for all times and countries, they are by far less dangerous [than male institutions], since no considerable detriment can be expected from them.'³²¹

In the eighteenth century Samuel Richardson had the hero of his novel *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* (1754) pronounce that,

We want to see established in every country Protestant Nunneries, in which single women, of small or no fortunes, might live with all manner of freedom, under such regulations as it would be a disgrace for a modest or good woman not to comply with, were she absolutely in her own hands; and to be allowed to quit it whenever they pleased.³²²

The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries saw the growth in a fascination with the past that expressed itself in the movements of Antiquarianism, Medievalism and Romanticism. For many the interest in the past was a comment on the state of industrialised Britain, an approach at its clearest in Carlyle's *Past and Present* (1843) in which the Middle Ages were set against the nineteenth century to expose the deficiencies of modern society. Yates suggests that, although primarily aesthetic, such movements created a scholarly atmosphere in which people were more open to less hostile interpretations of the English pre-Reformation church.³²³ Such a climate allowed for a degree of tolerance to the concept of female religious orders within the Anglican Church although the majority of supporters for

³²¹ *ibid.* p. 21.

³²² *ibid.* p.20-21.

³²³ N. Yates, *Anglican Ritualism in Victorian Britain 1830-1910* (Oxford, 1999).

religious communities were inevitably those involved in the Anglo-Catholic revival. Whatever the degree of interest generated by such movements the fact remained that the anti-Catholic sentiment prevalent in Victorian society was to effect the extent to which Anglican female religious orders were accepted.

Sisterhoods and the Anglo-Catholic Movement

In 1874, Mary Frances Cusack (a former Anglican Sister and founder of a Roman Catholic order) stated that men 'wrote the Tracts for the Times...but it was women who first put all this theory into practice.'³²⁴ There is no doubt that the sisterhoods were a response to problems which the traditional parochial structure failed to cope with, and Allchin suggests that the sisterhoods' reaction to these problems, and their hidden life and development, is an illustration of the *Via Media* in practice. The frequent communions, regular confession, and the use of the Breviary demonstrated a life where Anglo-Catholic spiritual ideals were successfully married with those of a pastoral nature as the sisters ventured into working class areas.³²⁵

The doctrinal and practical ideals of the Tractarians created an atmosphere in which it was almost inevitable that there would be an attempt to revive religious communities, and their subsequent involvement with sisterhoods was to be much more successful than attempts to establish male religious orders. With the founding Park Village Sisterhood in 1845, Pusey put into practice an idea that had been present in Anglo-Catholic circles for some years. The Park Village Sisterhood is crucial to understanding the relationship between the sisterhoods of this period the Anglo-Catholic clergy. It was not a relationship that was to be successful, and its failure was the result of its experimental nature and the presence of strong clerical control. The importance of the clergy in the revival of female religious communities in the Church of England lay in the initial impetus and the guidance they offered. The catholicity of the Church of England could not be

³²⁴ S. Mumm, *Stolen Daughters, Virgin Mothers* (London, 1999) p. [xi].

³²⁵ A. M. . Allchin, *The Silent Rebellion: Anglican Religious Communities 1845-1900* (London, 1958) p.15.

revived without some recognition of the role which female religious could so clearly play.

This thought was in the mind of Pusey as early as December 1839 when he set out his ideas in a letter to W F Hook,

I want very much to have one or more societies of *Souers de la Charité* formed: I think them desirable (1) in themselves as belonging to and fostering a high tone in the Church (2) as giving a holy employment to many who yearn for something (3) as directing zeal, which will otherwise go off in some irregular way, or go over to Rome. The Romanists are making great use of them to entice our people: and I fear we may lose those whom one can least spare³²⁶

There was also interest in the idea from women; Marian Rebecca Hughes (born 1817, died 1912) took her vow of chastity before Newman at St Mary's Oxford in 1841. Later that year Newman received a letter from a Miss Giberne that led him to make the following reply,

What you hear about a convent is mere mistake. I know nothing of it. But I am very glad to hear that such ideas are spreading, and talking is the first step to doing. Several places are agitating for establishing Sisters of Mercy, whether for hospitals or parochial visiting; but I expect nothing of them yet. ... Women... would not live together without quarrelling, as things are amongst us. A very strong religious principle and a tight discipline would be necessity. But it is a very good thing for people to be thinking about.³²⁷

³²⁶ Allchin p.222-223.

³²⁷ H.P. Liddon, *Life of Edward Bouverie Pusey*, Vol. 3 (1903) p.10.

This correspondence illustrates that there were women who were discussing the possibility of a revival of female religious communities and the opportunities which such establishments could provide.

The first sisterhood was, however, very much the product of the designs of Anglo-Catholic clergy and laymen.. When the Poet Laureate Robert Southey (born 1774, died 1843) passed away his support for the foundation of sisterhoods was seized upon by John Manners who suggested that such an establishment would be an ideal memorial. The idea was well received and a committee met to discuss the conditions. These were set down as follows; that the society be based in a parish where the incumbent supported the idea and would consent to be the spiritual head, and that the community would be sanctioned by the bishop. Dodsworth (born 1798, died 1861), the Vicar of Christ Church, St Pancras, was chosen as the spiritual head (although Pusey was to have great involvement) and the committee met again on 27 April 1844 for further discussion.

The committee was made up of Lords Lyttelton (born 1857, died 1913, Lyttelton was married to Mary Glynne, Gladstone's sister-in-law), Clive, Camden and Lord John Manners, Rev. Dodsworth and Rev. Hook, along with Thomas Dyke Acland, Mr Dickinson, and Mr Watts Russell; Gladstone expressed his support but could not be present.³²⁸ The issue of which women would be involved with the sisterhood was not established at this point and illustrates a certain arrogance about the proceedings. Gladstone composed the circular in which there was a call for an organised system to deal with the widening chasm between the rich and poor.

³²⁸ Anson, p. 226. See also Colin Matthew, 'Gladstone, Evangelicalism and "The Engagement"', in *Revival and Religion since 1700, Essays for John Walsh* ed. Jane Garnett and Colin Matthew (London, 1993) p. 111 -126.

The circular demonstrated the good intentions of the men involved and the practical way in which they viewed their venture. The failure of the Park Village Sisterhood lay in the nature of its foundation. It was not a society that came into being for its own sake and on its own terms. The intentions of the founders may have been admirable but a community based upon committees and memorials added up to an experiment devoid of spontaneity. The founders had very little knowledge of what actually went on in religious orders and the strictness of the Rule for the community exceeded that of nearly every Roman Catholic order of the time³²⁹. The Park Village Sisterhood taught an important lesson to the Anglo-Catholic movement; if religious communities were to be successful they could not be created from without. The community failed to develop or attract new members and was eventually incorporated into the Society of the Most Holy Trinity founded by the close friend of Pusey, Lydia Sellon. The sisterhoods which flourished were spontaneous products of the Anglo-Catholic revival and were largely founded by, or on the initiative of, women who wanted to pursue the religious life. Clerical involvement was crucial due to the nature of a spiritual life that was dependent on daily services, frequent communion and confession. What the sisterhoods required from the clergy was guidance rather than control. Thomas Thelluson Carter, based in the village of Clewer near Windsor, was an excellent example of a clergyman who offered spiritual guidance to those who wanted to carry out their works of mercy within the setting of a religious community. Carter began to offer help to the women occupying the brothels in his parish and what happened next is a perfect example of the slow development of a community.

³²⁹ Anson, p.237.

Mrs Tennant, the widow of a clergyman, offered to take women that wished to leave prostitution into her home. After four months she was housing eighteen former prostitutes, and when that number increased land was bought in the parish and a House of Mercy purpose built. Another widow, Harriet Monsell (born 1811, died 1883), offered her help to Carter and the penitents, and when he concluded that the best care for the inmates would be through the work of a sisterhood, Monsell became the first Mother Superior.³³⁰ Harriet Monsell had been moving in Anglo-Catholic circles for some time and Pusey had been her spiritual advisor, a role that frequently meant acting as a confessor. Her position within the Community of St John the Baptist at Clewer grew out of her desire to perform Christian acts of mercy, and without her there would have been no sisterhood. Unlike Monsell, the other volunteers at the House of Mercy left when it moved under the control of the sisterhood and did not automatically join the community.

The penitentiary work at Clewer took place within an Anglo-Catholic framework, and Carter certainly felt that the Church of England had not done enough to help the 'fallen women' of Victorian society. Confession and absolution, along with the idea of the saving blood of Christ in the Eucharist were ideals that were applicable to the penitentiary work being by the sisterhood. Absolution and salvation were crucial in convincing the penitents that they would not be eternally condemned because of past sins; they could be saved through the blood of Christ in the Eucharist. This point was re-iterated in the final prayer in the Service of Dismissal of a penitent,

³³⁰Ibid. 308.

Teach her to love Thee, O God; to be thankful and contented in all thy appointments for her; to endure all things meekly; and may she be preserved pure and blameless in body, soul and spirit, and, all her sins blotted out in the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant, may she be saved forever in the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord.³³¹

It was not just through the clergy that Anglo-Catholicism asserted itself in the foundation and running of the sisterhoods. The sisters themselves were committed to the movement, although this was more the case with the founding figures than with the rank and file sisters, as Susan Mumm has pointed out in her recent comprehensive study of the sisterhoods.³³² Often the attraction for them was the social work that they could carry out rather than the spiritual side of community life, but even so they maintained a strict adherence to the spiritual tasks.

The founders of communities often moved in Anglo-Catholic circles before they embarked on a life as a sister, and they were largely from wealthy families.. *Punch* made much of this in its criticism of the sisterhoods, portraying the communities as brimming over with the ladies of Belgravia and other such fashionable areas of London. This was not far from the reality as the sisterhoods were indeed the bastions of wealthy ladies. Women from lower social strata could rarely become full sisters, and had instead to join a lay order carrying out the domestic duties of the community.

The Catholic revival in the Church of England attracted females and, although most congregations contained more women than men, Anglo-

³³¹ Ibid. p.94.

³³² S. Mumm, *Stolen Daughters, Virgin Mothers* (London, 1999).

Catholic churches boasted a higher percentage than most. Reed notes the high proportion of women attending Anglo-Catholic morning services as such, St Barnabas' in Pimlico 75%, St Thomas', Regent Street 71%, and St Mary Magdalene, Munster Square 82%. His comparison with other denominations in Marylebone underlines this point, 73% of the Anglican congregation was female compared with 59% of Baptists, 58% of Wesleyans, and 57% of Congregationalists.³³³ Anglo-Catholicism demanded more from the worshipper with daily services, frequent communion and the possibility of attending regular confession. For the bored and wealthy lady it offered some sort of useful occupation and by accepting the work that women did the movement implied that it valued the contribution that they could make. For the older spinster there was added attraction in the value placed on virginity and chastity by Anglo-Catholicism, which viewed celibacy as an acceptable, and sometimes preferable, state.³³⁴ The push for greater pastoral work could also have drawn women towards the Catholic revival as acts of charity were seen as an acceptable enterprise for women of breeding. It was common for women who founded sisterhoods to have previously carried out charitable work for their parish. Examples of this are found with Harriet Monsell at Clewer, Priscilla Lydia Sellon at Devonport, and the ladies who followed Henry Daniel Nihil from Manchester to London and eventually became the Community of St Mary at the Cross in 1866.

Marian Rebecca Hughes was introduced to Tractarianism by her acquaintances Rev. Charles Seager and his wife. When she made her personal vow of celibacy in 1841 in front of Newman at St Mary's in Oxford she was disappointed that a sisterhood did not exist which would allow her

³³³ John Shelton Reed, *Glorious Battle* (London and Nashville, 1996) p. 188.

³³⁴ *ibid.* p.191-193.

to develop her spirituality.³³⁵ Her vow should not be taken lightly (as will be discussed presently) since to make such a commitment in Victorian society entailed a total rejection of accepted views on the role and place of women. Celibacy in male clergy was largely reviled and the Anglo-Catholic clergymen who chose to abstain were labelled as effeminate. In women, a conscious adherence to a life of celibacy with no intention of starting a family, was an implicit criticism of marriage and motherhood that was unacceptable to mainstream society.

The decision of Marian Rebecca Hughes to devote her life in this way was made before the existence of sisterhoods and shows that such communities came into being as a product of the desires of women rather than clergy. Hughes could not join the Park Village Sisterhood due to family commitments and decided not to join St Thomas' in Oxford, as she wanted to be under the spiritual direction of Pusey. She eventually founded the Society of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, Oxfordshire, in 1851 after working in the area for two years. The community established by Hughes was not founded because a structure was required to carry out the charitable works of the area. She had made a very conscious decision ten years before the sisterhood came into being that her life would be devoted to Christ. This very spiritual aspect of her calling was reflected in the emphasis that was placed on the recitation of the Divine Office in choir and the importance of specified times for private prayer. An attempt to incorporate a contemplative order could not be sustained due to the workload but the more spiritual inclination of the Society of the Holy and Undivided Trinity was clear.³³⁶ This was often the

³³⁵ Anson, p.289.

³³⁶ Ibid. p.292-293.

case with women who had been under the spiritual guidance of Pusey who placed an emphasis on self-denial and personal prayer.

Elizabeth Neale also had close links to the Anglo-Catholic movement through her brother John Mason Neale and yet chose not to join his community, founded in 1855, at East Grinstead. She had worked closely with Wagner in Brighton, founding an orphanage under his guidance, but did not join the sisterhood which he also founded in 1855. Instead Neale preferred to establish her own community in 1857, the Society of the Holy Cross, originally based in Wapping. It is unfortunate that Charles Lowder is largely credited with the creation of the Society of the Holy Cross. Although the community moved into the former mission house of Lowder and his curates in the parish of St George-in-the-East, he was not the founder. Neale's strong Anglo-Catholicism was evident in the level of ritual and ceremonial in the community, which drew very heavily on Roman Catholic doctrine. The liturgical life of the community was eventually to take precedence over the active work.³³⁷

Harriet Brownlow Byron, the daughter of the deputy lieutenant of Hertfordshire and from a wealthy background, was involved in the Anglo-Catholic revival from around 1845. Her spiritual advisor was William Upton Richards (born 1811, died 1873), the curate of Margaret Street chapel that evolved into the parish of All Saints³³⁸ and she attended the services there along with Ethelreda Anna Bennett ³³⁹, Georgina Napier, and Georgina

³³⁷ Anson p.362-3.

³³⁸ See Chapter 5 for more on the construction of All Saints' Church under the direction of A J B Beresford Hope.

³³⁹ Ethelreda Anna Bennett went on to found her own community, The Sisters of Bethany, in 1866 after the death of her father. Along with Brownlow Byron, Napier and Hoare she had visited the sisterhood at Park Village West . (Anson p.406).

Sophia Hoare who all became members of religious communities. Brownlow Byron had many Catholic friends in England and travelled in Europe where she witnessed Roman Catholic orders first hand. She worked unaided in the slums of Marylebone for six months in 1851 before anyone other women joined the community.³⁴⁰ There was a strong emphasis on a life of prayer and All Saints also borrowed heavily from Roman Catholic teaching with Harriet Brownlow Byron's strong convictions shaping the society from the start. In her memoirs, Sister Caroline Mary remarks upon the strictness of rule and religious order that the founding Mother Superior brought the community under in the early years.³⁴¹ Such convictions were not always seen in the other sisters, although the fact that they accepted the strict spirituality of the sisterhoods suggests that some leanings towards Anglo-Catholicism were required. Brownlow Byron and Monsell shared a very practical approach towards the fact that not all the sisters shared their strength of religious vision, and the latter noted that while one could instil religion in someone with common sense, instilling the required common sense in someone with religious conviction was another matter.

When Benedicta Bostock joined the Benedictine community at St Mary's Abbey she was asked why she wanted to become a nun and gave as her answer 'The Poor Law.' The early sisterhoods did place emphasis on active work over the religious life but the latter was still prominent.³⁴² The fact remains that whatever the reasons for joining, the sisters eventually became steeped in Anglo-Catholicism. Carter remarked in 1863,

³⁴⁰ Ed. S. Mumm, *All Saints Sisters of the Poor* (Bury St Edmunds, 2001) p. xiii – xv.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.* p.9.

³⁴² S. Mumm, *Stolen Daughters, Virgin Mothers*, p.15.

It has always been the feeling of the Sisters that their purpose and conviction is a life-long dedication of themselves... We have no need to teach it, if we desired to do so. They assume it as a preliminary; that if thought worthy to be a Sister at all, it must be for life. They have taught it to me, not I them.³⁴³

The communities at Clewer and Wantage initially had no fixed spiritual programme. When vows were introduced it was because the sisters felt that they were necessary to ensure the quality of the work they carried out³⁴⁴ and they wanted to perform their acts of charity within a spiritual construct. The sisters were not just working for the area in which they lived, but for Christ. The issue of vows is interesting on because it shows that sisters did not view their membership of a community as being transitory, but instead as a life-long commitment and an alternative to traditional roles.

³⁴³ Anson, p. 75.

³⁴⁴ Ibid. p.74.

Becoming a Sister

Sisterhoods of the nineteenth century were mainly divided into two orders, choir and lay. Lay sisters would be of a lower social status than their choir equivalents. These sisters had to serve a minimum of four years as a novice while the noviciate of choir sisters was between two and four years. The same level of theological instruction was not offered to lay sisters and their training was largely domestic. Once a lay sister had professed she could not vote in chapter along with the choir sisters. On rare occasions lay sisters of exceptional talent would be promoted to choir status, this was the case at the communities of the Holy Name, Holy Martyr, and St Thomas Martyr.³⁴⁵ Only one order existed at Wantage but this was the result of practicalities rather than a conscious decision not to separate sisters of different social classes. The sisterhood had originally consisted of two women from different social backgrounds and the creation of two orders would obviously have been impractical. One community did purposefully retain all sisters in a single order, that of St Mary at the Cross in Shoreditch. All backgrounds were accepted and sisters were discouraged from discussing their families or previous home life in order to encourage a sense of equality.³⁴⁶

These two communities were in the minority and most sisterhoods did not defy any social conventions on the issue of class boundaries. Different sisterhoods drew the line between choir and lay at different points and lay sisters were treated well. Those that chose to leave would do so with excellent references, the knowledge of running a large house, and a new

³⁴⁵ S. Mumm, *Stolen Daughters, Virgin Mothers*, p.40.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.* p.36.

outfit and money from the sisterhood for returning to life outside community.³⁴⁷ Mumm suggests that female religious communities 'envisioned themselves as an idealised microcosm of the social order of Victorian England.'³⁴⁸ While they challenged the accepted norms on many other levels the sisterhoods were, in this case, very much of their age.³⁴⁹

Once a woman had chosen the sisterhood to which she felt most suited the road ahead was neither easy nor fast. The first step was to write an informal letter of application to the Mother Superior with a member of the clergy, usually her spiritual director, acting as her referee. She would then be invited to come and view the community and meet with the Superior. Pending the success of this interview she would be invited to spend a few weeks living and working with the sisters. If both parties were satisfied the candidate would be offered a six month postulancy. After the completion of this six month period the community would vote on whether the applicant should be entered into the sisterhood as a novice. For this to be approved the candidate required at least two thirds of the vote and, contrary to the anti-sisterhood pamphlet literature of the time, between one third and a half of all applicants were rejected after their postulancy. The rigour of the selection process certainly defies some of the assumptions of the time which suggested that those who entered a sisterhood rarely re-emerged.

³⁴⁷ Ibid. p.37.

³⁴⁸ Ibid. p.40.

³⁴⁹ The lack of research into the subject makes it difficult to ascertain whether sisterhoods founded towards the end of the nineteenth century reflected changing attitudes towards class. Many of the ninety communities founded between 1845-1900 were very small and few, if any, records remain. It would be practical for smaller sisterhoods to only operate with one order (as Butler's community did to begin with) but whether there was any class consideration is unknown. There is, however, no record of the larger sisterhoods changing their policy as the century progressed

The time spent clothed in the novice habit lasted two to four years for choir sisters and not less than four for lay sisters. This was a time of practical training, especially since many of those hoping to be professed as choir sisters would have had little experience of domestic duties. Novices were free to leave at any time and some communities rejected as many as fifty percent of those who reached the noviciate.³⁵⁰ Those who did reach the stage of profession therefore did so around four to six years after their initial application to join the sisterhood. The research of Susan Mumm suggests that around twenty percent of sisters opted to leave their communities and the majority did so around the time of their profession.³⁵¹ Their reason for leaving could be to join another Anglican community (there was much movement between sisterhoods) or to secede to Rome, while some simply found that it was not the life that they had envisioned. Those who wished to leave were supported by their fellow sisters, and the Community of the Holy Name even invested funds yearly to ensure that lay sisters that opted out of life of the community would have financial backing. The measures that were in place to ensure that communities only took in acceptable women challenges many of the more lurid accusations that were levelled at female religious. Instead of societies that spirited away young women we find that the sisterhoods were not prepared to accept women who would not fit easily into the established structure of the community.

³⁵⁰ Mumm, p.20-29.

³⁵¹ Ibid. p.50.

The Work of the Sisters

The poor quality of the parochial structure of the Church of England, and its inability to meet the challenge of the industrial age, had been fully acknowledged in the reports of the Ecclesiastical Commission from the mid-1830s. The challenges to the relationship between the Church and State had laid bare a parochial system that failed to provide for the spiritual wants of the people and the utility of the church as established by law faced close scrutiny. The rapid growth in population, and the migration from rural to urban areas, mean that a large proportion of the population were left destitute and without any opportunity to worship within the national church. Until the later part of the nineteenth century education and charity were still viewed as services provided primarily by the national church. If there were not enough ministers in the populous towns and cities, the national church could not fulfil its role.

The sisterhoods could not provide for the want of worship, but they could provide for the practical needs of the people. While the reports of the commission did encourage some to action and new churches were constructed, especially under Blomfield's scheme in the capital, the problems with the parochial system in densely populated areas remained. The efforts of the so-called slum priests showed that many remained untouched by the efforts of their national church. What the sisters aimed to provide were the absolute basics in the form of health care, food, schooling or refuge. They also engaged in more specific works such as penitentiaries and convalescence homes. Their work frequently focused on the women and children of the lower classes as in many cases these were the people, along with the elderly, that most needed their attention. The fact that a substantial portion of the

urban working classes did not attend any kind of religious service meant that requiring denominational allegiance from the people that the sisters helped would have proved fruitless. They administered aid to those who most required it, and in the early days this took precedence over the spiritual life of the sisters. The majority of communities had at least one orphanage and the children would often previously have been residing in workhouses. In keeping with the Tractarian tradition the sisterhoods were strongly opposed to the poor law and its less eligibility principle.

The importance of the active life of the sisters, and classification of whom their work should be directed towards, was set out in the 1855 rule of the All Saints Community,

The primary object of this Society is to provide a Religious Asylum for incurables, aged and infirm persons in destitute circumstances, and to train up Orphan children to useful employments; and although other works of mercy may be from time to time added at the discretion of the Superiors, these shall always have the first consideration and hold the principal place in the work of the Sisters.³⁵²

Sisterhoods were often established with a particular category of work in mind and would then expand into other areas as needed. At the Community of St Mary the Virgin in Wantage the focus was on penitentiary work from the early 1850s. In 1864 they were invited to undertake rescue work in Bristol which they conducted until this was passed over to the Sisters of Charity at Knowle in 1876. A House of Mercy was opened in Cornwall, also in 1864, and girls were received from all over the West Country. In 1875 Bishop John Jackson of London requested that the Wantage

³⁵² Church Records Society 9, p. 67.

sisters begin rescue work in Fulham which they duly undertook, and in that year they also opened a home for young offenders in Paddington. In 1883 the sisters began maternity work in the same area. Three years later they opened a rescue home in Leicester and two homes for mentally ill girls in Peterborough. Parochial work was taken on in parishes where their services were required or requested.³⁵³ The community was well known for its work in education and in 1864 it opened an establishment devoted to the instruction of pupil-teachers. In 1873 the sisters opened their boarding school, St Mary's, which became so over-subscribed that by 1893 they had opened a second school, St Katherine's.³⁵⁴

A similar expansion occurred in the Community of All Hallows. This sisterhood began in the diocese of Norwich after a number of parishioners at St Peter Mancroft expressed their desire to found a penitentiary. When the superintendent, Lavinia Crosse, visited the House of Mercy at Bussage she determined that the true success of such institutions lay in the work done by the sisters. In 1855 Crosse took her vows along with two others and All Hallows was founded. The growth of the community made moving a necessity and the sisters re-located to Ditchingham in 1864 where an orphanage and cottage school were soon opened. In 1877 building of the All Hallows Country Hospital was completed, in 1884 they opened a rescue home in Norwich and by 1885 the sisterhood had an order of Magdalenes.³⁵⁵ Both these communities illustrate how sisterhoods founded to deal with specific demands expanded beyond the boundaries of their original localities and it would have been difficult for the sisters to undertake such work if they had been forced to operate under diocesan controls.

³⁵³ Anson, p.253-255.

³⁵⁴ Ibid. p.252-253.

³⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 329-330.

The Society of St Margaret demonstrated more than most the widespread work of the sisterhoods. They originated out of John Mason Neale's call for nurses in his locality of East Grinstead and soon moved into London, operating all across the city. They were to be found in Soho, Haggerston, Eaton Square and Lambeth and Hackney. The branch house at Hackney³⁵⁶ founded its own rest homes for women and girls at Herne Bay in Kent, for men and boys in East Hampshire, and for Church Workers at Buxted in Surrey. Sisters were also sent to work in Ipswich and Aldershot, and in 1862 John Compter of St John's Aberdeen requested that a sister be sent to work with him in the Scottish Episcopal Church. A branch house was subsequently opened in Aberdeen in 1864.³⁵⁷ Even sisterhoods like the Community of St John the Baptist at Clewer who were famed for one type of work did not become static. Their skills in their field would be taken beyond their own district. The Clewer sisters opened mission houses in Soho, Holborn and Southwark in the capital, and at Bovey Tracey in Devon. They also moved outside of the sphere of penitentiary work, opening both a children's hospital and a convalescent home.

The work of the female religious communities demonstrated how they addressed social problems that were largely ignored by wider society. The sisterhoods could undertake a workload that was greater than that of charitable ladies or parochial visitors. They could commit themselves totally to the work that needed to be done among the poor and thus stepped into to

³⁵⁶ Branch houses, like the one at Hackney run by the Society of St Margaret, were run independently of the Mother house. But although they had branch Superiors they ultimately remained under the authority of the Mother Superior.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 347-349.

a gap in the parochial system. Doing so took them outside of the traditional role of women in mainstream Victorian society.

The penitentiaries are an excellent example of a sphere of work that the sisters undertook when few others would do so. The lack of attention to the plight of the prostitute was exposed in an article of 1848 in which the author raised the point that, despite the Victorian flair for philanthropy, no one was prepared to deal with the problem of the 'peculiar sins of women',

the evil we speak of is in the background still; in timid
silence we permit it to sweep on; spellbound we let it pass;
and it needs an emboldened mercy to break the spell.
Woman falls...never to rise again.³⁵⁸

The author estimated that London alone had between 8,000 and 12,000 prostitutes, only 441 of whom were inmates of the capitals' penitentiaries. The question regarding the prostitute was not 'whether she is to suffer, and suffer most severely, but whether she is to suffer without hope, without the chance of repentance, without the means of repentance, without the means of escape; whether she is to lose all and forever?'³⁵⁹

While there was a strong Anglo-Catholic element, focusing on the spiritual salvation of the penitent, there was also a very practical component to the work with the aim being respectability rather than a simple renunciation of commercial sex. Time in the penitentiary allowed women to learn new skills and many left having received significant training as specialised domestic staff. Some of the more competent inmates were

³⁵⁸ The Quarterly Review 1848, p. 360.

³⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 361.

trained as nurses, another specialised area, and a profession which would have afforded them respectability whether they previously been involved in prostitution or not. The penitentiary made a point of removing women from an environment that encouraged prostitution and furnished them with skills that would support them financially. The Houses of Mercy sought to show the penitents that salvation and respectability could be theirs, contrary to conventional views about the 'fallen woman' and the approach condoned by the Contagious Diseases Acts of the 1860s.

The penitentiary encapsulated the spiritual and practical aims of the sisterhoods. Their Anglo-Catholicism encouraged the approach that all sins could be forgiven through the saving blood of Christ, while their desire to work with the needy (especially women and children) made the prostitute an ideal candidate for their help. But the majority of work carried out by the religious communities was of a very temporal nature and not geared towards the spiritual wants of the people. The sisters did not exist merely to carry out the work of the Anglican clergy and the orphanages, schools and guilds that they ran were not vehicles for proselytising. Sisterhoods would provide cheap dinners, ragged schools, and encourage working men to meet at the guilds that they set up as alternatives to the public houses and gin palaces, but the only religious element in such activities was the involvement of the sisters themselves. Many of the working classes, suspicious of the middle-class clergy, were won over by the work of the sisters in the towns and cities during cholera outbreaks.

This was certainly the case with Elizabeth Neale's Community of the Holy Cross during the 1866 outbreak which affected the dockland area where the sisters were based in London. Linklater, who joined the staff of St

Peter's, London Docks as a curate in 1869, described the appreciation that the parishioners continued to express for the work carried out throughout the 1860s,

Night and day the clergy and sisters toiled as hearts can only toil that toil for the love of God...To this day the people of the parish talk of the kindness they experienced, and the good they received.³⁶⁰

Charles Booth, writing at the beginning of the twentieth century, did not agree that the hearts that toiled for God toiled the strongest, or that the sisters refrained from proselytising,

The spirit of the proselytisers has its genesis in the strong religious convictions of the Sisters, which lead them to be keenly alive to the dangers of false doctrine, and horrified at the neglected and heathen lives of the people among whom they work. The temptation to win souls by whatever means becomes very great; and the unscrupulous spirit which is evinced obtains the more licence from the fact that the Sisters feel themselves to be working not for their community, but for the Church; not for themselves, but for God.³⁶¹

Such accusations were common and failed to acknowledge the fact that, if religious convictions had not encouraged the sisters to carry out this work, it would have remained undone. Charitable organisations attacked the sisterhoods on the grounds that their method of assisting the poor abetted pauperism. The Charity Organisation Society accused Emily Ayckbowm's Sisters of the Church with interfering with the Poor Law after they provided 53,700 halfpenny dinners during the recession hit year of 1892.³⁶² No doubt

³⁶⁰ Quoted in Allchin, p. 360.

³⁶¹ Quoted in Allchin, p.438.

³⁶² S. Mumm, *Stolen Daughters, Virgin Mothers*, p.128.

interference with the Poor Law was something which the sisterhoods were more than happy to be charged with.

The Ideals of Anglicanism

The approaches adopted by female religious communities constantly drew vehement criticism from those opposed to the Anglo-Catholic movement. However admirable and desirable the work was that they carried out the utility of it was always questioned on the grounds of their religious persuasion and their gender. Sensationalist pamphlet literature and general ignorance dogged the sisterhoods in the period from 1845-1901. Despite the reality of their organisation and work, the nature of Victorian England, with its prevalent anti-Catholicism and strong views on the role and place of women, meant that assumptions about the sisterhoods were, as shall be discussed, frequently extremely wide of the mark.

over them.

When searching for a new chaplain in 1873, Mother Marston of the Society of the Holy and Undivided Trinity writes that it is "better to be under than over Chaplained and" this view is proved quite true for when we come to enter in to detail Mr Hudson proposed some absurd points... I could in no way accept so Mr Hudson will not be the Chaplain, such a Chaplain would be intolerable.¹⁰⁰ The sisters knew what they wanted, and it was not to be under the control of a chaplain. This would be especially true for a community such as the above in 1873 when it had already been in operating for nearly thirty years.

¹⁰⁰ S Memoir, p.159.

The Ideals of Anglicanism

It can reasonably be assumed that the clergy who were successfully involved with female religious communities shared the vision of the women involved. The Park Village Sisterhood was an example to those clergy involved with communities that they had to be allowed to develop organically and that, while some direction and guidance was necessary, excessive clerical involvement was resented or rejected by the sisters themselves. The attempt by Chaplain R M Benson to wield undue influence over the All Saints community was thwarted by the sisters who viewed his position as one of service. After all, the sisterhood paid him to provide for them, not to rule over them.

When searching for a new chaplain in 1893, Mother Marion of the Society of the Holy and Undivided Trinity noted that it is 'better to be under than over Chaplained and this case is proved quite true for when we came to enter in to detail Mr Hudson proposed some absurd points...I could in no way accept so Mr Hudson will not be the Chaplain...such a Chaplain would be intolerable.'³⁶³ The sisters knew what they wanted, and it was not to be under the control of a clergyman. This would be especially true for a community such as the above in 1893, when it had already been in operating for nearly thirty years.

³⁶³ S Mumm, p.159.

Emily Ayckbowm (born 1836, died 1900), the founder of the Sisters of the Church in Kilburn, was certainly adamant in her opinion on male involvement in sisterhoods, remarking in her diary on 7 June 1884,

In real truth the only Sisterhoods (in the English Church) that have done well, have been originated by women; and men have made such a mess of Religious Communities among themselves, that it is absurd that they should try to subject sisterhoods to their control.³⁶⁴

Control and guidance from clerical founders was crucial in the early years of a sisterhood but this would diminish as the community became more confident in its abilities and had established its routine and work. John Mason Neale felt that male guidance was unnecessary and in his opinion the floundering of the episcopacy was proof enough that women were better at managing such things than men. The founder of the Community of St Mary at the Cross, D. Nihil, remarked that 'not all the Vicars in the Kingdom drawn up in a row, with all the police four deep behind them, could stop my sisters.'³⁶⁵

The Anglo-Catholic clergy were much more realistic about the limitations of clerical involvement because of their day to day involvement with the sisterhoods. No doubt stung by the failure of his early effort, which had seen conflict with Dodsworth at Park Village, Pusey was to conclude that parish clergy should not be involved in female religious communities. Although he did not found a sisterhood Pusey was heavily involved through his role as a spiritual advisor to many of the women who eventually did go on to do so.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.155.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.* p.157.

The ideal of the clergy outside of the Catholic revival was somewhat different. The view of the episcopacy was always going to be one that reflected their wariness about female communities, and deaconesses were preferable to sisters because of their obedience to episcopal authority. Cecilia Robinson, the founder of one of the deaconess institutions, explained why she believed this to be the case with her statement that the 'Deaconess is the servant of the Clergy; she does not plan out her own work, but receives it from her Vicar... [she is the] handmaid of the Church.'³⁶⁶

Herein lay the problem for the clergy with sisters, they were handmaids of Christ before the church and they worked to their own agenda rather than carrying out the wishes of the clergy. It must not be forgotten that the clergy were men of their age and of their class: the majority held the accepted opinions on the role and place of women in society. They found it almost impossible to conceive that a woman could be called to devote her life to Christ in the same way as a man. Moreover, many of the clergy seemed to have harboured a sense of resentment that these women were carrying out parochial work without their say.

Whether a sister made her vows in the presence of a bishop or not, the vow of obedience was sworn to obey the rule of her community, not the authority of the bishop who presided. The level of control which the episcopacy could exercise over the sisters was the same as their authority over any other member of the Anglican community. The sisters were not clergy and the episcopacy had no jurisdiction over the work that the sisters

³⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 152.

chose to undertake. The feeling that some control should be exercised over the sisterhoods was a common one among clergy at all levels. There was a feeling among some sections of the clergy that women were not fit to govern themselves.³⁶⁷

At the 1883 Church Congress Rev. Berdmore Compton insisted that greater control was needed over the vows of poverty and obedience. The sisters could not be allowed to carry out the clarification,

These two vows require definition by authority. And it is time the authorities in the Church should define them...It is hopeless as it is dangerous, to delay any longer the recognition of the practice of vows, and thus to suffer them to crystallise irregularly and injuriously to defenceless women.³⁶⁸

The question of the full time ministry of women came before Convocation in 1861 and 1862. Rev R Seymour presented the following motion which included a demand for the hierarchy to regulate the practices of female religious communities and,

deliberate upon certain rules by which women, whose hearts God has moved to devote themselves to works of piety and charity, may be associated together on terms and conditions distinctly known as those which the Church of England has known and prescribed.³⁶⁹

Although favourable towards the sisterhoods, Seymour had no involvement with them and gave a largely inaccurate portrayal of them to Convocation.

³⁶⁷ This will be explored later in the chapter.

³⁶⁸ Allchin, p.149.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.159.

At the Church Congress of 1866, Rev Dr Howson made several points in a paper that give insight into the way in which clergymen who were not involved with sisterhoods viewed them. He observed that they 'do not incorporate themselves easily into the general work and system of the Church and the customary way of things.' He felt that the mystery that surrounded female religious excited suspicion and a 'movement which might easily have been controlled in its earlier stages, may, if coldly treated, become when strong impatient of control.'³⁷⁰

There was also a desire to stress the social work of the sisterhoods at the expense of the religious side of their communal life. If the spiritual aspect was removed or suppressed the clergy would be better able to control the practical side of the sisters' work. The Earl of Devon asserted at the same Church Congress that the sisters could strengthen the Church through their charitable and practical efforts only if they were under 'due superintendence and active guidance.'³⁷¹ There was a reluctance to accept the sisterhoods on their own terms even though their work was acknowledged as beneficial. The Earl of Devon was not suggesting that the sisterhoods should be disbanded, on the contrary, when comparing them to parochial mission women³⁷² he expressed his preference for female religious communities. He found the sisters 'more useful' because the 'members of such an association have special advantages in the support, comfort and guidance, which they derive from each other.'³⁷³

³⁷⁰ *Authorized Report of the Proceedings of the Church Congress 1866* (York, 1867), p.190.

³⁷¹ *Authorised Report of the Proceedings of the Church Congress 1866* (London, 1866), p. 185.

³⁷² Parochial mission women were women trained by the clergy to carry out basic parochial duties in the parish such as visiting.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

It was the spiritual side of the sisterhood that was considered dangerous; their vows, the enforcement of peculiar religious observances, and their imitation of Roman Catholic sisters. There was often an acceptance of the work that they so ably carried out, and the advantages which living in community afforded to such work, and yet a denial of the spiritual framework that had brought the sisterhoods into existence in the first place. The clergy often asserted that these women did an excellent job and that their basic utility could not really be faulted, and yet there was always a 'but'. At the Church Congress of 1875 a layman, Mr Carleton Baynes, maintained that whilst 'sisterhoods are doing a great amount of good, and the devotedness of many sisters cannot be overrated, there is in them a want of that inalienable attachment to the Church of England which should distinguish all the Church's recognised organisations.'³⁷⁴ T.T. Carter challenged these views at the Congress in 1883 and called for an acceptance of the sisterhoods on their own terms,

That the Church of England has recognised and accepted the Sisters' work is a gain to the life of the Church of England; but it remains still for the Church of England to recognise and accept the life of the Sisters, and what that life needs for its support and nourishment, and for this the prayers of all who love the Church of England are surely to be earnestly desired.³⁷⁵

The opposition to vows and the belief that women were being kept against their will was the slant of many a scare-mongering pamphlet of the 1850s, but the issue of vows also touched clergy who were not completely opposed to the sisterhoods. In fact, a problem with vows was often stated as the only reason for not fully supporting female religious communities. The

³⁷⁴ *Authorised Report of the Proceedings of the Church Congress 1875* (London, 1875) p.69.

³⁷⁵ *Authorised Report of the Proceedings of the Church Congress 1883* (London, 1883) p.139.

problem emanated from two sources; a misunderstanding of what they entailed, and the fact that their substance did not sit easily with Victorian society. The reaction of the clergy was no exception. Tait was adamant that the episcopacy had not sanctioned vows and therefore any clergyman involved in the profession of them was liable to prosecution. He wrote when Bishop of London 27 December 1865 to an unknown male correspondent, stating that he considered the vows taken by members of female religious communities to be illegal oaths. He also accused the clergymen who administered them as having acted in 'a most improper manner'.³⁷⁶

A life regulated by vows of poverty and chastity was viewed by many in Victorian Society as an implication that the life of middle-class and upper-class women was not the true Christian ideal. The assumption that all unmarried ladies were virgins meant that the vow of chastity was a statement that sisters would not consider marriage. It was also often assumed that the third vow, that of obedience, was made to the Mother Superior. In fact, this was not the case. The vow was made to the rule of the community and even the Superior was required to take it.

These vows were offensive to the social norms of the era and the clergy, as mainly middle class men, found them as unacceptable as their lay counterparts. Many had a problem with the taking of vows for life, which meant that sisters were engaging in a religious vocation. As late as 1883, in Convocation, there was a need for the Bishop of Truro, G.H. Wilkinson, to state in his report on the recognition and regulation of sisterhoods that,

³⁷⁶ Randall Davidson & W. Benham, *Life of Archibald Campbell Tait* Vol.1 (London, 1891) p.457.

Experience shows that, in point of fact, some women are conscious of a call which binds them, as they believe, to dedicate themselves wholly and irrevocably to a life of special devotion to God. They feel that this call requires them to give up their personal freedom of action, and to obey a settled rule...In this dedication of themselves to God – accepted, as they trust, and blessed by Him – they find their strength.³⁷⁷

The committee which Wilkinson was reporting to ruled on the unacceptability of vows. However, in that year (1883), Wilkinson went on to found his own sisterhood.³⁷⁸ There was widespread opinion that the taking of vows implied some surrendering of free will, rather than the exercising of free will through the commitment. At the 1866 Church Congress Howson maintained that a 'life supported by vows, express or implied, is not, as it seems to me, more religious but less religious than one which is the continuous offering of a free and willing heart.'³⁷⁹ The fact that the vows removed the sisters from society, and therefore their accepted roles, was one which caused contention with the clergy as much as the laity. Tait was a supporter of the sisterhoods to a certain degree and was involved with several communities but was strongly opposed to the taking of vows. He made this clear in his Charge of 1866. 'Family ties are imposed direct by God,' he stated. 'If family duties are overlooked, God's blessing can never be expected on any efforts which we make for His Church.'³⁸⁰

The clergy did not need to be convinced that women had a part to play in the Church of England but the majority did not feel that this could be

³⁷⁷ Allchin, p.166,

³⁷⁸ Anson, *The Call of the Cloister*, p.459-60. Wilkinson remained in strong control of his sisterhood to the point of devising the type of habit that they wore and setting out the time to be spent in study and prayer.

³⁷⁹ Church Congress 1866, p.190,

³⁸⁰ Davidson & Benham, *Life of Archibald Campbell Tait*, Vol. 1, p.468.

realised through a sisterhood. The implication that the life of a sister was more spiritually rewarding than that of a wife and mother irked many. Carter did not help to dispel this when he declared that the work of the sisters '...realises the highest ideal of Christian work, for it is founded on self-sacrifice, and sacrifice is the noblest principle of work.'³⁸¹ While he felt the need to make clear the following,

Sisterhoods are not to be regarded as casting any reflection on other forms of life or service, least of all family life, which is the source and nurse of all that is pure and beautiful in human society, but as a distinct state to which some are called, partly for their own greater holiness, partly for the sake of their fellow creatures, whom, in the love of Christ, they can better serve when thus set free from other claims.³⁸²

At the Church Congress of 1883 Carter again defended the sisterhoods against accusations that they seemed to break or disparage family ties. William Conyghame, the Bishop of Meath (consecrated 1876, translated to Archbishopric of Dublin 1884, died 1897) was not to be easily swayed, Let me say to any of you who desire to work for Christ, without at the same time leaving your homes, Stay there, and by remaining in your homes, you will love Christ the more too; and...you will not, I am very sure, work for Him the less!³⁸³

The Archdeacon of Bedford, Frederick Bathurst, was very much in agreement with the Bishop of Meath. He wanted to see,

the possibility of faithful women of every age and rank in society going forward under episcopal authority to carry out

³⁸¹ Church Congress 1875, p.53.

³⁸² Ibid., p.55.

³⁸³ Church Congress 1883 p.155.

their great work for Christ, to the salvation of souls, and the glory of God, and the comfort of their own lives , and that of their neighbours about them.³⁸⁴

Bathurst felt that any organisation purportedly working for the Church of England, but operating outside of episcopal control, could not be healthy. His call for women to work within the Anglican Church, and do so from within their accepted roles, was a commendable one. Yet to suggest that this would be a viable alternative for the women who had joined, or desired to join, sisterhoods again seeks to deny these women the spiritual framework that was so often crucial to their work. It also ignores the fact that many who subsequently joined female religious communities had already carried out the very work that the Archdeacon of Bedford was rallying for.

Clerical responses to the sisterhoods mirrored those of society as a whole, yet the clergy do seem to have been more willing to accommodate the communities. But despite their praise for the utility of the sisterhoods they could not accept them on their own terms. The sisterhoods were communities that had been established outside the control of the church hierarchy to meet the needs of women who felt that carrying out acts of charity under the guidance of their parish priest was not enough. Outside of the Anglo-Catholic clergy the calls were for more control over the sisters, usually of an episcopal nature. Such controls were not imposed, and, after the failure of the Park Village community one must wonder if they could have continued their work as successfully under such constraints. William Gresley thought not and stated as much in his 1859 work *Bernard Leslie*,

³⁸⁴ Ibid., p.159.

I mean, they [the bishops] have absolutely no right whatever to interfere with these establishments, anymore than they could prohibit people from being district-visitors, or teaching in schools. Where is the law or custom which gives them the authority or makes their sanction needful? It is one of these matters surely with regards to which each branch of the Church Catholic may make its own regulations.³⁸⁵

The achievements of the sisterhoods, and the rate at which their workloads expanded, were very much due to the nature of their foundation. The fact that they were not constrained by diocesan boundaries or adherence to the control of specific clergymen meant that they could work wherever they were required. This could entail sending a small number of sisters to an area that required their expertise, or establishing convalescence homes, Houses of Mercy, or hospitals far from the Mother House. The way in which the communities were governed allowed for the flexibility that was so crucial to their active work. Carter recognised this when he stated that,

Sisterhoods have...a constitutional, not an absolute government. They are as an army, and, as an army, obedience is their watchword. Sisters go forth as they are sent and act under their Superior. They have thus an utility in action, and this is their strength.³⁸⁶

³⁸⁵ Anson, p.378.

³⁸⁶ T.T. Carter, *Church Congress* 1883, p. 135.

Anti-Catholicism and Opposition

The widespread suspicions about the Tractarians seemed to be confirmed by the secession of Newman in 1845. With their calls for more frequent communion, the introduction of confession, and their involvement in confraternities and religious communities, the so-called 'Puseyites' appeared to be Roman Catholic in all but name. There was intense dislike and distrust of the Anglo-Catholic clergy throughout the Victorian era which reached its peak with the trials and imprisonment of Ritualist clergymen and the passing of the Public Worship Regulation Act in 1874.

Criticism of the Anglo-Catholic clergy often portrayed them as the enemy within, contriving to bring down the established church. This view of the Puseyite clergyman was crucial to assumptions about the sisterhoods. He was habitually placed in the role of instigator, convincing impressionable young women to join religious communities unbeknownst to their parents and guardians. Pamphlet literature that attacked the sisterhoods exhibited an apparent reluctance to criticise the women themselves, and the assumption was that they were too naïve to understand the perils of joining a religious community. Defenceless Victorian ladies were being deceived into joining sisterhoods by the hidden enemy, the traitors within, the Roman Catholics in all but name.

One sisterhood received more than its fair share of opposition and lurid accusations. Lydia Sellon's Society of the Most Holy Trinity, originally based in Plymouth, became the subject of a pamphlet war in 1852 initiated by an exposé of the community by the Rev. James Spurrell. The accusations and denials came thick and fast from Sellon herself, her father and Henry

Phillipotts, the combative Bishop of Exeter, with various clergy offering varying degrees of opposition and support. The initial accusation came from a Miss Diana A.G. Campbell who had left the sisterhood and claimed that she had been subjected to harsh treatment from the Mother Superior who was portrayed as living in luxury. The more Catholic elements of sisterhood life, which Campbell reported, provided ample ammunition for Spurrell's denunciations.

Spurrell began his attack by criticising the parties in the Church of England who were trying to introduce 'their semi-Romish religion among the People.' He presented these parties as underhand and deceptive in the approach that they adopted,

The Romanizers within our Church are now working also through a system most insidiously and artfully contrived,...designed to entrap the wary, and lead them ignorantly forwards till they have made them in reality, if not in name, Romanists.³⁸⁷

This idea of entrapment was a common one in anti-sisterhood literature. The preferred method of encouraging interest in a sisterhood was thought to be through confession, which was portrayed as the means through which the Puseyite clergy were able to spend time with unchaperoned women. This would allow them to glean information regarding their innermost thoughts and then use this intimate knowledge to influence the women towards Rome. While anti-Catholic opposition to the sisterhoods appears to have waned towards the end of the century such opinions about the act of confession remained. Walter Walsh targeted the Anglo-Catholic movement,

³⁸⁷ J. Spurrell, *Miss Sellon and the Sisters of Mercy* (London, 1852), p.2.

and particularly confession as a method of control, in his infamous book *The Secret History of the Oxford Movement* which had sold 32,000 copies by the time of its fifth reprint in two years in 1899.³⁸⁸

Rev. William Morris Colles, who entered into the pamphlet war instigated by Spurrell, suggested that the first step in the journey to Rome was initiated by Pusey, who advised that parents should encourage their children to confess to them before doing so before a priest. This, Colles believed, created the correct state of mind for a desire to confess to a clergyman.³⁸⁹ The daughters were especially at risk as the Puseyite clergyman was able to convince them that confession was not enough, and that their new desire for a more religious life could be fulfilled only within the walls of a sisterhood,

...the principles of Romanism are first taught and practised by the *Spiritual Guide*; the confessional affords a ready way of knowing the secrets of the family and their feelings on this subject; the young lady seeks for peace on spiritual direction, not from HIM who can alone be our Guide and Comforter in all our ways, but from a weak and erring man; she finds no peace, but pain; her home, and her parent, and her sisters, lose their influence; she is altogether changed; the danger of perversion to the Romish principles, taught and practised by the *Spiritual Guide*, is brought forward as a plea for the Sisterhood, and the whole scheme is ascribed to the wonderful working of the providential care of God.³⁹⁰

Colles gave an example of a widowed mother and her daughters who came under the influence of Tractarian clergy; although their actual existence must be questioned, they provided an effective case study. Firstly,

³⁸⁸ Walter Walsh, *The Secret History of the Oxford Movement* (London 1899) Fifth Edition.

³⁸⁹ W.M. Colles, *Sisters of Mercy, Sisters of Misery* (London, 1852), p.5.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.8.

the family had been infiltrated by a Puseyite clergyman who had won over their trust and subsequently betrayed them by removing the daughter from the home. Secondly, the family was without a father or male figure and the women were therefore more susceptible to the cunning of the priest. Thirdly, he made it clear that the daughter did not abandon her family of her own volition. Rather she left because she had been deceived into believing that to do so was the will of God. Colles concluded that a,

daughter once affectionate as a child and a sister, exemplary in all the duties of social and domestic life, useful among the poor of her neighbourhood, beloved and valued by all who knew her, is thus disturbed by spiritual direction, and disturbs the peace of her family instead of finding peace for herself.³⁹¹

The assumption that women could not be called to the life of the sisterhood meant that detractors had to find a way to explain why they would become involved in religious communities. The overtly Catholic nature of the sisterhoods and their open links with the Anglo-Catholic clergy made entrapment seem like a plausible explanation. The anti-Catholic sentiments that were so prevalent in Victorian culture ensured that laying the blame at the feet of the Puseyites would be both profitable and popular for those engaged in pamphlet literature. The sisterhoods could easily be depicted as the servants of the Anglo-Catholic movement, carrying their Romanist message to the working classes and influencing their female acquaintances. 'It is very certain that without the Sisterhoods Tractarianism would never have reached any great extent in England,' asserted one pamphleteer. 'No one unacquainted with the interior working of such

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.7.

societies can imagine how deeply laid are their plans, and how widely their influence extends.³⁹² The sisters, once convinced by the clergy that they were carrying out their work under the will of God, would set out to influence others towards Rome under the guise of Anglicanism.

Thousands of women are scattered all over the country, quietly pursuing their work of proselytism, sometimes secretly aided, but more frequently openly supported by the clergy of the parish. By these "Priests" they are informed as to what cases of sickness and death are in the neighbourhood. Opportunity of gaining admission to family circles is never neglected on these occasions...³⁹³

The charitable work of the sisters that had gained such praise was portrayed as nothing more than a means of corrupting the morals and endangering the spiritual health of vulnerable people. 'There is an almost incalculable mischief caused by allowing such women to gain entrance into families during times of sorrow and bereavement: they always sow the seeds of Popery; that is their business, their vocation, and in most cases it bears abundant fruit.'³⁹⁴ Such seeds were also being sown in their orphanages and schools from which 'girls are sent as governesses to disseminate the moral poison they have imbibed.'³⁹⁵ Always at the forefront of such opposition was the influence of Rome and its attempts to creep unnoticed into the lives of unsuspecting, upstanding, Protestant families. Apparently many 'have been led astray by the prepossessing manners and apparent gentleness of these seemingly holy, but really hypocritical, Romanizers. Let it be remembered

³⁹² *Tractarian Sisters and their Teaching* (London, 1868).

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.13.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.13-14.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.43.

that Tractarians carry in their breasts the cruelty, the bigotry of “remorseless Rome”.³⁹⁶

The suspicion that Roman Catholic motives lay behind the work of the sisters undermined almost any good that they could have done. Henry T.J. Bagge (another pamphleteer who replied in support of the essence, but not the manner, of Spurrell’s initial attack) laid this charge before the High Church Bishop Phillpotts when he questioned his support for the work of the Society of the Most Holy Trinity. He asked if the Bishop of Exeter would ‘assert that the dissemination of errors is a blessing to the country, or that it becomes a blessing by the simultaneous distribution of alms? I suppose not.’³⁹⁷

The framework of Anglo-Catholicism that the sisters felt was necessary to their work was abhorrent to many. Spurrell maintained that the works,

however excellent *in themselves*, and worthy of all praise, must not be disconnected from *the System*...For when it is known that the Orphan Girls have been brought to Confession! When it is remembered, that the Sisters, the Superintendents and Teachers in the Schools and Asylums inculcate, to the utmost of their power, into the minds of the scholars and inmates of these Establishments their own false religious views, their charities at once assume a very different complexion to ordinary ones.³⁹⁸

There seems to have been acknowledgement that the sisterhoods were winning public favour through their acts of charity. Criticism that levelled the charge of Romanism at the sisters was intended to undermine such

³⁹⁶ Ibid., p.43.

³⁹⁷ H.T.J. Bagge, *The Anglo-Catholics of Plymouth* (London, 1852), p.19.

³⁹⁸ Spurrell, p. 40.

support. By casting the reviled Puseyites as the masterminds behind the religious communities one could give the work of the sisters a distinctly sinister tone.

The sisterhoods did, in many ways, lay themselves open to the charges of Romanizing; their mode of dress and the Rules that governed the communities were clearly drawn from Roman Catholicism. What is interesting about the charges is that they did not hold the women themselves as responsible. Rather, critics were prepared chivalrously to forgive the foolish women led astray by the sly dealings of the Puseyite clergy. The Mother Superiors were often the only women categorically criticised but even Lydia Sellon was granted a reprieve by Bagge,

I do not presume to say that Miss Sellon insists on this to effect "covert purposes". I would rather believe that she is an erring sister, and that great enemy has been filling her poor head with "imagination and high things, exalting themselves against the knowledge of God"; and, as an erring brother, I would earnestly and affectionately commend her to the mighty weapons of God, to bring her own mind into captivity to the obedience of Christ.³⁹⁹

It is interesting that Bagge cast himself in the role of brother and implored Sellon to turn from the Popery that was corrupting her.

Such assumptions were a long way from the reality of the sisterhoods which had as little clerical involvement as possible and allowed for funds to help those sisters that wished to leave. But in an atmosphere of anti-Catholicism where the role of women was sharply defined as one that was played out behind closed doors the reality of the sisterhoods was largely

³⁹⁹ Bagge, p.13.

inconceivable. Religious orders were viewed by the majority of English society as intrinsically Roman, there had been no precedent in the post-Reformation Church of England. This immediate association with Rome led to the arousal of suspicions as to what went on behind the door of the convent. There was often a salacious element to such suspicions. For instance the Conventual Enquiry Society reported in 1889,

Thus, a girl who is just growing in to womanhood and is at an age when her mind is most easily deceived, and she does not understand the cravings and instincts of a woman's nature, or of a woman's heart, is called upon to take the last vows...and then the monks and priests possess her for life. Her afterlife is a secret and a mystery to the outer world. Every crime known to earth and hell may be perpetuated; there may be the cry of insulted innocence, there may be the shriek of outraged virtue; it may ring and ring through the walls...and never reach the outside world...⁴⁰⁰

Such reports clearly relied on little investigation: sisters did not cohabit with monks or priests and they were under no circumstances prisoners. Recent research by Susan Mumm has shown that the majority of sisters joined their communities in their late twenties or early thirties, not as young girls. Accounts such as the above appear to be satisfying fantasies about the perverse nature of Roman Catholicism, in much the same way as the semi-pornographic stories concerning Maria Monk in which nuns became pregnant by priests and monks and then had to kill and bury their babies under the convent. Walsh gave a nod of recognition to such stories when he questioned the legitimacy of private burial grounds inside convent grounds,

⁴⁰⁰ S. Mumm, *Stolen Daughters, Virgin Mothers*, p. 193.

In Roman Catholic Convents, it is well known, illegitimate infants, and even sisters themselves, have been murdered and secretly buried. Human nature is the same all the world over, temptation and opportunity are all that is needed to rouse certain natures to do deeds of evil, and though we have heard of no such foul deed as murder in Ritualistic Convents...Depend on it, once the people of England realize that these secret burial places do exist, their just indignation will not be removed until they are closed forever. It is better and wiser to prevent evil and crime, than to cure them after they are committed.⁴⁰¹

Although Walsh did not make any accusations his point is hardly a subtle one.

Fantasies of a sexual nature also surrounded the act of confession with the accusation that the Puseyite clergy 'sneak about and get hold of your wife or daughter, and pour into their ears the most filthy suggestion you can conceive. Your daughter is at any man's disposal after a few such interviews as this.'⁴⁰² The anti-Catholic slant was only part of the opposition, the power that the clergy could wield over unsuspecting females made no sense unless twinned with accepted social norms regarding the role and place of women in society and the nature of their duties in the Victorian family.

⁴⁰¹ W. Walsh, p.192.

⁴⁰² Soltau, *A Letter to the Working Classes*, p.8.

A Woman's Place

The maternal and wifely role was conceived and accepted as the most desirable state for a woman. Celibacy in either sex was contradictory to the ideals of a society which venerated the family unit. Virginity was the preferred state for the unmarried woman but the spinsters, or superfluous women, who remained in this state were objects of pity.

Lack of a husband did not, however, remove the woman from duties within the Victorian family. An unattached woman was expected to care for both her parents until their deaths and then carry out further duties for other members of her extended family. The prevailing sentiment was that a woman had to be under the control of a man and joining a sisterhood was not considered a viable option while there were male relatives who would take the woman into their home.

Women of the upper classes were not often viewed outside the context of the home and family and were rarely seen in public unaccompanied. From 1845 the sisters defied these conventions and became women who operated outside of the domestic sphere assigned to them. Some felt that the work the sisters chose to do was incompatible with their position and sex. Spurrell indignantly noted that it was the practice of the Sisters of the Most Holy Trinity 'to carry out the rule of outdoor work, without any regard to weather; and to be perfectly indifferent as to the nature of work given them to do.'⁴⁰³ This was exactly what the sisters had committed themselves to when taking their vow of obedience. After the length of time spent as a

⁴⁰³ Spurrell, p.32.

postulant and then a novice they were more than aware of the tasks that would be assigned to them once they professed.

The assumption that the sisters were weak-minded women was clearly shown in the literature of the time. This assumption encouraged the belief that the sisters could not govern themselves, or be called into the service of God. Diana A G Campbell, the seceded novice at the centre of the pamphlet war instigated by Spurrell, suggested that the 'whole system, arrangements, and rules of the Institution are masculine, and more suited to young men than to delicate English women.'⁴⁰⁴ There was often an implication of masculinity about women who assumed a public role. This affected the women who ran the sisterhoods more than most because they were also declining to assert their womanliness through the role of wife and mother. Women were expected to be gentle and retiring, theirs' was not to be a public life,

when woman, instead of being a gentle, modest, and most unselfish helper, makes herself a bustling, forward, and in fact inconvenient rival; she must not be astonished to find herself treated as such: When instead of rejoicing in the sacred retirement of her home and the strict privacy of domestic duties...woman will too late discover that she has, as far as in her lay, unsexed herself; lost her present unique social position; come to be regarded only as an inferior type of man.⁴⁰⁵

Where women were clearly governed by other women the explanation had to be the lack of femininity of the female in charge, or that the Anglo-Catholic clergy were controlling activities from behind the scenes.

⁴⁰⁴ D.A.G. Campbell, *Miss Sellon and the Sisters of Mercy* (London, 1852) p.2.

⁴⁰⁵ J.W. Burgon, *A Woman's Place* (Oxford, 1871) p.10.

The misunderstanding that vows entailed obedience to the figure of the Mother Superior, and ultimately to the Anglo-Catholic clergy, led some to believe that the controlling male in the life of a sister was now the priest. In a letter to the Lord Bishop of London in 1854 A.H. Wratislaw suggested that 'when a woman has once made such a vow or declaration, she is no longer a free agent, any more than if she were married. She is, in nine cases out of ten, practically the creature of the priest, just as if married, she is morally and legally bound to obedience to her husband.'⁴⁰⁶

The reality of the sisterhoods, and the nature of the way in which they were governed, was clearly inconceivable to such a patriarchal culture. Property and divorce laws, the low standards of education for women, and the lack of suffrage all corresponded to the role which had been assigned to the women of Victorian England. It was unthinkable that women would choose not to take up this role, their remit was to be wives and mothers and suspicions about women who made a definite choice not to take up their determined role were bound to arise. Such suspicion did not only come from men. Many women had accepted their assigned place and felt it wrong for others to decline to do so. One such woman noted that as 'a natural result of higher cultivation, comes the longing on her part to assert her equality with man, or rather that which she exaggerates into equality, and which leads her to thrust herself into a position which her Maker never intended she should occupy.'⁴⁰⁷ Another set out the absolute natural aim of all women as love and marriage, stating that no 'womanly woman but hopes or wishes to be a mother. Maternity is the second greatest passion of a woman's life, almost

⁴⁰⁶ A.H. Wratislaw, *A Letter to the Lord Bishop of London and The Subscribers of the Church Penitentiary Association* (London, 1854) p. 5.

⁴⁰⁷ *A Woman's View of Woman's Rights* (London 1867) p.5.

equal the first in strength and intensity.'⁴⁰⁸ Here we see the assertion that women who decided to forego being wives and mothers were not 'womanly'.

The role and place of women in society was part of all attacks levelled at the sisterhoods. The Puseyite clergy could corrupt the women who became sisters because they were weak-minded and easily influenced. The work of the sisterhoods was admirable but tarnished by its association with Roman Catholicism and the assertion that it should not be carried out by ladies. The inability to govern themselves properly could mean that the sisters would slip unknowingly into Roman Catholicism. As shown in the views of the clergy, a life bound by vows was not seen as more religious than the acts of charity that a married mother could carry out in her spare time if she felt compelled to do so. 'England,' asserted the pamphleteer Colles, 'knows better [than Rome]; and many of her daughters...visit the fatherless and the widows, the sick and the destitute, the old and the young, while they still do their duty in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call them.'⁴⁰⁹

Much adverse reaction to the sisterhoods was rooted in the inability of mainstream society to understand why a woman would forsake the opportunity to be a wife and mother when she could do so and carry out charitable works. The suggestion that the sisters could do the same work while also fulfilling the traditional roles set down for them showed a distinct ignorance of the degree of work that the sisters actually undertook and, for many, the religious framework that the community gave them. Carter was

⁴⁰⁸ *The True Rights of a Woman* (London, 1869) p.58.

⁴⁰⁹ Colles, p.18.

constant in his attempts to have the life of the sister recognised as an acceptable role for women in Victorian society,

My mind is impressed with the conviction, that within the Church of God, every form of religious life, married or single, at home or in a community, in the midst of the world or in seclusion from it, may find its place and its joys; that the paths of righteousness in Christ once opened...are open still; that the calling of God falls, now on one, now on another, as He ordains, and each in her separate lot, without a thought of rivalry may therein "follow the Lamb wheresoever He goeth."⁴¹⁰

But the only manner in which the role of the sister received a degree of respectability was if it offered a solution to the problem of 'superfluous women'. The sisterhoods themselves were keen not simply to become rest homes for spinsters who had no calling to the work or the religious life of the community. The census of 1851 had shown that there were 500,000 more women than men, with the ratio becoming increasingly unbalanced towards the younger end of the scale. During the second half of the nineteenth century half of all women between the ages of 25 and 35 were unmarried, and half of them would still be so ten years later.⁴¹¹ With so many women available the Victorian male could choose to remain a bachelor for longer, but the very biological role of women meant that the older they were, the smaller their chances of finding a match.

Majority opinion was prepared to condone the sisterhoods if they would serve society in ways that had no relation to the principles and aims of the communities. Essentially this was an 'argument from weakness' that

⁴¹⁰ Carter, *Objections to Sisterhoods Considered in a Letter to a Parent* (London, 1853) p.5.

⁴¹¹ J.S. Reed, p. 192.

suggested that women too unattractive or stupid to marry could be shepherded off to convents.⁴¹² Victorian society found it hard to conceive that women would choose to join a sisterhood entirely of their own volition and therefore assumed that the communities were full of the unwanted and rejected. In his plea in 1862 for the Church of England to look more fully into the idea of sisterhoods Seymour asked whether anyone doubted 'that there are thousands of such women in this country who have no natural duty nor home to hinder them giving themselves to this service.'⁴¹³

Some, for example the anonymous author of the 1868 pamphlet *Tractarian Sisters*, suggested that the 'morbid fear of being considered "old maids"' had 'driven many weak-minded persons into communities, in which all "confirmed sisters" are regarded as "Brides of the Lord".'⁴¹⁴ Such views further illustrated an inability to envisage the sisterhoods outside of the accepted norms relating to women. Often when writing the histories of their communities (usually published around landmark anniversaries) sisters would emphasise the beauty of their founders and remark on their success in high society before joining the community, or mention that there had been rejected suitors. The remark was often made about Harriet Brownlow Byron that when she went begging for scraps with the orphans at the doors of grand town houses she feared that she would bump into former dancing partners. When recording the life of their founder, Emily Ayckbowm, the Sisters of the Church noted that both 'Mr Ayckbowm's daughters were remarkably beautiful – our Foundress especially so – and those who had

⁴¹² S Mumm p. 171.

⁴¹³ Seymour, *Women's Work* (1862) p.18.

⁴¹⁴ *Tractarian Sisters*, p.10.

once seen her never forgot her beauty, for it was not ordinary loveliness.⁴¹⁵ Sisterhoods wanted to ensure that they were not viewed as communities full of women rejected by the marriage market, living as sisters because they could not find a husband.

⁴¹⁵ *Emily H.E. Ayckbown, Mother Foundress of the Community of the Sisters of the Church* (London, 1914), p.4.

Conclusion

From 1845 to 1901 attitudes towards the Anglican sisterhoods changed from the initial fervent opposition to an eventual grudging acceptance. This was not, however, an acceptance of their way of life or the religious motives behind their work, but instead of their existence in English society. Opposition was often motivated by the issues at the forefront of public consciousness. This is demonstrated in the fierce anti-Catholicism of the attacks in the early 1850s at the time of the so-called 'Papal Aggression' when the Roman Catholic hierarchy was restored in England and Wales. From the late 1860s emphasis is placed on the position of women in society (whether female religious or not) which corresponds with the publishing of J.S. Mill's *The Subjection of Women*, and *Woman's Work and Woman's Culture*, edited by Josephine Butler in 1869.

The pamphlet literature which attacked the sisterhoods in this period contained material that would have been relevant and popular when it was published. The authors appealed to the mood of the time in order to sell their works and one suspects that this has much to do with the more sensationalist slant of much of the literature encountered. There were definite trends of opinion regarding the sisterhoods and it is interesting that, aside from their obvious Anglo-Catholic clerical champions, there is little support for them in the literature of the time. This was a trend that continued in the aftermath of the nineteenth-century Anglo-Catholic movement. Although many works have been produced on the catholic revival in the Church of England there is scant mention of the female religious communities.

The lack of reference to the sisters is somewhat surprising when one looks at the literature that attacked them. The contradictions inherent in the anti-Catholic opposition of many of the pamphleteers leaves their denunciations somewhat impotent. The sisters are portrayed as weak-minded and under the control of the Puseyite clergy and yet they were also to be feared. The Anglo-Catholic clergy were depicted as easy to spot, due to their effeminacy and mode of dress, and therefore required the sisters to spread the Romanist message to the unsuspecting. The sisters are represented as being incapable of withstanding the wishes of the clergy that supposedly controlled them. Yet they are also cast as a powerful force with their reputed ability to infiltrate families and influence them. By asserting that the sisters and their alleged cohorts were capable of deceiving good Protestant families the authors of the attacks inadvertently made the Protestant element in the Anglican Church seem weak.

Such contradictions between contempt and fear in the views of male critics reflect the general tone of attitudes towards the sisterhoods. Although the popularity of female religious communities as an alternative to the defined roles for women waned towards the end of the nineteenth century, their resilience in the Victorian period is astounding. Between 1845 and 1900 ten thousand women passed through the Anglican sisterhoods and ninety communities were founded. This was in spite of the extensive opposition that the communities faced and widespread misunderstanding about both their functions and aims.

The sisterhoods challenged the accepted views on how women should function in society, but they were also very much of their time. The splitting

of the sisters into lay and choir orders according to their social status showed that the sisterhoods were supporters of the class divisions that existed in their society. The lack of a government system to deal effectively with the urbanised population coupled with the unpopularity of the poor law gave the sisters the impetus to devote themselves fully to charitable works. For many this was impetus was enough, for others the religious element was paramount. While contesting some of the social norms of the Victorian period the sisterhoods were also very much a product of both the advances and set backs of their age. They were an illustration of how little employment was open to women outside of the working classes but also an example of the desire among women to alter this state. The work that they undertook showed the deficiencies of the parochial system but furthered calls for a non-religious framework to deal with social issues and a different kind of philanthropy from the wealthy of society.

The reality of the sisterhoods was so far removed from the assumptions about them that it is hardly surprising that a vast amount of their work has been largely overlooked. Their contribution to the Anglo-Catholic movement has been remembered in terms of their links to prominent clergymen rather than as expressions of Anglo-Catholicism, a movement that sought to embody moral and pastoral care. The movement also sought to challenge the perceived role of women within the Church of England. Allchin goes as far as to suggest that there was a connection between the start of the women's movement and Tractarianism. Newman was certainly appalled at the way many in the Anglican Church viewed the work of women, stating in *The Church of the Fathers*,

I know not of any more distressing development of the cruel spirit of Protestantism, than the determined, bitter, and scoffing spirit in which it has set itself against institutions which give dignity and independence to the position of women in society. As matters stand, marriage is almost the only shelter which a defenceless portion of the community has against the rude world; - a maiden life, that holy estate, is not left in desolateness, but oppressed with heartless ridicule and insult.⁴¹⁶

The Anglo-Catholic movement accepted and encouraged the work that women could do and the sisterhoods could be seen as an option by women who wanted an alternative to marriage. Florence Nightingale contemplated entering a sisterhood to fulfil her ambitions in nursing. She was certainly in no doubt about the options available to the Victorian woman, writing in a private note of 1851,

Women don't consider themselves human beings at all. There is absolutely no God, no country, no duty to them at all, except family...I have known a good deal of convents. And of course, everyone has talked of the petty tyrannies supposed to be exercised there. But I know of nothing like the petty grinding tyranny of a good English family.⁴¹⁷

Mainstream society did not see the sisterhoods as an alternative to this tyranny, but as an affront to it. At no point in the nineteenth century did Anglican female communities receive any kind of widespread support and condemnation of them continued until the First World War. It was largely the condemnation of a society that was not yet prepared to deal with women in the public forum or Catholicism in the Established Church.

⁴¹⁶ Quoted in Allchin, p.117.

⁴¹⁷ Quoted in Allchin p.115.

Unfortunately, when both became acceptable the sisterhoods of the nineteenth century remained hidden, their works heroically attributed to the slum priests and clergy at the forefront of the Anglo-Catholic movement. While the works of these men should not be ignored the same is true of the contribution that women made to the catholic revival in the Church of England.

The work of the Anglican sisterhoods must also be given further credit given the challenges that they faced from mainstream Victorian society, and the sacrifices and choices that they made for their religious beliefs should not be forgotten. While the society outside of these communities may have been arguing about their utility, many women found in their role as a sister a usefulness that they deemed to be wanting in the traditional role of wife and mother.

Chapter Four

The Guilds

Introduction

In 1851, at the same time as the first sisterhoods were appearing, Shirley Fielding Palmer founded the Guild of St. Alban the Martyr. It was the start of a movement that was to play an important role in lay attempts to live the Anglo-Catholic ideal. Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century hundreds more guilds were formed. Some had specific objects, such as the Guild of St. Joseph of Arimathaea, which worked towards the promotion of and practice of Christian burial; others, such as that of St. Alban, promoted general church work. At a local level, many guilds were founded to assist the clergy in an over-burdened parochial system.

The overall aim of the guild movement was to improve, defend, and promote the Church of England by raising the spiritual commitment of the Eucharistic Community. While the majority of organisations carried out practical work for the Church, it was essential that this was done in the context of a deeper spiritual understanding. The guilds offered a framework for the Anglo-Catholic laity in which active participation in practical church work was supported and motivated by strict devotional activity and the mutual support of fellow members. The guild movement was closely connected to the sisterhoods, even founding some communities of their own, and many of those involved were keen to promote the reintroduction of the communal religious life in England.

Unlike the English Church Union and the Church of England Working Men's Society the guilds did not become involved in the defence of individual members of the clergy and specific ritualistic practices. Rather, they strove to embody the Tractarian ideal that the National Church could be defended against its enemies through a strengthening of its doctrine and discipline. Membership of the English Church Union or the Society of St. Alphege were the means used to defend and promote the ceremonial aspects of Anglo-Catholicism. Within the guilds the emphasis was on the spiritual nature of Anglo-Catholicism and particularly on the importance of the sacraments as a means of preparing members to carry out work for the Church. These organisations provide an insight into the devotional activities of some of the Anglo-Catholic laity and the ways in which this influenced their practical work.

There is unfortunately little evidence relating to the guilds. Often the only evidence of a guild is the mention of its existence in the ecclesiastical press. Most of the information on the small parochial organisations comes from the manuals which were printed for members detailing the objectives and rules of a guild and containing prayers and often a rule of life. These rules were often demanding and required a high level of commitment and implementation in the guild member's life. In 1871 a large number of the guilds came together to form the Church Guilds Union and the conferences of this organisation provide information on what was taking place within the movement as well as revealing what members felt the role and work of a guild should be. The Guild of St. Alban also produced its own newspaper, *Church Work*, which detailed the practical work carried out by a variety of guild associations.

These sources combine to give an insight into the spiritual and devotional life of many of the Anglo-Catholic laity. The guild movement is a testimony to the advancement of Anglo-Catholicism after 1845 and the degree to which it found an audience that was willing to meet the high standards of devotion and self-examination which had been a feature of the Anglo-Catholic movement since the early days in Oxford. Importantly, they also reveal that Anglo-Catholicism in this period was about more than the beauty of holiness and Ritualism. Guild members were required to have an understanding of the spiritual demands of being a member of the Anglican Church beyond an appreciation of forms of worship.

This chapter will not however cover the most famous guild associated with the Anglo-Catholic movement, Stewart Headlam's Guild of St. Matthew. There are several reasons for this omission, not least that Headlam's approach has recently been addressed by John R Orens in *Stewart Headlam's Radical Anglicanism: The Mass, the Masses, and the Music Hall*⁴¹⁸. Established in Bethnal Green in the East End of London in 1877, the Guild of St. Matthew had a very different agenda to that of the guilds investigated in this study. Whereas the focus of the G.S.M. was geared towards the defence of an Anglo-Catholic socialism, the national and parochial organisations investigated here did not have aggressive or overtly defensive agendas and placed an emphasis on the development of personal spirituality. Headlam's organisation was militant and encouraged activities which the Anglo-

⁴¹⁸ John Richard Orens, *Stewart Headlam's Radical Anglicanism: The Mass, the Masses, and the Music Hall*, (Illinois, 2003).

Catholic guilds discouraged, such as attending the music halls and theatre, and as such does not fall within the remit of this study.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁹ Headlam's organisation does merit further examination for comparative analysis of lay personnel. If comparisons were to be drawn between the Guild of St. Matthew and any organisation covered in this study the Church of England Working Men's Society would perhaps be a more fitting contrast.

Organisation

There were three types of guilds which developed in the second half of the nineteenth century. The most widespread were those formed to carry out specific church work within a parish, often under the direction of the local clergy. There were also those of a more general nature, such as the Guild of St. Alban (G.S.A.) which were not rooted in a single parish or diocese and operated a branch system similar to that adopted by the English Church Union. As the movement gained impetus there were also societies formed for members of professions, such as the Army Guild of the Holy Standard and the Guild of St. Luke for Physicians. Organisation was often specific to a society and there appears to have been no definite method applied across the board although many guilds, regardless of type, ensured that there was some kind of probationary period or system to vet potential members.

The Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury had appointed a committee to investigate the parochial guilds and this committee reported in 1887. The committee revealed that it had been its intention to attach appendices to the report, which would have suggested a framework for parochial guild rules and direction. They were, however, forced to abandon these recommendations when it became clear that the circumstances of parishes differed so widely that the committee found it difficult, if not impossible, to make any satisfactory general suggestions.⁴²⁰ The report did remark that one of the common features of rural parochial guilds was that they were more likely to be under the direction of rectors and vicars whereas in the towns laymen held the more prominent positions.⁴²¹ Examination of

⁴²⁰ Convocation of Canterbury, Lower House, *Parochial Guilds*, (London, 1887) p.10.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

the available manuals on the parochial guilds supports this finding and it was a feature which was picked up on by others within the movement.⁴²²

The Guild of St. Laurence in Toot Baldon in Oxfordshire is an example of this type of parochial organisation. Founded in 1876, the guild had a mixed membership and was entirely under the control of the parish incumbent. There is no mention of a governing council and the clergy decided the location and times of all meetings as well as reserving the right to approve all admissions.⁴²³ Another example of clerical direction is found with the Cranbourne Parochial Association that was founded by the Rev. H. G. Rogers. This association adopted a method of organisation which was common in parochial societies where the vicar and his curates adopted the roles of president and vice-presidents. The council of the association was made up of the clergy, the churchwardens, and someone elected from each branch. There was therefore an element of lay involvement in the administration at Cranbourne as all laws adopted by branches had to be approved by the council as a whole. A similar structure was found in St. Mary's Guild of Church Workers founded in Kent by Rev. William Francis Shaw in 1879. Shaw acted as the warden with his curate as the bursar. The structure of many of the parochial guilds was straightforward and consisted largely of a clergyman directing the spiritual and practical work of members. The source material available cannot answer how far clergy founded guilds for their own benefit in an effort to ease their workload in the parish but it is probable that this was the motivation in some cases.

⁴²³ *Guild of St. Laurence, Toot Baldon* (Oxford, 1886) p. 3-4. Even today Toot Baldon remains a tiny village of less than 40 properties with the 13th Century Church of St. Laurence still in use. We could assume from this that the guild must have been a very small one.

Many guilds operated a system of orders for members according to the length of time they had been involved or the amount of work that they wished to undertake. The Guild of St. Alban had set the standard with regard to this type of order-based structure. From the outset the aim of the society had been to evolve into a brotherhood which lived communally but this was something that they hoped would develop naturally, rather than something that the leadership would have to implement. The guild identified two branches of church work; that which took place at a parochial level and general work which benefited the Church as a whole. Members were therefore permitted to enter the guild as either brethren or fellows. The brethren were expected to carry out work within their parish. If enough members of this category existed in one area they were to form themselves into a brotherhood which would annually elect a master. Fellows were members who carried out a more general type of church work. They were expected to meet with other fellows in their district which would generally cover a larger area than a brotherhood would operate within. A steward was elected by each of the districts. The masters and stewards came together twice a year with the provost and warden to discuss the general progress and direction of the national guild. At the annual meeting the provost was elected from amongst the brethren to lead the entire guild.⁴²⁴ Sisterhoods existed with the same type of organisation as the brotherhoods and elected a sister superior to manage their affairs. The sister superiors met annually with the provost and warden in the Court of Superiors and were under the ultimate control of the provost. In this was they differed from the female communities that examined in this study. Unlike the brotherhoods, those

⁴²⁴ G.S.A., *An Appeal* (1859).

wishing to be full sisters could not be married although assistant sisters were permitted to have spouses.⁴²⁵

This was the structure of the G.S.A. until 1867 when the constitution was amended and the role of the fellows altered. Instead of operating as independent members carrying out general church work, the order of the fellows became a novitiate of a year or more for acceptance as a member of the brethren.⁴²⁶ In a statement issued in 1870 by the guild all remaining members acting as fellows in the old capacity were instructed to join themselves to a brotherhood as a novitiate or leave the G.S.A. The view was expressed that the rise of the English Church Union meant that churchmen who were unable to meet the spiritual and practical demands of brotherhood life had a suitable avenue for promoting church defence.⁴²⁷ This is an important point in relation to both the E. C.U. and the guild movement as it suggests lay membership of a group of organisations, each with different goals.

Full membership was not available immediately within the G.S.A. As shall be seen from the spiritual and practical duties of guild members, much was expected and the guilds were not prepared to accept all who wished to join. The provost of the G.S.A. reinforced this point in an address to the London district in 1859 when he remarked that they should be aware that 'not every man, or every man who calls himself a Catholic will be a good Guildsman.'⁴²⁸ The Guild of St. Albans was not the only society to demand

⁴²⁵ G.S.A., *A Statement* (1870) p. 8-10.

⁴²⁶ *Church Work*, Vol. VI (London, 1868) p. 429.

⁴²⁷ *A Statement* (1870) p. 11.

⁴²⁸ *Church Work*, Vol. II (London, 1859) p. 243.

that a probationary period be served to ensure that members were the right sort of Catholics.

The Guild of St. Barnabas was reserved for nurses and midwives who communicated regularly.⁴²⁹ After applying personally to the guild by letter a six-month probationary period was served before full membership could be granted. The guild was governed by a sister superior who was required to have been a nurse for at least five years prior to assuming the post. Elections were held tri-annually. The superior chose her own assistant superior as well as the secretary and treasurer although these appointments were subject to the veto of the council. The council consisted of these positions along with the chaplain general, all of which were ex-officio posts. In addition to this there were eighteen elected members. The chaplain general was appointed by the council which kept clerical involvement to a minimum within this otherwise all-female guild. Other clergy were permitted to become associates of the guild and in doing so had to agree to provide spiritual guidance to any member of the guild that requested it. Honorary members were also accepted and had to engage in some sort of definite work for the benefit of the guild. Clerical associates and honorary members were not permitted to vote on any guild matters.⁴³⁰

The methods by which the guilds were governed, as the report of the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury noted, varied from society to society. The majority were parochial guilds which meant that there was a good deal of clerical direction. This is understandable, especially in small communities where the clergy could, through their guild of church workers,

⁴²⁹ Frequent communicating was a pre-requisite for membership to most guilds.

⁴³⁰ *Manual of the Guild of St. Barnabas for Nurses*, p. 3-14.

organise the necessary supplementary work to bolster the parochial system. Guilds that were lay controlled deemed submission to the clergy to be crucial and it was important that lines of authority within a parish were not crossed. Despite this submission to the clergy there was a strong feeling within the guild movement that it should be an exclusively lay enterprise with opportunities for the clergy to give advice and be associated with societies rather than to control them. The laity had been under-utilised by the clergy and there was a desire to organise themselves independently and demonstrate their importance within the machinery of the Church of England. Some members of the guild movement felt that only by the laity assuming their duties and obligations independently could the Church truly be strengthened from within.

Some guilds were keen to demonstrate that they operated independently of the clergy. In a paper on guild work published in 1877, the Provost of The Railway Guild of the Holy Cross stressed that six railwaymen had founded the society and remained among its managers and promoters. He insisted that the clergy had nothing to do with their guild beyond fulfilling a role as associates.⁴³¹ The Guild of St. Joseph of Arimathaea stated in their rules that they had been formed to aid and assist the clergy in all practices calculated to promote decency and reverence in public worship. But the rules strongly stipulated that they were exclusively lay in membership and leadership and that the clergy were only permitted as patrons and associates.⁴³² Why did some guilds feel a need to highlight their lack of connection with the clergy? In the case of the railway workers, guild there may have been a similar motivation to that of the Church of England

⁴³¹ J.W. Hewett, *Guild Work* (London, 1877) p. 9.

⁴³² *Rules of the Guild of St. Joseph of Arimathaea* (Liverpool, 1866) p. 3-5.

Working Men's Society—that is, to prove that they were not under the control of clergy who had initially persuaded them to become involved in Anglo-Catholicism.

In a speech to the Church Guilds Union in 1872, George Cowell noted that the majority of guilds were parochial with a priest at their head but he insisted that the success of the guild movement would depend upon lay commitment. Cowell believed that in order for a guild superior to have the required authority it was essential that he be elected from among the members and that he be answerable to the same rules and disciplines as those he governed. The guild movement had to be lay in orientation in order to show the obligations of the laity as a whole and the difference that a fulfilment of those obligations could make to the Church. 'If guilds are to do anything towards the happy restoration of discipline in the Church,' insisted Cowell, 'it must be as lay societies, in order that the voluntary resumption of discipline by numerous bodies of laymen bear testimony to its usefulness and practical advantages and thus gradually convince others how much they lose by its neglect.'⁴³³

Cowell raised the issue of stability, a point that was picked up on by other advocates of an exclusively lay-led guild movement. The Honorary Secretary of the C.G.U. also remarked upon stability in a statement of 1874 when he revealed that some of the organisations in the Church Guilds Union had disbanded in the course of the year because of the removal of the clergy at their head. This led him to comment that the clergy should be honoured for their efforts and interest in guild work, 'yet it should ever be borne in

⁴³³ *Church Work*, New Series, Vol. II (London, 1873) p. 175-7.

mind that the work, as in the olden times, is the work of the laity, and laymen should be found, as easily they may, to do the layman's work in the layman's manner.'⁴³⁴

The issue of stability in clerically led parochial guilds was also remarked upon by Sir John MacLean in an 1881 address on the guild movement to a ruri-decanal conference in the diocese of Gloucester. MacLean insisted that it was a grave error to have parish clergymen as wardens and superiors because of the problems identified above. Those guilds under the administration of priests were, he noted, very different to their lay counterparts. 'They are not fraternities working under the bond of brotherhood with earnest, self-denying zeal, animated in one spirit, but retain in their character all the disadvantages incident to difference in worldly rank.'⁴³⁵

There was, then, an aspiration within the guild movement that the motivation to do church work should come from the Anglo-Catholic laity themselves. This is understandable since the movement was aimed at changing and strengthening the Church by enhancing the role of the Eucharistic community. Those parochial guilds that were formed solely to carry out practical church work were perhaps at odds with the more spiritually oriented societies, such as the Guild of St. Alban, which were moving towards a revival of religious orders within the Church of England, but there were also small, clerically controlled guilds that were very spiritually demanding of their members. The varied methods of organisation and the fact that clerically led parochial guilds differed so greatly are perhaps an indication of the nature of the guild movement as a whole. It is

⁴³⁴ *Church Work*, New Series, Vol. III (London, 1875) p. 157.

⁴³⁵ J. MacLean, *Lay Help – Church Gilds* [sic] (Bristol, 1881) p. 7-8.

difficult to categorise the guilds beyond the distinctions made at the start of this section. The movement appears to have been locally generated, with guilds developing to meet the needs and demands of the areas in which they were formed, but operating with a selection of common aims borne out of their shared Anglo-Catholic beliefs. The cohesion within the guild movement is best observed in the practical work and spiritual demands that came with guild membership.

The Spiritual Side of Guild Life

Rev. W. F. Shaw, the warden of the St. Mary's Guild of Church Workers in Kent, gave an excellent summary of the objects and purposes for which his guild was formed in an address of 1889. By forming the guild, he maintained, the members had declared their intention to give themselves more fully to God and to deepen their own spiritual life by drawing upon the helps, privileges, and means of grace of the Church. This would aid them in strengthening and upholding the church through difficulties and dangers and 'to seek to know more of what the Church *is* and what the Church *does*, what the Church *teaches*...' ⁴³⁶ Such a deepening of the spiritual life of members was the most important aspect of the guild movement. Members committed themselves spiritually and this enabled them to be better equipped to carry out the many practical works of the Church. An article in *Church Work* on the realising of the guild life argued that those who joined the guilds voluntarily took on the yoke of Christ and dedicated themselves to serving the Lord. ⁴³⁷

The charitable work of the guild movement was important but the spiritual aspect was always paramount and without it the work that was carried out would be deemed meaningless. Members had to engage in their practical endeavours with the right motivations. The members of St. Augustine's Guild in Warrington were instructed in one of their manuals that they had to pray before undertaking any Church work. ⁴³⁸ During Lent they were instructed to engage in self-examination to ensure that they had not joined the guild as a result of party spirit or sectarianism, but had done

⁴³⁶ W.F. Shaw, *Guild Addresses* (1889) p. 49.

⁴³⁷ *Church Work*, Vol. VI (London, 1868) p. 366.

⁴³⁸ J. Brame, *Suggestions for Lent and Future Work* (Warrington, 1873) p.6.

so to promote the glory of God and ensure the salvation of their souls.⁴³⁹ Those who committed themselves to the guild movement had to increase their spiritual dedication before they could begin to influence others through their practical works.

The warden of the Guild of St. John the Divine in Kennington, Rev. Daniel Thomas William Elsdale⁴⁴⁰, addressed this point when he stated that,

Personal union with JESUS is the only design of all guild association, and it is only by this ultimate oneness of each of our souls with GOD that we can accomplish collectively the blessed works of attracting other souls from the outer world, to within the Church, and so into the mystical embrace of the Trinity of Unity.⁴⁴¹

This personal union with Jesus was to be achieved, or at least pursued, through the spiritual framework provided by guild life.

To demonstrate the high level of spiritual dedication that was required by guilds, members were expected to conduct themselves in a fitting manner. The Victorian age was one of opulence and growing materialism. Such affluence was unacceptable for those connected with the guilds, who were expected to live lives of self-denial and constant self-examination. The instructions given to the Guild of St. John the Evangelist in Upper Norwood⁴⁴² identified the luxuries of the age as one of the main hindrances to the spiritual life. A regulated life was advised as a means to

⁴³⁹ Ibid., p. 2.

⁴⁴⁰ Elsdale was the chaplain of Cuddleston theological college 1864 – 1866.

⁴⁴¹ *Church Work*, new series, Vol. III (London 1875) p. 346. Capitals are from original.

⁴⁴² Upper Norwood lies north of Croydon.

stop bodily comforts from developing into 'softness'. The practice of self-denial would be a reminder that they were bearers of the cross.⁴⁴³

The guilds developed spiritual means to help members resist temptations. At Upper Norwood they met twice every month to re-consecrate and re-pledge themselves to God, amid the distractions of their worldly acquaintances and secular pursuits. Extreme austerity was not required by this organisation but self-mortification was employed to curb impatience and defy the sin of vanity. 'Mortify the desire to shine outwardly, to be accounted clever or brilliant, to become popular,' members were instructed, 'seek to hide away all that is good in *yourself*, all that will make others think highly of you. Stop, tremble at the word of praise. You have nothing of your own to be praised for; everything is borrowed from God.'⁴⁴⁴

Several guilds were keen to enforce the principle of simplicity of dress and restraint in recreational activities. At St. Augustine's in Warrington moderation was enjoined in these areas and members were to live soberly, honestly, and steadily. Women associates were especially warned to be careful in their mode of dress.⁴⁴⁵ St. Mary's Guild in Reading also singled out women with regard to dress and mentioned the destructive nature of vanity in their rules., Vanity was now a sin which women were judged to be able to indulge in 'at a very trifling cost.'⁴⁴⁶ There was even an organisation, the Society of the Apostolic Rule, with the primary object of inducing Christian

⁴⁴³ W. F. La-Trobe Bateman, *Instructions given to the Guild of St. John the Evangelist, Upper Norwood* (London, 1876) p. 25-27.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2-5.

⁴⁴⁵ J. Brame, *S. Augustine's Guild Warrington. Objects of Guild and Duties of Members* (Warrington, 1872) p. 6.

⁴⁴⁶ *The Guild of St. Mary*, p. 8.

women to adopt modest styles of dress, reading, conversation, and expenditure.⁴⁴⁷

The Order of St. Columba warned its three orders (one of which was restricted to the clergy) that they were expected to avoid theatres and balls, as they were 'places of frivolous amusement'. Indulgence in eating habits was also to be shunned.⁴⁴⁸ In 1864 the G.S.A. adopted a Rule of Life which specified how members were expected to conduct themselves. As with the Order of St. Columba, food was to be consumed in moderation. The rule also recommended that members sleep for no more than eight hours a day unless under medical advice to do otherwise. Places of amusement that encouraged vice were to be avoided and amusements were to be used sparingly. All social gatherings were to be avoided on Fridays and fast days and care was to be taken to avoid contact with impurity when selecting reading material and frequenting public places.⁴⁴⁹

Exactly what types of recreational activity were acceptable was a matter for discussion within the Guild of St. Alban, and soon after the new rule was adopted an address was given to a meeting of the London District in an attempt to clarify the issue. Excessive dancing was to be avoided, in order to preserve one's modesty. Dancing was permissible in some circumstances, such as at a children's Christmas party, but sisters were expected to refrain from it at all times. Music halls were to be avoided but a trip to the theatre to indulge in some Shakespeare posed no problem. In fact, the speaker drew their attention to the many actors who could be seen at

⁴⁴⁷ *Church Work*, new series, Vol. IV (London, 1877) p. 251.

⁴⁴⁸ *A statement of the Order of St. Columba* (London, 1870) p. 6.

⁴⁴⁹ *Church Work*, Vol. V (London, 1865) p. 41-43.

some of the leading High Church services on a Sunday.⁴⁵⁰ One correspondent in *Church Work* criticised much of what had been said in the address to the London District and recommended that all members simply asked themselves, 'would I indulge in this if I was living in a community?' This would almost certainly reduce the scope of social activity.⁴⁵¹

Not all guilds exercised such a degree of control over the lives of their members, but there were some requirements that applied across the board. As the nineteenth century wore on, frequent communion became more popular and easier to achieve and it was the most basic obligation of Anglo-Catholic guild membership. Partaking of the Eucharist was a key factor in guild life as highlighted by the Rev. Shaw, of St. Mary's Guild in Kent, who remarked that 'those who partake of the Eucharist are knit more closely together into the One Body.'⁴⁵² Guild manuals often made the point of stipulating exactly how frequently members were expected to communicate. The nurses' guild of St. Barnabas identified monthly communion as the absolute minimum but it expected that members would make every effort to receive weekly.⁴⁵³ The requirements of the G. S.A. were that the Eucharist would be received every Sunday and Holy Day and that a prayer for the intercession of the guild would be said every time.⁴⁵⁴ Rev. Elsdale of the Guild of St. John the Divine expected frequent communion and asked why so many more women could fulfil this task than men.⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 106-110.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

⁴⁵² W. F. Shaw, *Guild Addresses*, p. 44.

⁴⁵³ *Manual of the St. Barnabas Guild for Nurses*, p. 4.

⁴⁵⁴ *Church Work*, Vol. V, p. 41.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, New Series, Vol. 3 (London, 1875) p. 347.

Communicating together was viewed as an act which strengthened both the individual and the organisation, reminding members that they were part of a compact body with a common aim and object.⁴⁵⁶ The importance given to corporate communion was reflected in the number of organisations that, at the very least, required their members to join together on anniversaries and saints' days. The Guild of All Souls expected all members to assist in the service on All Souls' Day⁴⁵⁷. The G.S.A., with a membership that was spread across the country, identified corporate communion as the means through which individuals were knit together into one society. Each local brotherhood or district met at least twice a year to communicate together and the whole body met for services on St. Alban's and St. Andrew's Day. Persistent non-attendance at the local and national gatherings was cause for dismissal from the guild.⁴⁵⁸

Many guilds expected a much greater degree of spiritual commitment than simply regular communion. The Rule of Life of the G.S.A. has already been touched upon, and the G.S.A. was not the only organisation to borrow these guidelines, which were derived from the organisation of religious orders. The Rule was drawn up to let members know exactly what they were obligated to do as guildsmen: failure to follow it could lead to expulsion. The Guild of St. Alban was founded in 1851 and it was not until 1864 that they developed their rule. This was still quite early on in the guild movement and it is probable that later guilds were founded with rules after the example of the G.S.A., which remained one of the most well known organisations. Activities which were not required before 1864 were made mandatory by the Rule. Previously the spiritual side of guild life was shaped

⁴⁵⁶ W. F. Shaw, *Guild Addresses*, p. 88-9.

⁴⁵⁷ *The Manual of the Guild of All Souls*, 6th Edition (London, 1886) p. 7.

⁴⁵⁸ Guild of St. Alban, *An Appeal* (London, 1859) p. 14-16.

by the cultivation of personal holiness, attendance at daily and Holy Offices where possible, and an observation of fasts and festivals. The Rule added the observation of the canonical hours (the division of the day into specified times for prayer) according to the use of the guild. Time was to be spent daily in devout meditation upon scripture and self-examination was to be undertaken regularly, and always before communicating. The directions of the Prayer Book regarding confession and absolution were to be adhered to. No practical work was to be undertaken without first engaging in prayer, while members were to attend an annual retreat if practicable.⁴⁵⁹ These were in addition to the guidelines on general conduct examined above.

Other guilds, including those of a parochial nature, also required that members carry out specific tasks. The G.S.A. Rule applied to all members, including probationers and sisters, but guilds with a system of orders could have a graduated Rule of Life. For example, the Guild of S. Nicholas in Spalding only required that the fourth order (which comprised boys and youths) pray kneeling in the morning and evening; say at least one intercessory prayer for the guild daily; observe Church festivals and attend church on Sundays. The third order was expected to fulfil the above and also engage in intercessory prayer at communion; attend Sunday matins and evensong; and read a few verses of Holy writing daily on which they were to meditate. These were mandatory for the second order in addition to fasting on the first Sunday of every month; self-examination on Fridays; the contemplation of all deeds and thoughts at night; and the saying of grace (at least privately) before every meal. Members of the most advanced order, as well as performing all of the above, carried out daily devotional reading

⁴⁵⁹ *Church Work*, Vol. V, p. 41-42.

which had to include the Bible and the Prayer Book; daily self-examination; the observation of all Church fasts; some self-denial; the saying of the 51st Psalm on Fridays and fast days; and the encouraging others towards holiness through their example.⁴⁶⁰

The Guild of S. Nicolas rules suggest that Anglo-Catholics were able to choose the level of commitment that best-suited their lifestyle. Not all members would have the time, or perhaps the inclination, to follow the Rule of Life drawn up for the first order, but that of the third order was much more accessible. Most rules required a devout use of the sacrament, some level of self-examination and perhaps self-denial, along with daily prayer. Prayer was felt to aid and strengthen guild members in their spiritual and practical efforts. William La-Trobe Bateman, of the Guild of St. John the Evangelist, Upper Norwood, described prayer as the power that embraced everything and that should be the occupation of the heart at all times. He believed that all strength in guild work was achieved through this – the greatest instrument available for the performance of good.

Bateman recounted to his guild a tale of a girl who was on the brink of 'deadly sin'⁴⁶¹ and who was the focus for the intercessory prayer of the guild for a whole month. At the end of this period Bateman came across her on the way to the guild's mission chapel. She informed him that she intended to live a better life and that from then on she would be attending church. 'And she came that night,' he reveals, 'wild and strange she looked, but she came.'⁴⁶²

⁴⁶⁰ G. B. Jameson, *Manual of Rules and Prayers &c., for the use of the Guild of S. Nicholas, Spalding* (Lincoln, 1871) p. 15-24.

⁴⁶¹ From the tone of his story it seems probable that this 'deadly sin' was prostitution.

⁴⁶² Bateman, p.6-9.

In guild work the spiritual was the foundation for all practical work that was undertaken. For Rev. Shaw of the Guild of St. Mary their weapons were 'not carnal but spiritual'.⁴⁶³ Prayer was therefore used not just to strengthen the individual but also the body within which they worked. At a local level this was seen as the guild but it was also a factor in the fortification of the whole Church body. One of the key objectives of guild activity was to support each other through unity. Such mutual support was not a by-product of involvement in the guild but a stated aim. Encouragement between members contributed to the understanding of the Church as the living and growing body of Christ which could be strengthened by the increased dedication of the Eucharistic community. The concept of mutual support was especially relevant in the Army Guild of the Holy Standard which was aware of the difficulties of being openly Anglo-Catholic in the military. The charges of effeminacy, which dogged Anglo-Catholicism, must have made the army an uneasy environment for guild members who were expected to be open and honest about their religious leanings. In a recruitment drive of 1886 the guild listed the benefits which could be gained from membership. These included the means of united prayer and intercession and the creation of a bond of sympathy between members. This support network was to allow them to encourage each other to an outward profession of their faith and the understanding that no man should be ashamed of his religion. The Rule of Life of the Holy Standard instructed them to 'encourage and support one another in the object of the Guild, and to set a good example to all men by leading a sober, upright, chaste, and godly life.'⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁶³ Shaw, p.26.

⁴⁶⁴ *The Monthly Paper of the Army Guild of the Holy Standard*, July 1886 (London, 1886) p. 88.

The object of the guild revealed that mutual encouragement and support were essential to the working of the organisation. Members were expected to 'promote religion in the army by teaching obedience to the Church, and by inculcating that the fear of their comrade, which so often deters men who are religiously disposed from outward profession of their faith, is cowardice and unworthy of a soldier.'⁴⁶⁵ The need to create a structure within which members were granted confidence to profess their faith was also reflected in the prayer of the guild,

Grant, O Lord, that the Brethren of our GUILD may not be afraid to confess the Faith of Christ crucified. Strengthen us manfully to fight under His Banner against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue His faithful soldiers and servants unto our lives' end...'⁴⁶⁶

There was also a need for mutual support outside of the challenging atmosphere of military life. Rather than relating to the profession of the faith, such encouragement was required because of the level of spiritual and practical commitment made by members. It was an intrinsic part of a movement which focused on common aims and work rather than individual efforts. The Guild of St. Mary in Reading stated this in its object, which was to 'arouse members of the Church to a due discharge of their responsibilities, and to associate them together in the common bond of unity.'⁴⁶⁷ The St. Mary's Guild of Church workers in Kent were admittedly a small organisation but their warden pointed out to them in one of his addresses that this was not important. Their strength lay not in their size, but in the

⁴⁶⁵ *The Manual of the Army Guild of the Holy Standard* (London, 1886) p. 31.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁴⁶⁷ Guild of St. Mary, p. 5.

power afforded to them by their unity. 'A small compact machine which does its work thoroughly,' remarked Rev. Shaw, 'is better than a large one which works imperfectly.'⁴⁶⁸ For Shaw the guild existed not merely for the purpose of practical work, or to make beautiful their places of worship, 'but also to be fellow-helpers one of another, to share in and sympathize with the joys and sorrows of our brethren.'⁴⁶⁹

St. Augustine's Guild in Warrington set out its object as the promotion of the glory of God 'through the instrumentality of His Church.' This was to be achieved through members helping each other to acquire the knowledge and information that would make them more efficient instruments for God.⁴⁷⁰ A similar objective was adopted by the Guild of St. Laurence in Toot Baldon, the manual of which described the organisation as a group of people who 'unite together in Christian fellowship with the view of strengthening and encouraging one another in holy living and good works.'⁴⁷¹ The Provost of the Guild of the Holy Trinity deemed mutual aid and encouragement to be crucial to the guild movement, because those who had joined had 'stepped out of the ranks of our fellow soldiers'. They had become a family, joined by the tie of brotherhood, which carried with it the duty to love and support one another.⁴⁷²

The spirit of unity and mutual encouragement which pervaded the guild movement was noted in the report of the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury. The committee remarked upon the fact that guilds of church workers aimed to bring together those engaged in the

⁴⁶⁸ W.F. Shaw, p. 27.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁴⁷⁰ J. Brame, p. 4.

⁴⁷¹ *Guild of St. Laurence*, p. 3.

⁴⁷² *Church Work*, Vol. VI (London, 1868) p. 367.

spiritual concerns of the parish 'in one general knowledge of unity and good fellowship.' This was felt to encourage greater earnestness of purpose and consistency of conduct.⁴⁷³ The concept of unity and mutual aid permeated the guild movement, and reflected the fact that its key concerns were the fortifying of the whole Church by strengthening the commitment of the Eucharistic community. Some of the spiritual demands of guild membership were time-consuming and must have involved a strong loyalty to the Anglo-Catholic cause. Members knew that they were carrying out these actions within a framework of support where co-operation from their fellow members was available. This was a different approach to the defence of the Church from anything attempted by the English Church Union or the Church of England Working Men's Society and it reflected many of the original aims set out by the Tractarians. This spiritual structure of the guilds was crucial to the practical endeavours which Anglo-Catholics hoped would strengthen the Church of England.

⁴⁷³ Convocation of Canterbury, Lower House, p. 5.

The Practical Efforts of the Guild Movement

Active Service

Practical efforts went hand in hand with spiritual commitment and one was seen to strengthen the other. Despite the reforms set in motion by the Ecclesiastical Commissions the parochial system was not proving able to meet the needs of an industrialised and urbanised nation. The guilds therefore endeavoured to supplement the parochial structure. It was essential that this task was carried out under the guidance of the clergy and that guild members had sufficiently prepared themselves through prayer and contemplation.

The manual of the Guild of St. Mary the Virgin, Reading, noted that the 'want of zeal to undertake work for Christ' was a sore evil in the Church. It also acknowledged that it was dangerous for the laity to attempt work which they were not qualified to undertake. This was almost as harmful as no work being done at all and had a tendency to pull to pieces 'what others, with much pain and trouble, have accomplished.'⁴⁷⁴ Guild members were expected to devote time to their work for the Church, and the giving of alms for the poor was not considered as sufficient in itself.⁴⁷⁵ The G.S.A. made this clear in its *Appeal* of 1859, in which the importance of monetary aid was noted, but deemed to be of less value than manpower. It stated that the guild felt that they had work to do, 'a calling, an office in the Church; and that no man can be a living member of Christ if he be not desirous of discharging his duties as such.'⁴⁷⁶ In this approach there is a reflection of the Victorian work ethic that was celebrated in the writings of Thomas Carlyle

⁴⁷⁴ *Guild of St. Mary the Virgin* (Reading, 1874) p. 5.

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.10.

⁴⁷⁶ G.S.A., *An Appeal* (1859), p. 3.

or Samuel Smiles. Carrying out work for the Church was seen as the fulfilment of lay duties which had long been ignored by both the clergy and the laity. An article in the official newspaper of the G.S.A., *Church Work*, in January 1859 recognised the progress made by various religious societies towards more active involvement in the work of the Church of England and gave these developments the title of 'the *personal activity* movement'. This movement acknowledged the need for lay work to support the parochial structure and the importance of personal piety in that endeavour. Subscribing to half a dozen charities was no longer an acceptable way to ease the conscience: personal activity was demanded.

Work we must, and work with our own heads and hands, or we shall see our rewards carried off by others, and learn too late that it is not sufficient to use our own money well, if the still more valuable talents of our time and our personal influence have been left wholly unemployed, or wasted to mere selfish worldly purpose.⁴⁷⁷

This was the call to active service – recognising that being a Christian involved spiritual and practical commitments that went beyond church attendance and the giving of alms.

There were various categories of work in which guild members could become engaged. One of the most widespread was encouraging people to attend church and receive the sacraments. As Frances Knight has noted, there was a prevalent mid-nineteenth century view that the Eucharist was only a rite for the dying, and this was coupled with a fear of being unworthy to receive communion.⁴⁷⁸ Efforts were made by the guilds to dispel these

⁴⁷⁷ *Church Work*, Vol. II (London, 1859) p. 193-195.

⁴⁷⁸ F. Knight, *Nineteenth-Century Church*, p. 53-56.

beliefs and to promote regular participation in the Eucharist. The Reading guild of St. Mary the Virgin stated in its rules that members were to 'excite an earnest endeavour to keep the Baptismal vow and so to lead a Godly and Christian life'. This was to be achieved through encouraging people to join in public worship and special attention was to be paid to communion because of 'prejudices or unworthy fears about the Eucharist.'⁴⁷⁹

The Eucharist was actively promoted by the guilds but it was often made clear that there was a process of instruction and selection before one could become a communicant. The Guild of St. Laurence requested that members persuade the careless to accompany them to church, promote confirmation, and encourage communion among the confirmed who were 'sober and ready.'⁴⁸⁰ The Guild of St. Alban's promoted baptism, confirmation, communion and regular church attendance.⁴⁸¹ Only certain boys, however, were selected from their night schools to attend classes on Sundays to prepare them for confirmation.

Confirmed communicants were encouraged to attend frequent services and maintain a standard of behaviour befitting of their position in the Church. The Guild of St. Joseph of Arimathaea promoted decency in public worship⁴⁸² and the Guild of St. Nicolas was devoted to the promotion of religious habits in others.⁴⁸³ The period of Lent was a time when the guilds particularly endeavoured to encourage more frequent attendance. This was the case with the parochial guild of St. Augustine, Warrington, which attempted to increase the numbers at the Thursday services in St.

⁴⁷⁹ Guild of St. Mary the Virgin, p. 6-8.

⁴⁸⁰ Guild of St. Laurence, p.5.

⁴⁸¹ G.S.A., *An Appeal* (1859) p. 15-17.

⁴⁸² *Guild of St. Joseph of Arimathaea*, p. 3.

⁴⁸³ G.B. Johnson, p. 3.

Anne's church in the town.⁴⁸⁴ In Lent of 1862 the London District of the Guild of St. Alban organised for daily services to be conducted for businessmen at St. Ethelburga's church in the Bishopsgate area of the City of London. The services took place during lunchtime and were well attended. St. Ethelburga's was in a state of some disrepair and the services led to the formation of a committee for its restoration.⁴⁸⁵

The fitting burial of the dead was another area in which the guild movement was active. The forms of worship used in the burial of the dead were of concern to the Anglo-Catholics and the English Church Union and Anglo-Catholic MP Beresford Hope had mounted a concerted opposition to Osbornes' Burials Amendment Bill. Several guilds were devoted solely to ensuring that reverence was maintained in burials and they often took special interest in the interment of the poor, particularly those who had been communicants. The Guild of St. Joseph of Arimathaea in Liverpool was, as the name suggests, one such organisation. Members assisted in the burial of the dead in consecrated ground, and formed choirs to attend such occasions.⁴⁸⁶ The Guild of All Souls went one step further doctrinally and engaged in intercessory prayer for the dying and for the repose of the souls of the dead. They also provided furniture for use at burials so that they could be conducted in a Catholic manner. Their aim was 'to set forth the two great doctrines of the "Communion of the Saints" and the "Resurrection of the Body."' ⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁴ J. Brame, *Suggestions for Lent*, p. 4.

⁴⁸⁵ G.S.A., *Statement and Appeal* (1862) p. 9-10.

⁴⁸⁶ *Guild of St. Joseph of Arimathaea*, p. 3.

⁴⁸⁷ Guild of All Souls, *Manual of the Guild of All Souls*, p. 4.

One G.S.A. brotherhood, based in Pimlico, London, devoted itself to the burial of the poor. They took up the task in 1856 after discovering that those without funds were buried in an unconsecrated cemetery regardless of whether or not they were Christian. The brotherhood provided the practical accessories for the ceremony such as elm coffins, the transport of the body to the church, a pall for the coffin, and the provision of a choir. Between 1856 and 1862 they assisted in the burial of 150 of the poor of the district.⁴⁸⁸

The work of the guilds revealed the social conscience of the Anglo-Catholic movement and much of the work that they engaged in was carried out among the poorer members of the parish. A large portion of their effort was geared towards education and the instruction provided was not always of a religious nature. Night schools run by guilds would focus on the basics such as reading and writing, while Sunday schools would be held separately to address religious instruction. At St. Mary's in Reading members were advised to provide instruction in subjects that were not available in regular schools, such as music, as well as being expected to assist with the Sunday and evening schools.⁴⁸⁹ Six members of St. Augustine's guild in Warrington ran evening and night schools for the 'lowest class of lads and young men.' There was also a 'ragged' Sunday school which was only open to children who had received no previous religious instruction. These were in addition to a Friday evening bible class at which members also assisted.⁴⁹⁰

The Guild of St. Alban was always keen to report on how its educational efforts were progressing. The night schools which focused on the education of boys and young men were provided by most branches.

⁴⁸⁸ G.S.A., *An Appeal and Statement* (1862) p.7.

⁴⁸⁹ *Guild of St. Mary the Virgin, Reading*, p. 10.

⁴⁹⁰ J. Brame, *Suggestions for Lent*, p. 5-6.

These were usually held twice a week and focused on amusements and basic education with no particular emphasis on spiritual matters.⁴⁹¹ In *Church Work* the branch in St. George's-in-the-East revealed details of their night school. In 1859 they had seventy males, aged thirteen to twenty one, enrolled, of whom thirty-five regularly attended. The branch report noted that their behaviour was initially outrageous but that this was soon addressed. Teaching focused on reading, writing, and arithmetic with some geography, and the branch admitted that little progress had been made in 'Christianisation'.⁴⁹²

The G.S.A. certainly seemed to have some success in their educational work. Some branches ran well-attended reading rooms which were stocked with periodicals. The Provost's address for 1868 revealed that over a thousand girls and youths attended the night schools in the winter of 1868-69⁴⁹³ and this rose to two thousand in the winter of 1871-72.⁴⁹⁴ The branch reports of 1871 detail these successes. The Sisterhood of St. Agnes enrolled 335 girls in their schools and employed some of the attendees as pupil-teachers.⁴⁹⁵ In Teddington, Middlesex, one G.S.A. brother had 130 on the attendance roll and a weekly attendance of 80⁴⁹⁶. The Mission of the Holy Trinity in Shoreditch, London, enrolled an impressive 535 boys and men in their free night school. It is interesting to note that these classes do not appear to have been part of a missionary effort. No attempt was made to encourage those who attended towards confirmation. An example of this is found with the night school of the Brotherhood of St. Barnabas in Pimlico

⁴⁹¹ G.S.A., *An Appeal and Statement* (1862) p. 6.

⁴⁹² *Church Work*, Vol. II (1859) p. 282 .

⁴⁹³ *Ibid.*, Vol. VII, (1869) p.153.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, New Series, Vol. III, (1873) p. 153.

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. VIII (1871) p. 418-19.

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 422.

where of the 135 boys in attendance, only ten were asked to go forward for confirmation. Not all guild members had the time or the abilities required to conduct frequent night schools and for them a range of other general church work existed. For many of the parochial guilds, such as that of S. Nicholas in Oxford, helping out with the choir was a suitable field of church work and no less valued than educational efforts. The G.S.A. provided members with an extensive list of appropriate types of work. This included the visiting of the sick; distributing alms to the poor; and helping orphans. It also advised members to engage in public speaking at both meetings which supported and those which were hostile towards Anglo-Catholicism. Those with professional skills were encouraged to utilise them for the church by transacting business, keeping accounts, and offering advice to religious societies and the clergy.⁴⁹⁷

The Guild of St. Mary in Reading provided no such guidance but noted in its rules that members were expected to use their initiative and be aware that there was always work to be done for the church other than visiting, giving alms, and nursing. At the same time, the rules also remarked that visiting the sick was an ideal way to test the reality of one's motives and the 'earnestness of our love for Christ.'⁴⁹⁸ The St. Mary's Guild of Church Workers in Kent is a good example of the kind of work carried out at a parochial level. The members provided an altar plate for use during communion, a litany desk, book and kneeler, provided coloured stoles, and refurbished the vestry. Members were invited to choose some definite work which they could carry out for the Church and which the guild and clergy supported. The warden of the Guild of Church Workers acknowledged that,

⁴⁹⁷ G.S.A., *An Appeal* (1859) p. 17-18.

⁴⁹⁸ *Guild of St. Mary the Virgin, Reading*, p. 10.

though they had only achieved small things for their parish, everything helped in the beautifying of the Church.⁴⁹⁹

St. Vincent's Guild in Cowley, Oxford, was another which expected members to engage in whatever work presented itself. They were asked to perform such good work 'as shall best tend to promote the greater Glory of God, and spread the Catholic Faith.'⁵⁰⁰ As has been shown, the work carried out did not necessarily have to be charitable in the traditional sense. The beautification of the Church was a valid avenue of work for guildsmen. The G.S.A. recognised the contribution that could be made through artistic endeavours and encouraged members to produce stained glass, illuminate books, decorate churches and oratories, and create musical compositions.⁵⁰¹

One guild devoted itself entirely to such work. The objective of the Artists' Guild, formed in association with Rev. A. J. N. MacDonald, was to erect an oratory in which the doctrine and ceremonial of the Catholic faith could be fully artistically represented. *Church Work* announced its formation in 1875 and gave details of its objectives which attracted correspondence accusing the guild of focusing on 'limited and local' work. MacDonald replied that he did not feel their work to be in any way limited. He was anxious to induce those with artistic ability to devote a portion of their talent to the service of their Church. 'I do not propose to make the religious observances burdensome,' commented MacDonald, 'nor do I wish the time of the guild to be taken up with the saying of offices &c. I want the "Artists' Guild" to be eminently practical and to convince the world...by the

⁴⁹⁹ W.F. Shaw, p. 21, 76-77.

⁵⁰⁰ *Manual of the Guild of St. Vincent* (Oxford, 1870) p. 3.

⁵⁰¹ G.S.A., *An Appeal* (1859) p. 18.

testimony of the senses, that the catholic faith is beautiful.⁵⁰² The Artists' Guild is an illustration of the way in which many of the guilds simply wanted the laity to give what they could of their practical abilities to their church.

⁵⁰² *Church Work*, New Series, Vol. III (1875) p. 387-88, 407.

Women's Work

It is difficult to ascertain from the manuals and rules of parochial guild how many women were involved. There is no point in speculating at these figures although it is acknowledged that Anglo-Catholicism attracted a large female following for whom frequent church attendance was an easier task than for men. As has already been established in the study of the sisterhoods, female attendance was much higher than male and the practice of upper-class women visiting and carrying out charitable work was an established one in the Victorian age. In 1876 the Church Guilds Union reported that there were 155 local societies affiliated to the C.G.U. Of these sixty-five were mixed, sixty were for men and boys, and thirty were for women and girls. Of the thirty-three general societies identified ten were mixed and two were for women.⁵⁰³ One of the largest general societies, the Guild of St. Alban, was for men only with an associated sisterhood attached. Not all guilds joined the C.G.U.; for example. The Guild of St. Helena for female relations of those in the armed forces was not affiliated. Nor were the vast majority of the sisterhoods through which around 10,000 women passed in the nineteenth century.

Many of the parochial guilds appear to have been mixed and some identified specific work for women which were in keeping with Victorian notions of appropriate female roles. The Guild of St. Augustine suggested that the most appropriate work for women was administering to the sick, carrying out needlework for the poor, and encouraging sobriety.⁵⁰⁴ *A Church*

⁵⁰³ *Church Work*, New Series, Vol. IV (1877) p. 330-331.

⁵⁰⁴ J. Brame, *Objects of the Guild of St. Augustine*, p. 10.

Work article in 1869 specified visiting and church decorating to be the activities most befitting of women.⁵⁰⁵ A later article in 1874 suggested that females also had an important role to play in improving the position of Anglo-Catholicism in light of the passing of the Public Worship Regulation Act,

It is the influence of catholic ladies living in the world, and moving day by day in the society of men and women mostly opposed to us, but whose opposition generally being founded on prejudice would gradually melt away before the delicate influences which educated women can bring to bear on anything they are interested in. Our opponents never tire of twitting us with the number of female followers; but let us act on the hint thus given and employ the fair contingent in every suitable way open to us.⁵⁰⁶

The suggestion that women could be used as some kind of secret weapon is an interesting one although the information from the manuals would suggest that the guilds were very much of their age and accepted common Victorian assumptions as to the kind of practical work that was suited to women.

⁵⁰⁵ *Church Work*, Vol. VII (1869) p. 555-556.

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, New Series, Vol. III, (1875) p. 173-4.

Clerical Obedience

There was a tendency for smaller parochial guilds to be founded and headed by the clergy. Indeed, obedience to, and support of, the clergy were important features in all guilds. Compliance with the local clergy was essential regardless of whether the clerics were Anglo-Catholic or not. The guild workers were not necessarily trying to engage in evangelical mission work, they were attempting to supplement and support the parochial structure. It was recognised that undermining clergy who did not share their approach to doctrine would not further these aims.

Rev. John Brame, chaplain of the Guild of St. Augustine, revealed that he had been reluctant to become involved with the guild initially because he did not want to appear to be part of a 'movement' within the town.⁵⁰⁷ He warned members that they should help all clergy and insure that they did not become embroiled in party issues,

No member of the Guild shall in any way hinder the work of his parochial clergyman or attempt anything like making proselytes from the congregation of one church to that of another; on the contrary, the object of every one of us should be, as far as we can, to strengthen the hand of our own clergymen.⁵⁰⁸

Brame's instruction to help parish clergy heartily and honestly is echoed in the literature from other guilds. All work was to be carried out

⁵⁰⁷ Brame, *Objects of the Guild of St. Augustine*, p. 3.

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p.8.

with the support and sanction of the local clergy. This involved submission to their authority as was highlighted in the manual of the Guild of S. Nicholas, Oxford, which advised members of its Second Order to aid the clergy in their parochial work while making sure that they did not encroach upon the special duties of the clergy. There was a legitimate place in the Church of England for the lay work of guilds but only if they acknowledged and submitted to the clergy of every parish in which they operated. Such submission, maintained the G.S.A., was consistent with their position as laymen.⁵⁰⁹ As heads of the local brotherhoods, the masters had to report all proceedings of their organisation to the clergy if they requested this information. In their *Appeal* of 1859 the Guild of St. Alban's revealed that they aspired to nothing 'but to provide the Parish Priest with a well-disciplined band of auxiliaries ready to act under his command and eager to be employed by him in such work as laymen may properly engage in.'⁵¹⁰ In the same year an article in *Church Work* reiterated the obligation of all brothers to conduct their work under their clergyman and added that in all things, 'the Priest's counsel and consent must be sought and his authority reverences, [sic. revered] even when opposed to the feelings of the Brother.'⁵¹¹

Guilds were keen to emphasise that they were lay workers and therefore the servants of the clergy. There were not aspiring to take away the duties of the clergy; on the contrary there was a recognition on the part of guild members that the clergy had so much to do that they needed support of their congregations.

⁵⁰⁹ G.S.A., *An Appeal* (1859) p. 3-4.

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁵¹¹ *Church Work*, Vol. II (1859) p. 227.

Church Views on Lay Work

The guild movement grew out of the recognition that the laity had a duty to work for their church, both spiritually and practically. This was particularly relevant in the second half of the nineteenth century when the parochial system was widely regarded as inadequate. Lay work for the church was not something exclusive to Anglo-Catholicism, and across the Church of England there was a realisation that greater co-operation was needed between the clergy and their congregations. The Church Congresses that took place from 1861 give some insight into how Anglicans believed the matter of lay work should be approached.

The relation of the clergy and laity was discussed at the Cambridge Church Congress, November, 1861. The Rev. George Venables gave an address in which he acknowledged that some of his fellow clergymen were alarmed at the idea of collaboration and feared that the laity would try to usurp the functions of the clergy. He determined that the way to remedy this was to define the labours which were appropriate to each, all the while bearing in mind that scripture implied the subordination of the laity to the clergy. Laymen would have to work under the instruction of their clergy since Venables believed that lay members who worked without clerical guidance created the impression that there had been some disagreement with their clergyman. Without co-operation he believed that there was a strong tendency for lay work to end up causing more harm to the Church than good.⁵¹²

⁵¹² *Church Congress, 1862*, p. 140-141.

Archdeacon Denison was present for the discussion which ensued, and commented that he considered the laity to have been severely under-utilised. 'The clergy should not be so arrogant,' he remarked, 'and the laity would be more disposed to assist them.'⁵¹³ At the Congress the following year, Mr. Edward Akroyd was keen to stress that the laity should also shoulder a portion of the blame. They needed to be called to action by the clergy but this was by no means an easy task,

Christians in the nineteenth century, placed in easy circumstance, are generally speaking a comfortable, money-making, money-loving race, luxurious in their houses and style of living. Their religion wears an air of Sunday respectability, and is not to be used on ordinary occasions or allowed to disturb the even tenor of their lives.⁵¹⁴

The type of Christianity identified by Akroyd was exactly what the guilds were trying to move away from. For the guilds, life as a member of the church brought with it a greater level of commitment than simply showing face on a Sunday. As the guild rules demonstrated, some level of self-denial in everyday life was also expected.

At the same Congress the Rev. T. J. Rowsell agreed that there was a degree of idleness on the part of the laity, and especially men, regardless of the fact that many clergy were seeing growing attendance and numbers of communicants. He identified the reluctance of the laity to go any further than these basic commitments. Rowsell suggested that the best method of co-operation and lay-work was for each local area to meet the particular

⁵¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

⁵¹⁴ *Church Congress, 1863*, p. 86-90.

demands of their parish and did not recommend the creation of national associations.⁵¹⁵

In 1868 Thomas Turner addressed the Dublin Church Congress on the growing number of lay religious societies that were in operation by that time. Turner stated his support of voluntary religious organisations but admitted that there were those who questioned their efficiency and the fact that they were not under Episcopal control.⁵¹⁶ He maintained that the majority of religious societies were of a genuine Church character but questioned the efficacy of various lay organisations competing for the same work rather than co-operating. This amounted to a waste of manpower and pointless expenditure of funds.⁵¹⁷ Turner had a valid point, rivalry between lay church groups was only to be expected in a national church so divided by party sentiments.

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 91-94.

⁵¹⁶ This had also been used as an argument against the Anglican Sisterhoods of the period.

⁵¹⁷ *Church Congress, 1868*, p. 25-28.

Difficulties

The Guild of St. Alban was the first of the organisations in the guild revival, and its work was pioneering. Many of the early difficulties they faced were recorded in the pages of their organ, *Church Work*. Perhaps because of their unique position they experienced greater problems than those guilds that followed in their wake. Some of this may have been related to the ambitious nature of their undertaking as a national organisation. They seemed to be more than willing to admit that their early efforts were not entirely successful, as was indicated in an appeal of 1859, eight years into their existence,

Do not despise us for our small show of results but bear our burden with us. We have had to contend with difficulties, discouragements, failures, errors, inseparable in great measure from the comparative novelty of our undertaking: but we have not lost heart, and, though we dare not boast, we have by no means worked in vain.⁵¹⁸

It is clear from the branch and district reports of the guild that not everyone was meeting the standards laid down in the rules and constitution of the G.S.A. The 1858 report of the steward in charge of the fellows of the Worcester Diocese revealed that members were too widespread to ever actually meet. He remarked that some effort was required to 'stir up' members or the work of the guild would fall dead.⁵¹⁹ In the same year the president of the Liverpool sub-district was having better luck with attendance at meetings but was experiencing problems with the members

⁵¹⁸ G.S.A., *An Appeal* (1859), p. 5.

⁵¹⁹ *Church Work*, Vol. II (1859) p.249.

who turned up. Two of these members felt their future with the guild was doubtful because of their work commitments and only one member had supplied the obligatory account of the work that he had undertaken. The president was also finding it difficult to engage their interest in meetings and he commented that it was scarcely possible to persuade them to do anything other than listen to the statements of the chair. He was perturbed by the fact that only half the members had managed to fill one of the minimum requirements of the guild – communicating on St. Andrew's Day. 'I had thought that those who regretted their inability to do general work,' he noted, 'would rejoice in the opportunity of fulfilling this most important, most sacred, and at the same time, easily performed duty.'⁵²⁰

In March 1859, the president provided an update of events in Liverpool. The two members who cited work commitments as the reason for their inactivity were forced to resign and he remarked that this excuse would no longer be tolerated. The pressures of business were, as far as the Liverpool president was concerned, simply being used to mask a lack of will and he was determined to weed out those who did not attend Common Hall or contribute practically to the guild.⁵²¹

This was a problem experienced by the whole organisation and the Provost devoted considerable attention to it in his annual address for 1859. By this point the G.S.A. had only 182 members nationwide and the Provost was prepared to acknowledge that the complicated framework of the organisation was indeed disproportionate to its administrative needs. Increasing their numbers was pointless if the men who were admitted were

⁵²⁰ Ibid., p. 265

⁵²¹ Ibid., p. 263-66.

not prepared to accept the duties, obligations, and level of commitment that membership entailed. The Provost insisted that greater caution was to be employed when enrolling members and that, in the past year, more men had been removed than in previous years. Along with the Warden and the brethren he was well aware that there were men in the guild, 'who, too lightly admitted in the first instance, have been but incumbrances [sic.] since.'⁵²²

The intended purge of the Provost does not seem to have been entirely successful. The Nottingham District Steward's report for 1861 complained of continued irregular Common Hall attendance.⁵²³ In 1863 the Steward of the London District reported that five members had left due to neglect of duty.⁵²⁴ Due to extreme laxity in the efforts of the probationers and fellows it was necessary to reiterate their duties. They were asked to remember that men joined the guild to live a life of a higher standard than the ordinary Christian, and only urgent necessity should keep them from their responsibilities.⁵²⁵ An editorial in *Church Work* in the same year took issue with the character that the anniversary festivals had taken on, and noted that fewer and fewer members were attending. Some branches were failing to send any representatives, and the day itself had become a general holiday 'with Guild colouring'. The day was not about sightseeing and the religious nature of the festivals should be paramount.⁵²⁶

With these difficulties facing branches across the country it is not surprising that, in 1864, the organisation decided to abolish the role of the

⁵²² Ibid., p. 292-295.

⁵²³ Ibid., Vol. IV (1862) p. 128.

⁵²⁴ Ibid., p. 392.

⁵²⁵ Ibid., p. 520-21.

⁵²⁶ Ibid., p. 401-402.

fellows as general church workers and instead make it a probationary period for admittance to the brethren. After 1865 the reports from the G. S.A. are much more positive and the organisation went on to instigate the foundation of the Church Guilds Union. As we have seen, the level of the commitment which the Guild of St. Alban's expected from members was exceptionally high. One member's correspondence in *Church Work* reveals that the work which they were expected to do could cause anxiety. Under the signature of 'Frater Ignotus' a member revealed his concerns over acting as a godparent to children. He revealed that this was a task that he was frequently asked to undertake, and one that the guild encouraged, but the duties were many and important.

Perhaps I am able to visit the poor child's family after the baptism once, not always that and seldom oftener, if I do, the sad conviction is forced on me, that, humanly speaking, the chances are against any of these good things coming to pass. If I don't act as sponsor I'm told that many children remain unbaptised. What am I to do? I speak for several in like straits. Am I to go on as present, feeling each time I kneel at the font, that the solemn charge of the Church to the sponsor is as far as I am concerned a farce?⁵²⁷

It is apparent that the correspondent is genuinely trying carry out his guild duty and ensure that as many children as possible are baptised. Yet in acting as their sponsor he is aware that he is unable to carry out the obligations that accompany the role and which, as a religious man and guild member, he takes very seriously. There must have been many other members who also found it hard to live up to the high ideals of the G. S. A.

⁵²⁷ Ibid., Vol. II (1859) p. 254-255.

The experience of membership of the national Guild of St. Alban, with its complicated framework, was very different to that of parochial guilds. Members of the national guild were expected to give accounts of their work, and the demands on their time were great. The parochial guilds, on the other hand, seemed better suited to meet the needs of their local area. Many were attached to a single parish and clergyman, and their members would therefore be unlikely to experience difficulties in attending meetings. The records of many parochial guilds have not survived, and it is hard to ascertain what sort of difficulties they faced. One of the most obvious hindrances would have been the removal of the clergyman who headed the organisation, and this was at the centre of many of the calls for an entirely lay-led guild movement. The G.S.A. identified as one of their key difficulties the failure of members to show the commitment necessary to carry out their work to the standard required to support the parochial structure. They believed that they had devised a solution to this problem.

The Desire for Religious Communities

The leadership of the Guild of St. Alban wanted to move towards the creation of communities of lay workers. This was a contentious issue within the guild movement since the guilds had been heralded as the way to utilise the untapped potential of the laity. There was an emphasis on the duty of ordinary communicants to carry out work for their church. The potential of members of the Church with families and secular commitments to contribute to church work and become better Christians was crucial to the guild movement. The call to active service entailed working within society rather than removing oneself from it. Why then did the G.S.A. feel communities of workers were necessary? Certainly the sisterhoods were an excellent example that such work could be done. But, as examined in the first chapter, they were at their most successful when their foundation was spontaneous. The Park View Sisterhood founded by Pusey and others as a memorial to Robert Southey had failed, whereas those sisterhoods set in motion by women such as Emily Aykbowm, achieved success.

There had been no comparable achievements among male communities so why did some within the G.S.A. promote the idea that communities would be a better option for church work than the general laity? An article in *Church Work* of May 1862 addressed this question. Yes, acknowledged the writer, the constitution of the guild said it was a lay society, but what prevented them from formulating rules for a body of laymen who could 'wholly free themselves from the world' in order to give themselves entirely to the 'glorious service of God without a single reservation.' There were laymen who devoted themselves to the work of the

church but they tended to retain their former habits and associations. Such problems would not arise if there was a body of regular religious.⁵²⁸

Marriage was considered to be one of the major obstacles in the work of the laity. Married men, stipulated the *Church Work* article, could not give themselves completely to church work without neglecting the responsibilities that came with married life. It remarked that the worker for the church 'will find that every atom of his power is needed by his work, and that he will cripple it grievously if he adds to it the cares, sorrows, and anxiety that are inseparable from the married state under its happiest aspect.'⁵²⁹ The article also criticised women who lived in communities without vows and put forward the claim of many of an opponent of Anglo-Catholicism – that these women were likely to end up marrying the curates that they worked alongside. It concluded that the real devotion and perseverance needed could only be expected of those who could give themselves completely and irrevocably to God.⁵³⁰ The issue of marriage was also picked up on by the Master of St. Dunstan's brotherhood, a male community of the G.S.A. which ended in failure after attracting only three full members. He commented that the temptations of married life to indolence and self-pleasing were too strong to be resisted except by the chosen few. Married men, he noted, had neither the time nor the energy to bring the nation back to Christ.⁵³¹

This contradicted the approach of many of the guilds who worked under the assumption that a laity with increased spiritual commitment and

⁵²⁸ Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 91-93.

⁵²⁹ Ibid., p. 128.

⁵³⁰ Ibid., p.127-131.

⁵³¹ Ibid., Vol. VIII (1871) p. 470.

mutual support could carry out the work of the Church. Such an approach to marriage also raises questions about the suitability of married clergymen to carry out their duties. There were Anglo-Catholic clergy who opted for celibacy, such as Lowder and Mackonochie, but many of the leading figures such as T. T. Carter and J. M. Neale were married with families. The view that religious communities were the answer to the ills of the parochial system was not a popular one outside of the Guild of St Alban. The president of the Church Guilds Union was keen to stress the importance of the lay guilds in a speech made in 1872. He acknowledged that the restoration of the common life for women had successfully moved out of the experimental stage. The guild movement was not something separate to these efforts but another phase of this common life. 'Less pronounced and valuable in one direction, the ascetic, they are perhaps likely to be more influential in another...by the continued daily influence of their members in the various ranks of society which they are called upon to move.' The C.G.U. president was keen to stress that the guilds were as much a part of the 'common life' as religious communities and that they were every bit as valuable.⁵³²

Guilds were concerned with carrying out the work of the Church in the way that suited the individual; hence, the many organisations with several orders, and the duties of the Christian were the same whether they were carried out through a guild or a religious community. Rev. D. Elsdale, the Warden of the Guild of St. John the Divine, Kennington, London, did not believe that the merits of the two approaches were equal. He contended that religious orders were not the most effective method of achieving the unity

⁵³² Ibid., New Series, Vol. II (1873) p. 39-40.

with God which should be the aim of all Christians. The best way to influence the church and the world was from within. This was an opportunity afforded to guild members but not those in religious communities 'who having given up social intercourse with the world can only influence her from without.'⁵³³

This concept of influencing the church and society from within was a strong one in the movement and was reflected in frequent instructions in guild manuals to lead by example. Members were expected to encourage temperance and humility through their own daily actions. This was part of the Anglo-Catholic understanding of the Eucharistic Community as an example to others. Guild members strived to be a group of communicants who were fit to receive the Eucharist and demonstrated this in their everyday lives through their work for the Church.

⁵³³ Ibid., New Series, Vol. III (1875) p. 345-46.

Ritualism and Defence

It was not necessarily the case that those who were Anglo-Catholics were also Ritualists. It is too simplistic to draw a line after the departure of Newman to Rome in 1845 and assume that the seeds sown by Tractarianism became Ritualism. One of the most interesting characteristics of the guild manuals is the lack of emphasis on advanced ceremonial. Time and again they stress how the guilds are Catholic but Ritualism is rarely mentioned. The Society of St. Alphege had as its sole aim the advancement of ritual but they appear to have been the only organisation to focus completely on ceremonial. The objects and rules of the parochial guilds focused on the importance of baptism, confirmation, and the Eucharist; of temperance and living a sober and Christian life; of supporting fellow guildsmen and strengthening the Church. The guilds, like the sisterhoods, were not formed in a reactionary or defensive spirit but as pro-active organisations working for the Church.

Their idea of Church defence was very different from that of the English Church Union or the Church of England Working Men's Society. While the guilds were clearly Anglo-Catholic, 'party spirit' was not something that they promoted. Rev. J. Brame of St. Augustine's Guild published the *Objects of Guilds and Duties of Members* in 1872 when anti-Anglo-Catholic sentiment was strong. Brame stated in his manual that he had been wary of becoming involved with the guild organisation and did not want to be associated with 'movements' within the town. He further stressed that the spiritual element was crucial in times of controversy over Church matters. Churchmen, he insisted, should not rely on 'numbers, nor

successful lawsuits, nor powerful associations, but on Him who is ever present in His Church, and moveth among the golden candlesticks thereof...' He also highlighted a point that seems obvious but that few vocalised during the controversy over ceremonial when he remarked upon the 'uncharitableness, and thorough want of religious tone' in many of the letters in newspapers and speeches discussing church matters. It is a charge that could be levelled at both high and low churchmen. The rules of St. Augustine's Guild were formulated, according to Brame, to avoid taking on any sectarian, congregational, or party character.⁵³⁴

The guild members were obviously aware of the accusations that would be directed at them in an era when Anglo Catholicism was extremely unpopular. There was a need to defend their position from the inevitable criticisms as John William Hewett of the Railway Guild of the Holy Cross did when he was compelled to state that,

We do not aim on the Guilds at any revival of medievalism; the thing were as undesirable as impossible. We do not aim at reviving any modern party aim; we are Church of England men to the backbone; for the Church of England we are anxious to work: being Church of England men we are of course Catholics, but we have not a particle of sympathy with Rome when she is un-Catholic...⁵³⁵

At the Conference of Church Guilds in 1873, which resulted in the formation of the C.G.U., the provost of the G.S.A. addressed the assumption that the guilds were part of the defensive wing of the Anglo-Catholic movement. He made clear that the guilds had not risen up to do battle

⁵³⁴ J. Brame, *Objects*, p. 3-6.

⁵³⁵ J. W. Hewett, p. 7.

defensively, and gave an excellent definition of the guild movement as 'the natural growth of healthy religious life, as the sweet fruit of Sacramental seed,' rather than having been formed 'with any notion of combating the course of political events as they affect religion.'⁵³⁶ The guilds were not concerned with defence or the promotion of Ritual. This was illustrated by the abandonment by the G.S.A. of the original function of the fellowship, that of carrying out general work, because it was felt that the sort of men who were attracted to it would be better served by E.C.U. membership. Defence of the Church of England was to take place through the appropriate organisations and not the guilds. This was not to say that there was not a role for the guildsmen during the crisis surrounding the Public Worship Regulation Act. *Church Work* published a guide detailing the actions that members could take. Educated men were expected to write to their MPs and bishops if their clergyman was prosecuted. Guildsmen were informed that their oratories could be the only places where Anglo-Catholic worship could be carried out if the crisis deepened and the guide suggested that they should be active in preparing these private chapels.⁵³⁷

There was no concerted aggressive defence mounted in the light of the Public Worship Regulation Act, and the G. S.A. maintained that the best form of Church defence continued to be organising church resources and making them available for her work in the world.⁵³⁸ The official organ of the Guild of St. Alban was keen to stress that the use of ritual had, in some cases, become excessive and this had led to vigorous and dangerous attempts to put down the practice. Advocates of extreme ceremonial had to accept some of the blame for the backlash that they faced. *Church Work* remarked that one

⁵³⁶⁵³⁶ *Church Work*, New Series, Vol. II (1873) p. 38.

⁵³⁷ *Ibid.*, New Series, Vol. III (1875) p. 227.

⁵³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 232.

could not presume that a man would 'accept instantaneously a series of dogmatic statements to which he has [been] long and consistently opposed.'⁵³⁹

In the aftermath of the P. W. R. legislation the G.S.A. suggested another method to combat ceremonial disagreements – laity and clergy discussing their differences. They advocated the formation of parochial associations to bring clergy and disgruntled parishioners together to talk about their problems. These associations carried out similar church work to the guilds but did not necessarily expect the same level of spiritual commitment. The G. S. A. suggested that his approach would bind the clergy and the laity together and avert any coldness that might develop between them.

Rev. Herbert Goodenough Rogers of Cranbourne, Dorset, formed such an association when concerns were raised about his use of ceremonial. Firstly the parishioners, assistant clergy, and Rogers met to discuss the content of the services and the general work of the church with opportunity for each to voice any anxieties. By the second meeting differences had been ironed out and a parochial association was formed which, Rogers stated, would allow the clergy and the laity to 'mutually counsel and assist each other in those charitable and religious lessons which are by all Christian rule common to both.'⁵⁴⁰

Recognition that the majority of guilds were much more devoted to church work and increased levels of spirituality than ritualism finally came

⁵³⁹ Ibid., p. 173.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 232-33.

in 1887 with the report of the findings of the committee appointed by the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury to investigate parochial guilds. It reported that considerable superstition had been attached to the movement because of its connections with Anglo-Catholicism but concluded that, 'although undoubtedly the credit of resuscitating these institutions belongs to a special school of thought among us, there is nothing whatever in their constitutions and main objects which may not be eagerly welcomed by all schools.'⁵⁴¹

⁵⁴¹ Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury, p. 4.

Anti-Guild Sentiments

The fear of the Romanisation of the Church of England by the Anglo-Catholics ensured that the guild movement was regarded with suspicion. The revival of organisations which many associated with medieval Roman Catholicism inevitably attracted criticism from staunchly anti-Catholic Victorian England. The guilds did not engage in the defence and promotion of overt ceremonial and much of their work was not about gaining converts to Anglo-Catholicism. As was also demonstrated through the reactions of nineteenth-century society to the sisterhoods, there was a belief in the sneaky 'Puseyite' clergy who tricked the young and vulnerable into becoming involved in Romanist practices. The guilds were treated no differently and their formation and work was viewed with great suspicion.

Unsurprisingly, the Church Association was no great supporter of the guild movement. In 1880 they published an article by Rev. George Warburton Weldon, vicar of St. Saviour's, Chelsea (from 1869 to 1881), in which he attempted to explain the guilds to the interested Low Churchman. Weldon acknowledged that if the guilds were indeed formed to create better Christians then they deserved the sympathy and support of all in the Church. He also admitted that those involved with the organisations were honest and sincere people and that the guilds did achieve some good. However, he then proceeded to describe the movement as one of obsolete and discarded ceremonies, unauthorised ritual, and the adoption of Romish formularies. Weldon informed his readers that a good proportion of the activity of the 300 existing guilds was concerned with prayers and intercession for the dead. He concluded that the guilds were first introduced by pagans and then borrowed by the papacy until,

The Reformation swept them out of the Church; and now, after lying quiescent for more than three hundred year, they are galvanised into existence. I will leave you to judge whether Guilds were rightly or wrongly discarded and whether, as they are now carried on, they tend to deepen spiritual life or to destroy it.⁵⁴²

Rev. Weldon had obviously failed to do his research on several points. There were guilds that engaged in intercessory prayer but it appears to have been something that largely took place in guilds which were specifically devoted to Christian burial,⁵⁴³ and it made few appearances in the rules of organisations dedicated to general church work. His critique predictably paints a picture of the guilds as part of the movement promoting advanced ritual, and buys into the common anti-Anglo-Catholic assumption that honest and sincere people had somehow found themselves involved with Popish mischief.

The guilds were something of a mystery to the Low Churchman. At a Church Association conference in 1873 on 'Sisterhoods, Guilds and Retreats' the speaker addressing the subject (a Mr. Bateman) admitted that he knew very little about them. This perhaps served the view that Anglo-Catholics were secretive with regard to their activities. Bateman went on to explain that these organisations were part of the conspiracy to Romanize the Church of England and he observed (incorrectly) that the Guild of St. Alban had been founded by the notorious ritualist, Alexander Mackonochie.⁵⁴⁴

⁵⁴² G. W. Weldon, *Guilds* (London, 1880) p. 1-12.

⁵⁴³ Such as the Guild of All Souls.

⁵⁴⁴ *Church Work*, New Series, Vol. II (1873) p. 131-2.

In 1869, the G. S.A had come under attack in Northampton where a series of letters to the local paper denounced the devious tactics of the organisation. One correspondent in the *Northampton Herald* complained that *Church Work* was,

surreptitiously but regularly laid upon the table in the reading room of the Religious and Useful Knowledge Society, for the perversion, no doubt, of some of the younger but unwary members of the society...By what right do these young people of the Guild obtrude themselves upon members of the Useful Knowledge Society, by endeavouring to force their tenets upon them, and act as decoys for the young...These injudicious young men who have set up their own altar with its crucifix and censer.⁵⁴⁵

Again the assumption is that youth and naivety were the key characteristics of guild members and that deception was the favoured form of recruitment.

An article by Edward Hayes Plumptre, professor of pastoral theology at King's College London, on the G. S. A. appeared that year in the *Contemporary Review*. He made a valid criticism of the organisation when he remarked upon the contrast between 'the vastness of conception and the poverty of results'. This was a point that the provost of the guild had himself made ten years earlier.⁵⁴⁶ Plumptre also assumed that the main feature of their work was a devotion to ritualism, which was not the case.⁵⁴⁷ But guilds like the G. S. A. did insist upon the wearing of robes when meeting and this cannot have helped to ingratiate them to Victorian society. The use of intercessory prayers for the dead contradicted the Thirty Nine Articles which stated that the belief in purgatory and the invocation of the saints were not

⁵⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. III (1869) p. 381-2.

⁵⁴⁶ See page 29.

⁵⁴⁷ *Church Work*, Vol. II (1869) p.193-195.

permitted in the Church of England as they were repugnant to the Word of God.

Anti-guild sentiments were consistent with the general criticisms levelled at the Anglo-Catholics, despite the fact that many of the organisations did not have overtly ritualistic programmes and openly questioned extreme ceremonial. The guilds must have appeared to some as evidence that Anglo-Catholic clergy were devious and controlling. The sight of a clergyman surrounded by a band of workers, sometimes with their own chapel, can have done nothing to dispel these thoughts. Despite the work done by the guilds they were considered to be part of the entire controversy of Ritualism and this is hardly surprising considering how contentious an issue this was in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Conclusion

The guilds committed themselves to the improvement and defence of the Church through the increased spirituality of the Eucharistic Community. They were concerned with corporate spirituality and the work of the group rather than the achievements of individuals. For this reason emphasis was placed upon spiritual and practical duties that were carried out with the support of fellow members. The myriad of organisations involved in the guild movement approached the work of the Church differently and some placed more emphasis upon spiritual duties. Regardless of where the main focus of a guild's work lay, the spiritual and practical elements complemented each other.

The nature of the guild movement meant that small groups could form to address the specific problems of their district in much the same way as the sisterhoods. There is thus no typical example of a guild. The Guild of St. Alban was certainly the first but it did not represent the structure of the majority of organisations. As a national guild with a developed system of government the G.S.A. differed from the small parochial guilds that were springing up across the country. While no one guild can be held up as typifying the movement there were certain themes which were common across the spectrum. Many of the guilds were formed to facilitate a corporate spirituality which encouraged participation, unity, discipline, devotion and the leading of an exemplary life. Active participation was crucial and one was expected to devote time and energy to spiritual and practical commitments that would improve both the church and the local community. It was not acceptable simply to give charitable donations; some effort had to have been expended.

Through these actions the Church was to be strengthened as her members led by example and brought others into the Eucharistic community. The power of the laity was to be utilized through their increased participation in the work of the Church. It is therefore difficult to gauge the success or failure of the guilds. In many cases they were transitory organisations which operated while certain members of the laity and clergy inhabited the same area, or while there was a specific need that had to be met. The guilds, moreover, focused much of their attention upon developing the spiritual lives of their members, and this is something that cannot be measured. Interestingly, the fact that the guilds did not use aggressive evangelical tactics led to the charges that they were “sneaky” organisations attempting to infiltrate the Protestant Church of England with continental Catholicism.

There has been a tendency among historians to focus on the defensive aspects of nineteenth-century Anglo-Catholicism, particularly in relation to the Public Worship Regulation Act. The guilds were not part of this defence of the Anglo-Catholic position and their achievements cannot be measured in relation to it. Within the guild movement there seems to have been an acceptance that defensive work was to be carried out through the appropriate organisations – such as the English Church Union – and not through the guilds. This is illustrated in the decision made by the G. S. A. in 1864 to abandon the original function of the fellow because it was felt to be too similar to that of an E.C.U. member. Fellows who did not want to assume the new probationary function of the role and eventually become Brethren were instructed to join the Church Union.

The activities of the guilds also demonstrate that Anglo-Catholicism was not just about Ritualism. Many of the guild manuals make no reference at all to ceremonial and its use, and the advancement of ritual was not a feature of guild work. The exceptions to this were the Guild of St. Alphege, which carried the sole aim of the promotion of ritual, and the various associations that promoted the use of Catholic ceremonial in burial practices. Parochial guilds formed to carry out work in their parishes do not appear to have been overtly ceremonial, and many encouraged members to work with clergymen regardless of their doctrinal position. This would not have been an easy task if the promotion of advanced ritual had been a key feature of their work. Clerical obedience certainly was a key feature, despite the lay orientation of the movement. There was no desire to work independently of the clergy but there was a wish to be self-governing. Members wanted the approval and guidance of the clergy because their concern was to supplement the parochial system, not to replace it.

So much of the literature concerning Anglo-Catholicism has focused upon the political struggle which the movement faced and the defence which was mounted. These are important aspects of the Anglo-Catholicism of the nineteenth century but, in contrast to this, the guilds provide some insight into how the laity responded to Anglo-Catholic teachings. At the heart of the guild movement was the Anglo-Catholic ideal of the Eucharistic Community, the body of Christ, strengthened by the sacraments and operating in the spirit of unity and mutual support. The laity was the force behind the guilds as they sought to enact the ideals of Anglo-Catholicism. They were also a reflection of the age. The second half of the nineteenth century was a time when great secular organisations, such as the trade unions, developed and this fact was not lost upon the participants in the guild movement. As one

member of the Guild of St. Alban's remarked at the Conference of Church Guilds in 1872,

The age of confederations, of unions, clubs, public companies, and co-operative societies must of necessity be an age wherein religion, should she fail to utilize the principle of association, would be putting herself at a great disadvantage.⁵⁴⁸

⁵⁴⁸ *Church Work*, New Series, Vol. II (1872) p. 60.

Chapter Five

Robert Brett and Alexander James Beresford Beresford Hope; Lay Patrons of the Anglo-Catholic Cause⁵⁴⁹

The mid-nineteenth century was a time of extensive church building. Through privately funded projects, two prosperous Anglo-Catholic laymen, Robert Brett and Beresford Hope, were able to construct churches which reflected their understanding of Anglo-Catholic forms of worship. The laity and clergy of the Church of England responded to the reports of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and attempts were made to provide a place in the national church for everyone in the rapidly expanding population. For lay patrons such as Brett and Hope there was a greater incentive than taking religion to the masses. Building their own churches meant that they could exercise control over the type of worship practised and ensure that it conformed to their understanding of Anglo-Catholicism.

This chapter will focus on two Anglo-Catholic laymen who acted as church builders and patrons of the movement. Brett and Hope have been chosen because they demonstrate the wide range of religious opinions that existed within Anglo-Catholicism. One was a family doctor and committed ritualist, the other an MP married to the sister of a Prime Minister, and a staunch critic of advanced ceremonialism. They were equally committed to providing buildings in which Anglo-Catholic worship could take place

⁵⁴⁹ For an excellent introduction to 'the Engagement' see Colin Matthew, 'Gladstone, Evangelicalism and "The Engagement"', in *Revival and Religion since 1700, Essays for John Walsh* ed. Jane Garnett and Colin Matthew. Also of note is David Thompson, 'The Christian Socialist Revival in Great Britain: A Reappraisal'.

unhindered. Brett and Beresford Hope were not men to be thwarted by the disapproval of local communities or the episcopacy, even if this meant engaging in considerable financial or, in the case of Brett, personal risk.

These two figures were not the only lay patrons of the Anglo-Catholic movement, but they are men who were vocal and passionate about their church building schemes and who communicated with the episcopacy, and penned pamphlets and books. Other contributors to the church building projects appear, such as Richard Foster whose wealth contributed to the Haggerston Church Scheme, or Henry Tritton who donated £30,000 to the construction of All Saints', Margaret Street, and financed the magnificent Gothic chapel at Lancing College. These men worked with Brett and Beresford Hope but did so quietly and sometimes anonymously and therefore information on them is hard to find. Brett and Beresford Hope are excellent examples of the practical problems faced when building an Anglo-Catholic church, and the motivations behind these structures.

Robert Brett – the Lay Pope of Stoke Newington

Introduction

During his forty years in London, Robert Brett's campaigning for the Anglo-Catholic cause earned him the moniker 'the Lay Pope of Stoke Newington'. It is not clear whether this was a title bestowed with affection or resentment, although it probably varied according to the person using the term. Examination of his position within the community, and his actions as a church builder and patron, leaves the distinct impression that either is possible. Brett was intimately involved with the erection of seven churches across Stoke Newington, Shoreditch, and Haggerston and took on duties that ranged from writing the begging letters for funding to acting as a trustee and patron. Church building was not the only work which Brett engaged in for the Anglo-Catholic movement. He was a vocal member of the English Church Union, a frequent speaker at the Church Congress meetings, an advocate of the penitentiary and guild movements, and the author of many devotional works. T. W. Belcher published a biography of Brett which, as was common with many Victorian biographies, is close to hagiography but provides interesting information about his personal life and snippets from his correspondence that was destroyed after his death.⁵⁵⁰

Brett, who had ran a medical practice in Stoke Newington and had a large family to support, had no private fortune to put towards church building. Belcher reveals that his friends at times questioned his failure to put money aside for his wife and children while he gave so much to the Church. Robert

⁵⁵⁰ T. W. Belcher, *Robert Brett (of Stoke Newington) His Life and Work*, 2nd Edition (London, 1891).

Brett was a promoter of the Anglo-Catholic movement from his arrival in London in the mid 1830s until his death (before the passing of the Public Worship Regulation Act) in 1874 and research into his endeavours reveals him to be an interesting character.

His second wife, Maria⁵⁵¹, commented that Brett was 'as meek as a lamb in most things; but for his children or his Church he is a lion.'⁵⁵² His correspondence with A. C. Tait, Bishop of London, certainly seems to support his wife's assessment. Brett supported the Six Points of Ritual⁵⁵³ and expected them to be put into practice in the churches with which he was associated. This level of ceremonial was not acceptable to Tait but Brett seems to have been incapable of compromising on any issue relating to ritual practice. One curate was transferred out of London diocese because of Brett's insistence that he defy the wishes of his Bishop.⁵⁵⁴

Brett is therefore a fascinating character to explore—a medical practitioner who whole-heartedly adopted the Anglo-Catholic cause and was determined to ensure that it was accepted by the public. His commitment to the movement was single-minded, and he was unwilling to accept the authority of an episcopacy he judged to have failed the laity of the Church of England.

⁵⁵¹ Brett's first wife died soon after giving birth to their son, leaving him a widower at 24.

⁵⁵² Belcher, p.30.

⁵⁵³ The Six Points are the Eastward position at the altar; altar lights; unleavened bread; the mixed chalice; and incense.

Religious Position

Robert Brett believed the Church of England to be a true Apostolic Church, and he presented his views on the Church at the 1872 Church Congress at Leeds in a paper entitled *Church Comprehensiveness*. He maintained that the English Church was, 'identical in doctrine and principle with the ancient Catholic Church of this realm. No new church was established at the Reformation, but the Church sought to deliver herself from the intolerable usurpations of the Papacy and from those corruptions and excrescences which had accumulated in the course of ages.'⁵⁵⁵ The Church of England met Brett's doctrinal and spiritual requirements.

The Oxford Movement and its leaders had first aroused Brett's interest in Anglo-Catholicism and from the late 1830s he was acting as a spiritual counsellor to young Anglo-Catholic men taking holy orders.⁵⁵⁶ In 1840 he began corresponding with Pusey from whom he obtained spiritual advice for both himself and his patients.⁵⁵⁷ He also sought Pusey's advice when he contemplated taking holy orders.⁵⁵⁸ From the mid-1840s Brett was also in communication with Henry Manning. It was to him that Brett turned for advice on how to reconcile his professional life with his commitments to the Church. For example, he asked whether, as a medical man, it was permissible for him sometimes to work on Sundays.⁵⁵⁹ Brett was keen to

⁵⁵⁵ *Church Congress* (Leeds, 1872), p. 261.

⁵⁵⁶ Belcher, p. 7.

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 7 & p. 34.

⁵⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 44. Belcher states that Brett abandoned this idea long before his death but does not reveal if this was an avenue that appealed to him for a considerable period. It would not be unreasonable to assume that Brett was drawn to the idea of becoming a clergyman as he devoted a considerable amount of his time to the spiritual aspects of his religious life and was an enthusiastic writer of devotional literature. It is possible that he may have been deterred from following this course because of the possibility of low wages and the fact that he had a large family and an established medical practice.

⁵⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

make acquaintance with the leading lights of the movement and showed a determination to understand the full spiritual implications of being an Anglo-Catholic.

These relationships were not one sided and Brett seems to have been held in high regards by prominent figures within the Anglo-Catholic movement. This is shown in the decision of members of the secret lay group known as the Engagement, the group of High Church men (including Gladstone) who came together for an 'engagement of discipline'⁵⁶⁰, to invite Brett to participate. Unlike the other members of this elite group who were bound to it through family and social ties, Brett had come to their attention through his reputation as 'a medical man near London of great Piety and Charity.'⁵⁶¹

The second wave of secessions to Rome in the early 1850s worried Brett. He was particularly troubled by Manning's conversion to Rome in 1851. He became convinced that if the hierarchy of the Church of England did not allow for more ceremonial, the numbers converting to Roman Catholicism would only increase. His acquaintance John Beck remarked in his diary on 19 September 1850 that, although Brett maintained pleasantries, 'he is often heavy-hearted at the desertion of those whom he has loved and looked up to as the champions of the Church in this her day of need and peril.'⁵⁶² After the departure of Manning, Brett wrote a moving letter to his former mentor describing his reaction to the decision,

⁵⁶⁰ Colin Matthew, 'Gladstone, Evangelicalism and "The Engagement"', in *Revival and Religion since 1700, Essays for John Walsh* ed. Jane Garnett and Colin Matthew (London, 1993) p. 119.

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 124. The comment was made by A.H.D. Acland (T.D. Acland's cousin) to Gladstone on Brett's joining the Engagement.

⁵⁶² Quoted in Belcher, p. 56.

Beneath this heavy and mysterious stroke of our Heavenly Father's hand, we would bow in meek submission, but, at the same time, we may be permitted an affectionate farewell. Wherever you may be, you will retain the love of all who knew, and profited by your teaching and example, for whatever motives may have drawn others aside, none will doubt that the highest and purest motives alone have influenced yourself... Accept my grateful acknowledgements for all past kindness. I would fain cry Oh, that it could be as in days past! But this cannot be; therefore God's will be done and may he give us steadfast and upright hearts.⁵⁶³

This was not the last time that Brett would confront such painful breaks. The vicar of St. Matthias's converted to Roman Catholicism not long after the church had been consecrated. When Brett learned that Manning's brother-in-law, Henry Wilberforce, was about to leave the Church of England, he hastily contacted him and invited him to contribute to the efforts in Stoke Newington.⁵⁶⁴ Brett evidently felt that if Wilberforce observed the Anglo-Catholic ideal in action in Stoke Newington the attraction of Rome would wane for him. There was no similar crisis for Brett and he was happy to remain within the Church of England, despite the departure of friends. However, his preferred ceremonial did go beyond that of many of his generation, who had been largely influenced by early Tractarians who had placed no great importance upon ritual.

For Brett the term 'Ritualist' was a positive one which accurately reflected his religious outlook. In a letter to his friend George Augustus Selwyn, the Bishop of Lichfield, he described Ritualism as 'the natural sequence of Tractarian teaching', which found its expression in the revival of what he termed 'hearty' services. 'The ritualist movement,' he commented, '

⁵⁶³ Ibid., p. 57. Letter reproduced by Belcher in entirety.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 81.

is nothing more than the onward sweep of the great tidal wave of life which the spirit of the living God is pouring over Christendom, and which will assuredly overwhelm all who try to stay its progress.⁵⁶⁵

Ritualism then, was the next phase of the Anglo-Catholic movement for Brett, and he maintained that the canon law and formularies within the Church of England allowed for its legitimate expression. At an English Church Union meeting in the 1860s,⁵⁶⁶ Brett asserted that the heritage of the Anglican Church showed that the grandest ritual that they could possibly want was there for them to claim.⁵⁶⁷ He was, however, rather vague about exactly where the ceremonial that he advocated appeared in the ornaments rubric. In speaking before the 1872 Church Congress, he gave himself licence to go beyond what the Prayer Book explicitly permitted by stating that the ornaments rubric was,

the mind and law of the Church, and as expressed in the Royal Proclamations and other documents, it is the mind and law of this Realm. But I hold that this and the other Rubrics were never intended to be precise or exhaustive, but illustrative of the principle to be followed, exhibiting the leading features of a ritual capable of expressing and setting forth the doctrines of the Church.⁵⁶⁸

The level of ceremonial which Brett was prepared to accept and promote went further than that endorsed by many Anglo-Catholics of his generation⁵⁶⁹. This does not mean that he was extreme; there were many who advocated a level of ritual that went far beyond Brett's somewhat liberal

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 127. Letter reproduced by Belcher in entirety without date.

⁵⁶⁶ Belcher does not provide the exact date.

⁵⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

⁵⁶⁸ *Church Congress* (Leeds, 1872), p. 262.

⁵⁶⁹ For instance Beresford Hope and Gladstone.

interpretation of the ornaments rubric. He refused to receive the more extreme Ritualist *Union* newspaper and explained that this was because of their adoption of 'principles which compel conscientious men to withdraw their co-operation.'⁵⁷⁰ He also accepted that many of the difficulties which faced Anglo-Catholics in the 1860s and 1870s were largely of their own making, and were the 'fruits of indiscretion'.⁵⁷¹

Ceremonial was important to Brett because he, along with many others, felt that this was the appropriate way to worship God in a Catholic and Apostolic Church. For him the beautification of God's house and the use of ritual to express beliefs and doctrines were crucial aspects of Anglo-Catholicism. Brett considered ceremonial to be so integral to the Anglo-Catholic understanding of the Church that a failure to implement it within the Church of England would result in a further exodus of Anglo-Catholics to Rome. He remarked to the Bishop of Lichfield that 'to stigmatize the Ritualists as Papists in disguise is the very way to make them such in reality.'⁵⁷² He believed that men like Manning and Henry Wilberforce would have remained if the Church of England embraced the ceremonial that belonged to her.

The Public Worship legislation which was to cause so much outrage within the Anglo-Catholic community came into force soon after Robert Brett's death. It was an act of Parliament which he did not live to experience but which he had been predicting for many years. In 1865, when anti-ritualist feeling was running high, Brett published *An Appeal to Churchmen on the Dangers which now Threaten the Church*. This pamphlet shows how acutely

⁵⁷⁰ Belcher, p. 87.

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 162. Quotation from undated ECU meeting.

⁵⁷² *Ibid.*, 127

aware he was of the dangers that faced the Ritualists. It also becomes apparent that he considered the Anglo-Catholic movement to have no united front to stand against the attacks coming their way. In 1865 membership of the E.C.U. stood at under two and a half thousand and the organisation was not yet under the leadership of Charles Wood.⁵⁷³ Brett was convinced that legislation was about to be introduced in the House of Commons to curb and restrict ceremonial.⁵⁷⁴ He suspected that 'legislative measures of a downward, negative, and destructive character are in course as preparation, and fierce conflict is hastening on which cannot but result in serious evil to the Church, unless her faithful sons take heed before it is too late.'⁵⁷⁵

There were further warnings for his fellow Anglo-Catholics. Churchmen had to remember how 'the fairest cause may be ruined, and the most devoted labours foiled, by the effect of internal divisions. It is not a time when individual predilections or personal antipathies ought to influence the minds of men who are earnest in a common cause.'⁵⁷⁶ This is just one example of Brett's desire to be actively engaged in practical work for the Church. It is a desire which is no where more apparent than in his efforts to promote and raise funds for the building of Anglo-Catholic churches.

⁵⁷³ See Chapter Two. Within ten years these numbers had increased by more than ten thousand.

⁵⁷⁴ There had been rioting as early as 1859 at the church of St. George's-in-the-East.

⁵⁷⁵ *An Appeal to Churchmen on the Dangers Which now Threaten the Church*, cited in its entirety in Belcher, p.96.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid. Brett here highlights the point made elsewhere that the Anglo-Catholic movement was not a united one with a common aim.

Church Building and Patronage

The Church of St. Matthias

On 13 June 1853 the Church of St. Matthias in Stoke Newington was consecrated by C. J. Blomfield, Bishop of London. Among the clergymen who preached at the service were John Keble and F. D. Maurice. The *Churchman's Companion* noted that the church was full, with many forced to stand, and that around five hundred attendees communicated. The paper reported that the, 'proper psalms and canticles were most effectively sung by a full choir of Gregorian chants, and the character of the Choral service throughout was one of earnest simplicity and beauty.'⁵⁷⁷

This was a proud day for Robert Brett, who remarked that for 'twelve years I have struggled here with the worst of difficulties, but a Christian with his eye straight on his object, can do anything.'⁵⁷⁸ Brett had in fact been working towards constructing a church in Stoke Newington for longer than twelve years. He first been in touch with Blomfield to raise the issue in 1839. Brett's interest in church matters in the area began in 1837 when he took on the role of superintending the Sunday School at St. Mary's. Soon after he persuaded the rector, who was initially unsupportive, to allow him to found a Sunday evening lectureship for which he secured the service of John Jackson, headmaster of Islington Grammar School and later the Bishop of London. Jackson became a close friend to Brett and godfather to his son.

⁵⁷⁷ *Churchman's Companion*, Vol. VIV, p.70. Quoted in Belcher, p.66.

⁵⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

In 1839 Brett wrote to Blomfield regarding the provision of another church in Stoke Newington and questioned whether it could be financed through the Metropolitan Church Fund. Why Brett determined that Stoke Newington needed another church at this time is unclear. In the years to come the population of Stoke Newington was to increase considerably as the main body of London engulfed such suburbs, but even as late as 1861 the census return put the population at only 6,607.⁵⁷⁹ Blomfield highlighted this in his reply, informing Brett that he could not encourage him to expect any aid from Blomfield's Metropolitan Churches Fund. 'The population of the parish is not so great as to require our interference,' he remarked, 'while there are parishes & districts each containing ten, twenty, thirty or fifty thousand souls, for which we have not been able to make a definite provision.' The bishop further questioned why Brett had cited the needs of the poor in the area as justification for his application for funding. It was his understanding, Blomfield observed, that the parish of Stoke Newington 'contains a smaller number of poor, in proportion to its entire population, than most other parishes in the suburbs of London.'⁵⁸⁰

Despite the bishop's insistence that there were other parishes in greater need, Brett continued in his efforts to erect a second church in the area. He had made little headway by the end of the year. Blomfield wrote again to Brett on 26 December 1839 complimenting him on his efforts and expressing disappointment that he had not met with more success. He suggested that it would take time for Brett to win over his opponents and

⁵⁷⁹ See <http://homepages.gold.ac.uk/genuki/mdx/StokeNewington/StokeNewingtonHistory.html>.

⁵⁸⁰ *Blomfield Papers*, Vol.21, ff 43-44.

added that the whole process might be made easier if Brett ceased insisting that the new church be constructed so close to St. Mary's.⁵⁸¹

Why would Brett want to build the new church so close to the existing one and what was the reasoning behind his efforts at this time? Unfortunately, because Blomfield's papers contain only copies of the letters which he sent, and not those he received, one can only speculate. Brett's biographer also sheds no further light on these early attempts at church building. Blomfield clearly believed that the size of Stoke Newington and the number of poor in the area were not valid reasons for the construction of another church out of the reserves of the Metropolitan Churches Fund. If Brett truly wished to accommodate and provide for the lower classes within the Church of England there were worthier candidates for his efforts than the small and relatively wealthy suburb in which he resided. It thus seems that Brett simply wanted a church in which his ideals of Anglo-Catholicism could be carried out.

The Peel Act of 1843 made it easier to form new churches with attached ecclesiastical districts and this in turn gave Brett renewed hope of a second church in Stoke Newington. He again corresponded with Blomfield who confirmed that, if means could be found to construct the church, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners could endow it out of property belonging to the prebend of the parish, with patronage lying with the bishop. He warned Brett that under such an arrangement there would be no contribution made

⁵⁸¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 23, ff 51.

to the costs of the actual building.⁵⁸² Brett had to wait until 1848 before the church of St. Matthias was endowed by the Commissioners.

This news was delivered to Brett in a letter of 22 April 1848. It explained that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners would make £100 per annum available as soon as the minister was appointed and licensed. A further £130 would be added to this once a room was made available for divine service and a final yearly sum of £150 would be released once the church had been consecrated.⁵⁸³

It is worth noting at this point that, although Brett was at the forefront of this project and also of a later scheme in Haggerston, he was by no means acting alone. It was certainly not Brett's money that funded the church of St. Matthias, although his contacts certainly helped. Similarly, one man could not carry out all of the administrative tasks that accompanied the venture. Belcher provided a list of those who were also involved with him in the venture. However, this list does not note their professions, and although some effort has been made, little can be found out about the individuals. In the history of the Anglo-Catholic movement, a great many of the laymen who devoted time, money and effort to its promotion have been forgotten. Those who helped to raise the funds for St. Matthias's were messrs Browne, Burt, Charrington, Charlesworth, Detmar, Dickinson, Fabian, Hall, Heathfield, Jarvis, Mackreath, Porter, and Reynolds. Along with John Beck, Richard Foster, James Taylor, W. Twells, A. Witherby, and Walter Witherby,

⁵⁸² Belcher, p. 50. Letter reproduced by Belcher in entirety. Belcher states that the author of the letter is Dr. Selwyn, Bishop of Lichfield, but George Augustus Selwyn did not hold this position until 1868. At the time of the letter, Selwyn was the Bishop of New Zealand and an unlikely candidate to deliver this news. It would seem that Belcher has made some error as to the author of the letter.

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 50-51.

A Mr. Hubbard is also mentioned in regard to his fundraising activities in the City of London.⁵⁸⁴

The completion of St. Matthias's was heavily dependent on Brett's associates and Belcher notes that if a further £1000 was required Brett could locate it from among his wealthy merchant friends.⁵⁸⁵ It was through such connections that Brett was able to secure the services of William Butterfield (born 1814, died 1900) as architect for the project. Butterfield was closely acquainted with the businessman Benjamin Starey and his family, who had commissioned him to design their country house in Bedfordshire. The Starey family resided at Newington Green and Brett was their doctor as well as godfather to the children.⁵⁸⁶ Furthermore, Brett's close relationships with the Bishop of Lichfield (who donated £100 to the project) and John Jackson must have lent additional credibility to his project.

The fundraising on behalf of St. Matthias's went well and in 1851 the foundation stone was laid. It had been the intention to build only a portion of the church on the assumption that there would not be sufficient funds to complete construction of both the church and the school buildings in one go.⁵⁸⁷ This proved not to be the case and St. Matthias was consecrated in June 1853. By this point it was clear that the new church was to be different from the St. Mary's. Those who had campaigned to raise the funds for the church were adamant that it should reflect Anglo-Catholic ideals. For Brett there were two factors which were crucial factors in achieving this goal; the seats were to be unappropriated and the church was to operate using a voluntary

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid., p 53-54, 66.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 110.

⁵⁸⁶ P. Thompson, *William Butterfield* (London, 1971), p. 12.

⁵⁸⁷ Belcher, p. 59.

offertory system. Neither of these approaches was particularly popular in the 1850s.

In September 1852 Brett and his associates sent out a letter requesting donations towards the final £2000 required if the church were to be opened within the year. In this letter they detailed the ethos of St. Matthias's Church. It was to have free sittings, the observance of the Church's rule of daily service, weekly and Saints' day communions, and a weekly offertory.⁵⁸⁸ The offertory system was opposed by both Blomfield and Selwyn who warned that it was unpopular, obsolete, and would generate hostility towards St. Matthias's. In a speech before the 1862 Church Congress Brett revealed what his answer to these misgivings must have been,

So confident are we that the principles enunciated by the Apostles and sanctioned by the Church's authority in all ages must be right and true in every age, that we are determined to test the principle and see whether there is anything in it, or whether it is ultimately to be abandoned.⁵⁸⁹

In 1862 Brett could reveal that the voluntary offertory at St. Matthias's raised an average of £1000 per annum. This allowed them to double the endowment of £200 a year which the church received from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. Moreover, it permitted them to give £270 each year to the curates and entirely to wipe out the debts which had been incurred during the church's construction.⁵⁹⁰ The voluntary system was central to the running of St. Matthias's as an Anglo-Catholic church because it demonstrated that the congregation were supportive of the kind of services that were provided;

⁵⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 72-73. Letter reproduced by Belcher in entirety.

⁵⁸⁹ *Church Congress 1862*, p. 116.

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 117; *Church Congress 1863*, p. 152.

services that were openly and unashamedly ritualistic. The weekly offertory was considered a 'badge of party' when the church first opened and this seems to have been the intention of Brett and his associates. The entire project was undertaken in order to provide the ideal surroundings for Anglo-Catholic worship. It was lay Anglo-Catholics who funded its construction and who, to a large extent, controlled its affairs.

The voluntary offertory and the general ethos of St. Matthias's proved to be a success, but the running of the building project, and later of the church itself, were not without difficulties. Looking back at this time, Brett remarked that, 'we had to labour under every possible suspicion and imputation of Popery, Puseyism, and every kind of evil; still we resolved to go forward stedfastly [sic], and maintain the principles of the Gospel in the Church of England, and either to stand or fall by those principles which we advocated.'⁵⁹¹

Such suspicions were inevitable at a time when several prominent Anglo-Catholics had recently seceded to Rome and anti-Anglo-Catholic sentiments were intense. However, Brett seems also to have attracted criticism from fellow Anglo-Catholics. Belcher reproduces a letter which Brett composed in February 1853 which suggests that there were some who questioned his methods and the way in which money collected for the project was being allocated. The contents give the impression that Brett saw St. Matthias's, perhaps rightly so considering the extent of his efforts, to be his private chapel, and that he was not prepared to accept criticism.

⁵⁹¹ *Church Congress 1862*, p. 116.

Setting aside bodily exertion the *mental anxiety* I have suffered on account of that church is known only to God, and *has literally worn me down*. And further *many* donations have been sent to me solely 'as thank offering' for benefits derived from my books. Under these circumstances I feel that non-contributors or others would have no ground to turn and condemn me for *beautifying* (not unnecessarily) a temple which they had not the heart to attempt even to build. The praise or blame of such men are alike to me. Even now they accuse us of running bricks and mortar up into the skies.⁵⁹²

The whole effort indeed affected Brett's health and his doctor recommended that he go to Brighton to convalesce in autumn 1852. He remained by the sea recuperating until the consecration of St. Matthias's the following June.

Difficulties did not cease with the opening of the church and in 1854 St. Matthias's first incumbent, T. A. Pope, was received into the Roman Catholic Church. However, the real test for Brett came in 1866-67 when St. Matthias's became the scene of anti-Ritual rioting. Brett was compelled to write to the Bishop of London, who was now the Broadchurchman A. C. Tait. Brett described in detail the riots and revealed the very personal direction they had taken, with attacks upon his person and property.⁵⁹³ The disturbances continued, and Brett wrote to the Royal Commissioners on Ritual to inform them that on Sunday after Sunday large groups were gathering and attempting to gain entry to the church. On one occasion, when foiled by the police in their attempts to enter St. Matthias's, the group proceeded to Brett's house where they hurled lumps of granite through his windows. During the period of these disturbances Brett was threatened to

⁵⁹² Belcher, p. 64-66. Letter reproduced by Belcher in entirety.

⁵⁹³ *Tait Fulham Papers*, Vol. 145, ff 108. Letter dated 30 September 1866.

such an extent that he required a police escort between his house and the church.⁵⁹⁴

On other occasions when Anglo-Catholic churches had been attacked in this manner the violence had often been directed towards individuals. The most famous case was that involving the Rev. Bryan King at St. George's-in-the-East. But King was a clergyman who was actually carrying out the ritualistic services. It says much about Robert Brett and his reputation in the community that the attacks were directed towards him rather than towards the incumbent or curates. He was certainly not afraid to publicise his religious convictions and he made it clear to the clergy of St. Matthias's exactly what type of liturgical services they were expected to provide. This was a man who had *Pro Ecclesia Dei* painted on his carriage doors. This carriage, incidentally, was bought for him by friends who had come to the conclusion that he spent too much money on church matters at the expense of his family's comfort.⁵⁹⁵

The Haggerston Church Scheme

Once St. Matthias's was complete, Brett and his associates undertook a scheme to build a series of churches in the less salubrious areas of Shoreditch and Haggerston. This time the idea was not Brett's but a joint effort on the part of Thomas Simpson Evans, the vicar of St. Leonard's, Shoreditch, and Richard Foster, who had also been involved with the work in Stoke Newington. In fact, Foster should perhaps be given more credit than Brett

⁵⁹⁴ Belcher, p. 92-94.

⁵⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

for the Haggerston efforts because it was due to his substantial donation that the scheme was able to get under way. It was an immense task which resulted in the construction of four churches in Haggerston: St. Augustine, St. Columba, St. Chad, and St. Stephen. Also erected were St. Michael's in Shoreditch, St. Saviour's in Hoxton, and St. Faith's in Stoke Newington. Brett was heavily involved and donated all the proceedings from his devotional works,⁵⁹⁶ but his participation also caused problems for the scheme.

The district of St. Michael's in Shoreditch was approved by the Estates Committee of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners on 3 July 1862. The project required the approval of the Bishop of London before it could begin, and this proved difficult to obtain. Tait refused to give his assent for the scheme because he was under the impression that Brett was to be the sole patron. This was not in fact the case, although the idea had been mooted at an earlier stage. In any event, the promoters now agreed that the patronage should be invested in a body of trustees for forty years, after which it would pass to the diocesan. The patronage was limited to forty years because the proposed trustees, including both Foster and Brett, believed that if the Anglo-Catholic movement had not taken hold by then there would be no point in promoting it further. However, Tait's misconception that Brett was to be the sole holder of the patronage caused him to stall the proceedings, a course of action which the Commissioners could not understand.⁵⁹⁷

The refusal of the Bishop of London to sign off on the scheme led the Commissioners to propose a scheme to Brett by which the patronage would alternate between the trustees and the diocesan. However, Brett replied in

⁵⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

⁵⁹⁷ *Tait Fulham Papers*, Vol. 128, ff 358; Vol. 129, ff 201-208.

April 1863 protesting against any such scheme. He argued that that alternating the patronage was by no means a fair recompense for the sacrifices that had been made by those involved in the Haggerston Church Scheme. Some of these sacrifices were monetary and the carrying out of the proposed plan was to require an endowment of £10,500 in addition to the £6,000 that the promoters had already spent. The project also entailed the provision of a further £10,500 deposit for each of the other three churches which they planned to build. The main difficulty for Brett appeared to be the effect that the proposed alternating patronage would have on the influence which the promoters could exercise over the churches they had offered to build. He set these concerns before the Commissioners,

I need not tell your Lordships that it would involve years of anxious labour to carry out with success, a scheme of such magnitude and the only satisfaction we would have for all our toil would be to see this large and neglected Parish with its 30,000 souls brought under the influence of the Church. But such satisfaction could be denied us if we had only the alternate patronage as our nominees might be removed after death, or otherwise, just as our work was brought to a state of completion; and we might have to endure the disappointment and annoyance of seeing others appointed who would disregard, if not entirely uproot, the labour of our lives.⁵⁹⁸

For those involved in the Haggerston Church Scheme it was crucial that the clergy in their churches were Anglo-Catholic and that this was reflected in their services. They did not want to evangelise the poor by any means possible but rather wanted them exposed to Anglo-Catholic ceremonials. They wanted 'a reasonable and equitable return for money and

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid., Vol. 132, ff 33-34.

toil expended on this great work.' Robert Brett presented their position starkly to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners; if they were not granted the patronage for a series of years they would relinquish the entire scheme and supply another diocese with their money and efforts.⁵⁹⁹

A report of the Estates Committee Meeting on 16 April 1863 reveals that they agreed with the position taken by Brett. They concluded that there was 'considerable justice and reason' in the views expressed by him, but that, because the Bishop of London did not concur, things could go no further. These misunderstandings carried on for a year before Brett was finally compelled to write directly to Tait and ask him exactly why he objected to Brett and the other trustees acting as patrons. Brett could only conclude that the nature of the objection must be purely personal and he insisted that the bishop should set out his position 'clearly and unreservedly'. In his reply, Tait admitted that there had been some confusion, and he now stated that he approved of the patronage lying with the trustees for a period of forty years. After a year of delays, the Haggerston Church Scheme was at last able to get underway.⁶⁰⁰

The fact remained that Tait clearly did have some personal objection to Brett. He had been led to think that the patronage was to lie with Brett by the Rev. John Ross of St. Mary's Haggerston, who disapproved of the scheme and with whom Brett had quarrelled in the past.⁶⁰¹ Had it actually been the case that Brett was to be the sole patron (which had in fact been the proposal at one stage) then Tait's resistance could be understandable. The Broad Church Tait and Anglo-Catholic Brett were, of course, very different in their

⁵⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, ff. 34.

⁶⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, ff 51-54.

⁶⁰¹ *Ibid.*, ff 54, 57-58.

views on the Church. The two men, moreover, had already had disagreements about the level of influence which Brett exerted over the clergy at St. Matthias's. Robert Brett was not known as the Lay Pope of Stoke Newington without good reason, and Tait had no wish to share authority within the diocese with him.

There can be little doubt that Brett and his fellow trustees expected some return from their efforts – they had stated as much. Their church building efforts in Haggerston were about the spread of Anglo-Catholicism as opposed to purely benevolent efforts on behalf of the lapsed masses. That is not to say that the lower classes were not of concern to him and this was demonstrated through his penitentiary work and his labours during the cholera epidemics in London. However, both these issues seem to have been encountered in his capacity as a general medical practitioner.

Robert Brett and the Clergy

The foundation of St. Matthias's church had involved a vast amount of personal sacrifice and once it was completed, Brett was determined that it would reflect the ideals of Anglo-Catholicism. As with the Haggerston Church Scheme, patronage was an important issue, and that of St. Matthias lay with the crown rather than with a board of trustees. The amount collected in the voluntary offertory at the church demonstrated that it had attracted the type of congregation envisaged by its founders. In order to retain this congregation the church needed to preserve the character of its services and this could only be achieved if the incumbent was sympathetic to their claims. Within a year of the consecration of St. Matthias's, as we have seen, its first incumbent, T. A. Pope, left the Church of England for Rome.

Those who had laboured for thirteen years to construct St. Matthias's were perhaps lucky that Blomfield was still their diocesan. The High Church Bishop of London had been well aware of the circumstances that had led to the foundation of the church and of its character and he had shown his sympathy for the Anglo-Catholic commitments of the founders when he had instituted Pope. To ensure that the new incumbent would retain the established tone of the services the communicants sent a memorial to Blomfield detailing their situation. They explained that any variation to the established services would 'cause a great shock to the feelings of the congregation.'⁶⁰²In response, Blomfield appointed another Anglo-Catholic clergyman, Samuel Wareing Mangin. The bishop thus showed himself to be very accommodating to the wishes of the congregation. The previous incumbent had converted to Roman Catholicism at a time when there were

⁶⁰² Belcher, p. 74-76.

many suspicions about just how committed the Anglo-Catholics were to the national church.

Brett's association with Blomfield had been on the whole cordial and the former welcomed the encouragement the bishop afforded to this church building schemes, regardless of whether he was able to allocate funding to them or not. Tait, who became Bishop of London in 1856, was a different matter altogether. The correspondence between the two men makes it clear that they disliked each other and Brett often made do with the most fleeting of pleasantries before launching into the issue at hand. At the annual meeting of the English Church Union, 20 June 1865, Brett summed up his relationship with the bishop, stating,

I have had some very earnest contentions with him, on matters of principles, but I must say that he has always met me as a Christian man should do. He has maintained his opinions and I have maintained mine, and when he has found that the principle which I have contended for has been right he has yielded up his own opinion.⁶⁰³

It is interesting to note that Brett makes no mention of what happened if Tait's principle ever turned out to be the correct one. One suspects that, at least as far as Brett was concerned, this was a set of circumstances which rarely arose.

The first disagreement between the two men occurred in 1857. In accordance with the level of ceremonial advocated at St. Matthias's, Brett being an advocate of the Six Points of Ritual, altar lights were used. In late

⁶⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

1857 Tait requested that the incumbent, S. W. Mangin, cease this practice. Altar lights had not been deemed legal ceremonial by Dr. Lushington, and by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in the appeal case of Mackonochie in 1857.⁶⁰⁴ What is extremely interesting about this case is that Mangin concluded that he would accept the authority of his diocesan and discontinue the practice. It was not the incumbent who refused to accept Tait's prohibition, but Brett, who stated that they would continue to use altar lights in the church because, according to Brett's understanding of the ornaments rubric, they were permitted. Brett wrote to the bishop, on 17 December 1857 and explained that his prohibition had caused discord and divisions 'in the happy and flourishing congregation'. He was also keen to make Tait aware of his own position at St. Matthias's and the regard in which Blomfield had held him,

I believe that some wrong exists in your Lordship's mind concerning me. Pardon me saying that the late Bishop Blomfield always looked on me as a devoted son of the Church of England. He knew and often acknowledged the years of toil and anxiety which I had to endure in the erection and support of St. Matthias Church, and he always treated me with...confidence...May I not then venture to hope that I may have some measure of confidence from your Lordship also, particularly in the cause of a Church which has called forth my most fervent prayers and earnest aspirations?⁶⁰⁵

Brett also remarked that there was a need for consistency as several other churches in the diocese continued to use altar lights. On 26 December 1857, he directed a letter to Tait's secretary which was rather threatening in

⁶⁰⁴ The Judicial Committee did, however, rule on the legality of the credence table, coloured frontals, altar coverings, and candlesticks and a cross above the holy table.

⁶⁰⁵ *Tait Fulham Papers*, Vol. 7, ff 77-79.

its tone. He warned that, 'the whole matter will become a subject of newspaper scandal and controversy throughout the country, unless his Lordship stops it by withdrawing his prohibitions.'⁶⁰⁶

Tait would not be drawn in this way and instructed his secretary to reply that he would happily answer any legitimate questions that were put to him through the properly constituted authorities, such as the churchwarden or the clergyman himself.⁶⁰⁷ The matter was not closed by the end of the year and on 6th January 1858 Brett informed Tait that Mangin was 'sorely troubled in conscience', and that he felt he was morally bound to use altar lights despite the fact that he said he would assent to Tait's order. Brett was not the only member of the congregation who felt that the practice should continue and revealed to the bishop that it was the main topic of discussion at the lay association meetings at St. Matthias's. Later that month Brett wrote again to Tait and told him that as they did not wish to be secretive, he wanted to notify the bishop that if they discovered altar lights in use in any other church in the diocese, they would re-light those at St. Matthias's.⁶⁰⁸

The incumbent seems to have become rather lost in the wrangling that was taking place. Brett had worked hard for St. Matthias, but it was not his place to decide what the actions of Mangin should be in relation to instructions from his bishop, whom he was bound by oath to obey. His actions put Mangin in an untenable position where, despite the fact that the clergyman stated to the bishop that he would obey his order, it appeared that the level of ritual at St. Matthias's was completely out of his control and

⁶⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, ff 95-6.

⁶⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, ff 98-99 (28 December 1857).

⁶⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. 108, ff 14a-14m.

was being determined by Robert Brett. In an attempt to extricate himself from the situation, Mangin offered his resignation but Tait refused to accept it. The situation was finally resolved when, at Brett's insistence, the Bishop of Oxford, Samuel Wilberforce, offered Mangin another benefice.

The whole set of events surrounding the use of altar lights reveals much about what Brett considered his position to be at St. Matthias's. The level of ceremonial was apparently down to Brett's interpretation of the ornaments rubric rather than that of either the incumbent or the diocesan. He did not have the authority to over-rule the decision of the bishop on behalf of Mangin but appears to have had no hesitation in doing so. Through these actions he put the incumbent in a position where he not only had to leave Stoke Newington, but had to leave the diocese. The disagreement could potentially have turned out much worse for Mangin at a time when it was difficult for Anglo-Catholic clergy to obtain livings. This was definitely a case of the Anglo-Catholic laity pushing their clergy to deliver more in terms of ritual.

In light of Brett's actions at St. Matthias's it is easier to understand why Tait was so adamant that Brett would not hold sole patronage of any of the churches constructed under the Haggerston scheme. Despite the fact that the patronage lay with a board of trustees, Brett continued to be a prominent figure and problems regarding the clergy frequently fell to him to resolve. In 1866 he was required to chair a meeting at St. Michael's, Shoreditch, which met to discuss the rumours of scandal surrounding the curate Mr. Lyford. It was alleged that Lyford was a drunkard who acted inappropriately towards women and Brett and Richard Foster defended him

against these accusations.⁶⁰⁹ Brett felt that the curates who worked within the deprived areas of Haggerston and Shoreditch deserved more recognition and petitioned Tait, the Bishop of London, in an effort to gain stipends for the junior curates at St. Michael's.⁶¹⁰

By the time his friend John Jackson became the Bishop of London in 1869, Brett had adopted the role of mediator between the clergymen of the Stoke Newington and Haggerston churches. It was not an easy task and Brett revealed to the bishop that there was much 'unbrotherly conduct' between the men. 'I have been trying to get all the Haggerston clergy to work together,' he remarked in April 1869, 'but the perpetual little jealousies...are widening the breach.'⁶¹¹ Brett did not make things any easier for Jackson than he had for Tait. When the new bishop of London requested in April 1869 that W. R. Sharpe, of St. Chad's Haggerston, remove one of the bells which were rung at the time of the consecration, Brett intervened. He maintained that the bell was to call the sick to communion and that one bell could be heard just as well as two. 'I imagine there is no law to prevent this being done, therefore it is better to let it pass,' he advised Jackson.⁶¹²

The following month Jackson encountered problems at one of the other Haggerston churches, St. Columba's. The bishop had made it known that he did not approve of plans to provide a confessional in the church. Brett wrote on 23rd June 1869, as both a trustee and friend, to notify Jackson

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid., Vol. 145, ff 110.

⁶¹⁰ Ibid., Vol. 147, ff 425-8.

⁶¹¹ *Jackson Papers*, Vol. 12, ff 1-2.

⁶¹² Ibid., ff 1-2.

that, although his objections had been noted, they had determined to install it anyway.⁶¹³

Brett's power struggles with successive bishops suggest a frustration with the hierarchy of the church and the management of church affairs by the clergy. He was certainly a strong advocate of synodical action which would ensure that the episcopacy would have to listen to powerful lay figures such as himself. Robert Brett was not afraid to state openly his negative opinion of the bishops of the Church of England. He believed that they had let a golden opportunity to lead a great revival slip through their hands. In a letter to the Bishop of Lichfield in 1869 he made clear his views on the episcopacy and their actions in relation to the Anglo-Catholic movement,

They have dwelt so long among the temporal accidents, so to speak, of all the Church's being that they had lost her rights, and as rulers in a Divinely appointed kingdom, which is above and apart from all earthly dominion. Had they guarded and maintained the rights and privileges of the Church as zealously as they have those of the royal prerogative the present crisis would not have happened.⁶¹⁴

Brett believed that the episcopacy had neglected their duty to protect the Catholic identity of the Anglican church. He was convinced that the episcopacy had failed the Anglo-Catholic laity. He viewed them as 'fettered and tongue-tied by a debasing Erastianism.'⁶¹⁵ He was unable to comprehend why the episcopacy would want to stifle the Anglo-Catholic revival as he believed that this would ultimately force men to Rome.

⁶¹³ Ibid., ff 7-10.

⁶¹⁴ Belcher, p. 124.

⁶¹⁵ Ibid., p. 128.

Robert Brett did not want the laity to control the national church. He did, to be sure, want the laity to have a voice in synodical deliberation, but more importantly he wanted the bishops to stand up for the claims of the Church of England as a Catholic and Apostolic Church. When he felt that the bishops were unable, or unwilling, to do this, he was prepared to step forward as a layman and make his opinion heard.

There is no doubt that he was a strong character and this caused problems in the parishes within which he worked. It was this strength of character which drove him to campaign for over twelve years in order to construct the church of St. Matthias's in Stoke Newington. There were other laymen involved in the projects at Stoke Newington and Haggerston but one must question whether these projects would ever have come to fruition without Brett as the driving force. He did appear to see the churches as his own and he certainly earned his title as the 'lay pope of Stoke Newington.' His role in the parish seems to have been summed up effectively by C. J. Le Geyt at a memorial service for him when he stated that the most commonly used phrase in churches in the area was, 'see what Mr. Brett says.'⁶¹⁶

⁶¹⁶ C. J. Le Geyt, *In Memoriam of Robert Brett* (1874) p. 12.

Introduction

To be sure, a person might play with architecture as he might play with anything else, and make it an object of mere amusement and aesthetic trifling; with such a man I have no sympathy. But he might also take it up in a true, a spiritual, and a religious manner, and not as a matter of selfishness or self-indulgence.⁶¹⁸

These remarks by Alexander James Beresford Hope at the 1863 Church Congress reveal the great passion of his life: church architecture as a means of expressing the sacramental nature of the Church of England. The Hopes were a wealthy and well connected family and this enabled Alexander James to lend his patronage to the building of churches which reflected his architectural tastes and his religious principles. In this way Hope is a very different figure from Robert Brett. Much of Hope's motivation lay in the creation of the building itself, rather than in the desire to be involved with the church once it was complete.

It was not just through church building that Hope championed the Anglo-Catholic cause. He entered political life in his early twenties when in 1841 he became Tory MP for Maidstone in Kent. The great battle of his political career was against that corrupter of the Victorian family in-waiting, the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill, against which he campaigned vigorously. At a time when the Anglo-Catholics had few figures to fight their corner in the

⁶¹⁷ Irene and William Law *The Book of the Beresford Hopes* (London, 1925), p. 193.

⁶¹⁸ Beresford Hope, *Manchester Church Congress, 1863* (Manchester, 1864) p. 48-49.

House of Commons, Hope was extremely active in his opposition to this bill, as well as the Burials Bill and the Public Worship Regulation Act.

Hope occupied an unusual position within the Anglo-Catholic movement and this is illustrated through his ability to build ornate churches while sitting on the Royal Commission investigating Ritualism. He also had little time for leading Anglo-Catholic figures such as Pusey and John Mason Neale. With the latter he shared Benjamin Webb, co-founder of the Ecclesiological Society and, fellow Trinity College Cambridge man, as a confidant, to whom he wrote as often as three times a day. Unfortunately Hope's granddaughter, Irene Law, destroyed this vast correspondence after using it to co-author the history of the Beresford Hope family with her husband William Law in 1925.⁶¹⁹ Law does quote extensively from the letters although this only hints at the wealth of information that must have been in the original correspondence.

These citations, along with Hope's correspondence with several members of the episcopacy and his numerous journalistic efforts, allow us to piece together a picture of the man and his contribution to Anglo-Catholicism. Law states that 'his character seemed more that of a monastic recluse than that of a man of affairs; he was in the world but not of it.'⁶²⁰ This, however, is not the impression given by Hope's own writings and actions. He promoted Anglo-Catholicism in ways which corresponded to his own position and lifestyle and he was not concerned with notions of self-sacrifice.

⁶¹⁹ See Irene and William Law *The Book of the Beresford Hopes* (London, 1925).

⁶²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

He admitted that his strengths lay in legislation and in speeches and not in heading up parochial guilds.⁶²¹

Hope was passionate about church architecture and Anglo-Catholicism and was eager to place emphasis upon the 'Anglo'. He did not see the relevance of the breviary, or the keeping of proper hours, to the English Church and he had a strong dislike for both the term Ritualism and the practices which it implied. For him, the overt ceremonialism present in the Anglican Church was not the natural progression of the ideals of the Tractarianism to which he purported to adhere. His dislike of both Pusey and Neale hints at the distaste which he had for those who were 'other worldly'. Anglo-Catholicism for Beresford Hope was not Italianate and effete, as many in the general public believed, but was an English and manly set of ideals which did not find their truest expression through excessive ceremonial.

⁶²¹ Ibid., p. 193.

Religious Position

In his writings Beresford Hope sought to distance himself from the more extreme elements within Anglo-Catholicism. He did not judge them to pose the greatest threat to the Church of England: that he reserved for the lapsed masses. He refused to join the largest Anglo-Catholic lay organisation of the time, the English Church Union. This was despite the fact that they campaigned as diligently as did he to prevent the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill from passing into law. Hope even objected to the very name Ritualist in a way that would have shocked those such as Brett who had adopted it as a term which they felt accurately described their religious beliefs. He described his position to be,

that of a moderate High Churchman of rather old-fashioned opinions, who values ceremonial worship but deprecates pressing it upon worshippers to whome [sic] more simple forms are palatable, while at the same time he claims from them the liberty which he so heartily accords to their principles.⁶²²

Perhaps by 1884, when Hope wrote the above, his religious views were old-fashioned in comparison to the more extreme Ritualism of the day. In the early 1840s his belief in the Real Presence, the Eucharistic Sacrifice, and the reunion of Christendom were considered by many to be extreme. He was, however, a relatively moderate Anglo-Catholic. In the early 1850s he contributed a series of articles to the *Morning Chronicle* under the pseudonym of D.C.L.⁶²³ He informed Webb that he had taken up this task in order to propagandize Catholic truth among Protestants and to call 'the

⁶²² Hope, *An Ecclesiastical Olive Branch* (London, 1884) p. 10.

⁶²³ The degree conferred on him by Oxford University in 1848.

High Church party for the crucial battle for Anglo-Catholicism which is now arraying.⁶²⁴

The tone taken by Hope in these articles is therefore revealing. He set about his task of propagandising Catholic truth by asserting that High Churchmen were the same as all other Englishmen. Like their fellow countrymen they held dear the material and intellectual advances of the Victorian age; the liberal institutions, the scientific resources, and the educational progress. He considered Nathaniel Woodward's colleges to be a shining example of the Anglo-Catholic values which he held to be 'morality, religion, sound education, manly English habits, under and through the Catholic Church, set forth in the Church of England.'⁶²⁵

It was also important for Hope in the early 1850s that he distance himself from the extremism that had led to the second wave of secessions to Rome. 'Because a man believes in Apostolic Succession he is not therefore to be set down at once as in league with the Pope,' he insisted, '—nor is the desire to act up to the Prayer-book the infallible diagnostic of a Jesuit in disguise.'⁶²⁶ There was an awareness in his writings that public opinion did not hold Anglo-Catholicism in high regard, combined with an understanding as to why many people found it repellent. This was because he too found the ultra-ritualistic side of the movement repellent and believed that it did not reflect true Anglo-Catholic ideals.

Hope believed that Anglo-Catholicism could and should be appealing to the English public but that this was undermined by some figures within

⁶²⁴ Law, p. 148.

⁶²⁵ D.C.L. (Beresford Hope), *Letter on Church Matters* (London, 1852) p. 394-395.

⁶²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 393.

the movement who deliberately set about making the movement alien to English beliefs. For Hope, one man was more guilty of this than most: John Mason Neale. Neale, Webb, and Hope had all attended Trinity College, Cambridge, in the late 1830s and early 1840s. Webb formed strong and lasting friendships with both men but, from the outset, Neale and Hope harboured an intense dislike for one another. Hope felt that Neale went to extremes with his ceremonial practices and that he displayed an un-English approach to religion which was repugnant. He made his animosity towards Neale abundantly clear in his correspondence with Webb. In a letter of 1862, for example, he is scathing towards Neale, who was by now established as one of the leading lights of the Anglo-Catholic movement,

Neale is distinguished morally by a combination of tuft-hunting and bristling democracy, a great theatric [sic] admiration of episcopacy with a gift of insulting all embodied Bishops. His veracity is conditional. Intellectually his faith leads him greedily to swallow all modern forms of credulity, rapping, spiritualism, etc. His historical lore, which is great, is altogether subservient to his own one-sided propagandism. Within his own wilful limits he is versatile. Politically he is emphatically and patently un- or anti-English. Personally he is tall and hawk-faced; he snuffles and talks through his nose, and he preferentially wears at all hours tail dress-coats.⁶²⁷

While Hope's description of Neale amounts to character assassination, Neale's opinion of him also raises interesting points about Hope's religious position. Neale believed that the lavish lifestyle of Hope precluded him from committing totally to Anglo-Catholicism. He remarked to Webb that he considered it 'to be impossible for a man, unless he lives a

⁶²⁷ Quoted in Law, p.146.

truly ascetic life, to move in the rank in which he moves, and to mix with the high life without being affected with the miserable compromising spirit of the day.'⁶²⁸ Benjamin Webb was inclined to agree, although he also defended Hope as 'pure, sincere, noble, [and] unselfish' and simply too prepared to accept the status quo.⁶²⁹

In addition to his conviction that advanced ceremonial held no appeal for the English people, Hope also found its use unnecessary. He argued in favour of what he termed 'essential ritual' which he categorised as the use of musical intonation in all parts of the service which did not include scripture readings or sermons; the use of a surpliced choir engaged in antiphonal choral services; and the Eastward position. He concluded that these should take place in a church 'beautiful in architecture, rich in material, ornate with fresco, mosaic, carving and stained glass.' He considered this level of ceremonial to be in keeping with the rubric of the Prayer Book and therefore the most effective way of celebrating and reflecting the sacramental nature of the Church of England. He accepted that there was other ceremonial which was beautiful and touching but, if it was not essential, then it should not be practiced.⁶³⁰

Hope realised that the position of the Anglo-Catholics needed to be augmented. He did not consider the most effective way to achieve this to be through defensive organisations such as the English Church Union, although he supported involvement with specific groups, such as the Marriage Law Defence Union. He judged that the best way to protect their position would be to convince people that there was nothing worth

⁶²⁸ Sackville Lawson, *Letters of J.M. Neale* (London 1910) p.93.

⁶²⁹ Law, p. 146.

⁶³⁰ Hope, *Church Politics and Prospects*, p. 32-33.

attacking in the ideals of Anglo-Catholicism. The advanced ritualists were not doing this and were instead propagating a type of Anglo-Catholicism which the Englishman was prone to 'shrink from and fear'. Hope deemed this to be unfortunate because the English would actually be welcoming to 'the stately and the reverential worship of the Almighty God.'⁶³¹

The Anglo-Catholics therefore needed to ascertain which aspects of the movement were appealing to the English public. Hope was of the opinion that popular feeling had warmed to Anglo-Catholic architecture and constructive ritualism, iconography, and the choral service with the surpliced choir. In contrast, the public viewed the revival of vestments and ceremonial with a large degree of suspicion.⁶³² In 1860 he remarked that the usages that had been granted by the Judicial Committee up to that date⁶³³ ought to be enough to make Anglo-Catholics content.⁶³⁴ This was a stance which he reasserted in "Church Politics and Prospects" in 1865. The article provoked an angry response from J. M. Neale who published an open letter to Hope entitled *Extreme Men*. He attacked Hope's approach which he felt had left the Anglo-Catholics open to attack with the suggestion that no further development was necessary in Anglo-Catholicism. ⁶³⁵

Hope did not approve the Six Points of Ritual which were the benchmark for many Anglo-Catholics. He was keen for both the clergy and the laity to take efforts to ensure that they did not unnecessarily antagonise those of different affiliations within the Anglican Church. He viewed

⁶³¹ Ibid., p. 31.

⁶³² Hope, *Church Cause and Church Party* (London, 1860) p. 52.

⁶³³ The use of the cross in close superposition to the altar; the clothed altar; the use of candles; and fencing with cancelli.

⁶³⁴ Ibid., p. 50.

⁶³⁵ Neale, *Extreme Men* (London, 1865).

sensational ritual as 'a direct invitation to popular outbreak' and the fostering of a sectarian spirit.⁶³⁶ Similarly, he believed that the use of 'other-worldly' language by leading clerical figures within the movement, specifically Pusey, did nothing to improve their position with lawyers and MPs. He remarked to Webb that much mischief had been unintentionally caused by those who tried to communicate with 'worldly' men in a 'godly' language.⁶³⁷

As has been demonstrated with the English Church Union and the Church of England Working Men's Society, there were many within the movement who united in defence of the Catholic identity of the Church. Hope however, contemplated the possibility of using compromise to secure the position of the Anglo-Catholics. If ceremonial were to be kept within agreed boundaries it would be accessible to Englishmen who shied away from Continental innovations. He believed that contentious issues of ceremonial usage could eventually be settled according to local circumstances and suggested that varying rites could be prescribed on different days or hours to accommodate all persuasions. Writing at the time of the Public Worship Regulation Act, Hope recommended that, since both the clergy and the laity had come to attach a deeper importance to the ceremonial of the Church of England, the time 'seems to have arrived for an attempt to regulate the *modus vivendi* between more or less ornate forms of worship, by some way of conciliation, rather than of litigation.'⁶³⁸

⁶³⁶ Hope, *Church Politics and Prospects*, p. 31. Beresford Hope was a member of the Establishment and popular protest was not something which his class welcomed.

⁶³⁷ Law, p. 209.

⁶³⁸ Hope, *Hints Towards Peace in Ceremonial Matters*, (London, 1874) p. 5-13.

Hope was a much more moderate churchman than many of his generation. He considered himself to be a Tractarian yet he had shared very little in the academic approach taken by the early Oxford Movement and he harboured a dislike for Pusey, its leading figure. He took a practical approach to his religion and demonstrated that he was very much a man of his social status and his age. He focused on church architecture and decoration rather than on the theological and devotional aspects of Anglo-Catholicism. Further, as might be expected of a man of his social position, he expected to take a prominent role, and to be treated with a degree of deference. He remarked to Webb, when asked if he would head up a guild for his friend, that 'I can do a little autocracy pretty well, or legislation, or speechifying, but I am not the man for quiet, horse-in-harness work.'⁶³⁹ His biographer, Irene Law, suggests that Hope was unable to understand the spiritual basis of the opposition to the Public Worship Regulation Act.⁶⁴⁰ He was against the legislation because he opposed the assumption that such a thing as 'ritualism' en bloc existed, when in fact they were a collection of practices which each required judging upon their own merit.⁶⁴¹

The moderate nature of his position is best illustrated in his willingness to act as a member of the Royal Commission that drafted for the First and Second Reports on Ritual, although he opted not to sign the latter report. As a commissioner, he exhibited a very different reaction on the issue of altar lights from that of Robert Brett, who, it will be recalled, had pressed the incumbent of St Matthias's to use the altar lights against the instructions of his bishop. By contrast, when the commissioners were examining the level of ritual at Webb's church of St. Andrew's, Well Street,

⁶³⁹ Law, p. 193.

⁶⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

⁶⁴¹ Hope, *Worship and Order* (London, 1883) p. 287.

London, Beresford Hope suggested to Webb that it might be prudent not to light the altar candles until the investigation was over.⁶⁴²

Moderation and compromise seem to have been the guiding factors in determining Beresford Hope's religious position. He was also a practical, rather than an overtly spiritual man, who illustrates that not all Anglo-Catholics embraced, accepted, or welcomed the Six Points of Ritual. That both Pusey and Beresford Hope considered themselves to be guided by the ideals of Anglo-Catholicism is evidence of the broad spectrum of opinion within the movement. It is interesting that a man who was so opposed to extremes in others regarding religion, exhibited neither moderation nor compromise in his church building efforts.

⁶⁴² Law, p. 208.

Church Building & Patronage⁶⁴³

Beresford Hope, as we have seen, was a wealthy and well-connected man. An MP from the age of twenty one, he was related, through his marriage to Lady Mildred Cecil, to one of the most prominent political families of the day.⁶⁴⁴ His independent wealth and society contacts played important roles in his church building schemes. Hope had inherited £300,000 from his parents and an additional £30,000 from his stepfather, Viscount Field Marshall Beresford Hope, from whom he also received a house in Cavendish Square, London, and the Bedgebury Park Estate in Kent.⁶⁴⁵ The immediate concern for church builders such as Brett was the raising of funds whereas for Hope the challenge lay in the design of the structure and how this could best reflect the principles of an Anglo-Catholic Church of England.

Hope was well known for his involvement with the Ecclesiological Society, the second phase of the Camden Society, which he led together with Benjamin Webb. However, his architectural ambitions had already achieved practical fulfilment before he rose to prominence within that organisation. His first major project came about in connection with a letter which Robert Brett had written to the *English Churchman* in September 1843 decrying the state of the former abbey of St. Augustine, Canterbury. In the same year Hope had begun to convert Christ Church, Kilndown, on the Bedgebury

⁶⁴³ It is not the intention of this chapter to cover Beresford Hope's involvement with the Ecclesiological Society as this has been extensively covered elsewhere, especially by architectural historians. See C. Webster & J. Elliot (Ed.), *A Church as it Should Be* (Stamford, 2000).

⁶⁴⁴ Lady Mildred was the sister of Lord Salisbury, Prime Minister 1885 – 1886, 1886 – 1892, 1895-1902.

⁶⁴⁵ Law, p.179.

Park Estate, to conform with the principles of Gothic Revivalist architecture—but St. Augustine’s was his first major project.

Brett wrote that he prayed that God might ‘dispose some wealthy Catholic to purchase and restore the sacred edifice’ of the former abbey which was being utilised as a brewery and pot house. Hope read the letter, visited the ruins, and purchased the site.⁶⁴⁶ Chris Brooks suggests, in his article on the relationship between Beresford Hope and the architect William Butterfield⁶⁴⁷, that by this stage the former harboured a desire to control the Ecclesiological Society. Brook interprets his purchase of the site as an attempt to demonstrate the power of his patronage to the organisation.⁶⁴⁸ This may well have been the case as Hope was certainly keen to make his influence felt.

Once the site had been purchased Hope was approached by Edward Coleridge, Master at Eton, who eventually convinced him that the best use of the building would be as a missionary college.⁶⁴⁹ The project went ahead to create a college for 45 students and Hope paid for the construction of a chapel designed by Butterfield who had worked with him at Kilndown. Hope believed that Benjamin Webb would be ideal as a fellow and offered him the position which his confidant rejected.⁶⁵⁰

Prior to taking on the project at St. Augustine’s Abbey, William Butterfield had not completed an entire church building. ‘In a single move,’

⁶⁴⁶ Law, p. 157-158.

⁶⁴⁷ Butterfield designed almost 100 churches including the chapels of Balliol and Keble colleges, Oxford.

⁶⁴⁸ C. Brooks, “‘The Stuff of a Heresiarch’ William Butterfield, Beresford Hope, and the Ecclesiological Vanguard’ p. 121-148, in C. Webster & J. Elliott (Ed.) *‘A Church as it Should Be’*, *The Cambridge Camden Society and its Influence* (Stamford, 2000) p. 130-132.

⁶⁴⁹ Coleridge wanted to found such an institution to help his close friend Broughton, the first Bishop of Sydney.

⁶⁵⁰ Law, p. 157-159.

states Brook, 'the St. Augustine's Commission now established him, along with Hope as the patron, in the vanguard of ecclesiological Gothic, and thus of Gothic Revival architecture as a whole.'⁶⁵¹ Hope and Butterfield went on to work together on a third scheme, that of All Saints' Church, Margaret Street, London, which caused relations between them to sour dramatically.

The building of All Saints' was Hope's personal project. It was an opportunity, not only to create the model Anglo-Catholic Church, but also to contribute to the design of the building to a degree that had not been possible in previous renovation projects. In 1845 Hope wrote to Webb outlining his plan to build the church in an economically deprived area of London. Despite the decision to build in an impoverished district, Hope was not particularly interested in the plight of the working man and admitted to Webb that he avoided such discussions when attending Church Congresses.⁶⁵² He wanted his church to be similar to St. Saviour's, Leeds,⁶⁵³ but with greater aesthetical perfection. It was his vision to see the erection in urban centres of churches which 'have a foreign character, lofty and apsidal, and domineer by their elevation over the haughty and Protestanized shopocracy of their respective towns. They must have a boundless nave and hold as many as possible of the all but heathen population.'⁶⁵⁴

Hope was adamant that the church, in keeping with Anglo-Catholic ideals, should be without the pew rental system, but he devoted most effort to describing to Webb the lofty windows, painted glass, towers and spires, and a lofty apsidal chancel which was to be itself 'a quasi-Church.' The

⁶⁵¹ Brooks, p. 132

⁶⁵² Law, p. 210

⁶⁵³ For more information on this parish see Nigel Yates, *The Oxford Movement and parish life St Saviour's, Leeds, 1839-1929* (York, 1975).

⁶⁵⁴ Law, p. 160-161.

intention may have been for All Saints' to cater to the poor but its most important function was to cater for a specific architectural taste.

At this stage it is important to acknowledge the contribution made to the scheme by Henry Tritton who donated a vast sum of money to ensure the construction of the church. While Hope provided an undisclosed sum that amounted to several thousands, Tritton anonymously donated £30,000, and another £2,300 was collected from donors. Tritton is not a well known figure within Anglo-Catholicism but he appears to have given generously to projects related to the movement. In addition to the sum provided for All Saints, the banker was also responsible for the construction of the imposing Gothic chapel at Lancing College, founded by Nathaniel Woodward. Tritton was extremely private about his beneficence and few knew the extent of his financial involvement in All Saints'. It was this that W. E. Heygate focused upon when delivering Tritton's memorial service at Lancing in 1877,

Shall I say he gave his money? Yes, he gave it freely and silently, like the dew of heaven; not building palaces for himself or his children; not seeking social or political greatness by means of wealth; living in a true simplicity; having neither a regard for appearances, nor a negligent or proud indifference to them.⁶⁵⁵

Tritton was also one of the patrons of All Saints along with Sir Stephen Glynne (Gladstone's brother-in-law from whom he inherited Hawarden Castle), and Hope. Although co-patrons, Tritton wished to remain anonymous and Glynne did not want to be practically involved with

⁶⁵⁵ W. E. Heygate, *In Memory of Henry Tritton* (London, 1877) p. 9.

the construction work. Hope gladly took on the responsibility for the project and what began as a plan to build the model Anglo-Catholic church became a battleground between Hope, two bishops of London, the appointed clergyman, and William Butterfield.

Bishop Blomfield was the first to discover just how intent Hope was on having things his own way. Hope's passion for architecture meant that he was heavily involved in the design of the building. He determined that the chancel screen should have gates, a decision which Blomfield was strongly opposed to. For much of 1851 the two men argued over the matter. The discussions relating to this disagreement did not take place directly between them but through the appointed clergyman, Upton Richards.

The Bishop of London was extremely reluctant to back down over the issue of the chancel gates, but not as reluctant as Hope who stated that all building work would be stopped unless the gates were installed.⁶⁵⁶ In May 1851, Blomfield wrote to Upton Richards admitting that he could not remember seeing the gates in the original drawings but that, as soon as he became aware of them, he made his strong objections very clear. The bishop was keen to emphasise to Hope, through Upton Richards, the fact that he had made compromises in the past and Hope was now refusing to afford him the same courtesy,

I cannot help thinking that this is a point which M. Hope should concede to my authority... In the plans for your intended Church I have allowed some things of which I did not altogether approve, but which I thought might be permitted out of deference to M. Hope's wishes. I think I

⁶⁵⁶ *Blomfield Papers*, Vol. 51, ff 174-75.

may fairly expect him to give way on a point to which I feel a strong objection in principle.⁶⁵⁷

Beresford Hope refused to give way on the matter and confirmed that when the contracted work for the shell of the building was finished all further work would be suspended until Blomfield yielded to his wishes.⁶⁵⁸ Upton Richards contacted the bishop in August and admitted that it was the intention of Hope to go ahead with the building work and set aside the chancel for the exclusive use to the clergy and their assistants and that this was to be achieved through a screen with gates. Blomfield was completely opposed to the plans and maintained that the reservation of the whole chancel in this way was unnecessary and at variance with Christian feeling and practice. Upton Richards was directed to inform Beresford Hope of his 'determination not to consecrate any Church in which the Chancel is separated from the body of the Church by a screen with gates.'⁶⁵⁹

The threat from the Bishop of London was ignored by Hope. Blomfield eventually broke the stalemate by approving the plans on 28th November, no doubt reluctantly. Having taken nearly a year to resolve one conflict the two men then spent most of 1852 embroiled in another, with Upton Richards again acting as arbitrator. Early in 1852 Beresford Hope took the decorative designs for All Saints to Fulham Palace for Blomfield to examine. The bishop requested that he be permitted to peruse them at his leisure, but Hope refused and left with the designs. Blomfield was determined not to give way a second time and expressed his annoyance to Upton Richards, informing him that, 'the language which Mr. Hope has

⁶⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, ff 196-7.

⁶⁵⁸ Law, p. 165.

⁶⁵⁹ *Blomfield Papers*, Vol. 51 ff 303-7.

thought fit to signify his objection to [my proposal] is unbecoming to him and disrespectful to me.'⁶⁶⁰

The bishop requested another meeting with Hope, who declined. Hope legally owned the building and his strong attachment to the entire project seems to have made him unwilling to let anything out of his control. He confided to Webb about the approach he was taking to the latest dispute with the Bishop of London, commenting that Blomfield,

cannot interfere with the Church, inasmuch as it is my freehold unconveyanced to anyone, so I shall just finish it off in my honour and perception, and when ready ask him either to consecrate it as it stands, license it as it stands, or leave it still in my freehold as it stands. That will soon bring him to reason.⁶⁶¹

The two men did not meet again until 1853, which resulted in significant delays to the project. On this occasion it was Hope who resolved that the situation had reached an impasse and he called upon the bishop on 7 February 1853 with the designs. According to Law they reconciled their differences by finding some common ground – both criticised Upton Richards' Romanising tendencies.⁶⁶² Blomfield had demonstrated that he too could be stubborn, but his approach is understandable. He had made numerous and frequent compromises to Hope's tastes and yet Hope had shown no willingness to respect Blomfield's sincere reluctance to authorise the more extreme aspects of the building. In 1852, the bishop had merely requested that he be given the opportunity to examine the interior designs in his own time. This was surely a smaller concession for Hope to have made

⁶⁶⁰ Law, p. 166.

⁶⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 166 No date is given for this correspondence.

⁶⁶² *Ibid.* p. 166-7.

than the significant concession made by Blomfield in approving the plans for the chancel.

An agreement was reached in 1856 that, since the project was behind schedule, the building would remain the property of Hope for the foreseeable future with each section opening as it was completed. Although Hope had disagreed with Blomfield, he appeared to feel no personal animosity towards the High Church bishop. This was not the case with the Broad Churchman, Tait, who became Bishop of London in 1858. Hope revealed in his correspondence with Webb that he found the new bishop to be 'slimy, but malicious, shuffling, inconsistent, and yet courting the dirtiest popularity.'⁶⁶³

Like Blomfield, Tait was interested to see the plans for All Saints and requested that all building work should cease until he had the chance to approve them. Hope was keen that there should be no more delays and so he politely, but firmly, informed Tait that he would not be bringing work to a halt. 'Your Lordship is too conversant with buildings,' he remarked in December 1858, 'not to be aware that contracts entered into with tradesmen and engagements made with... artists are not so easily postponed and altered.' Hope then added that he was convinced that the suggestion that work be altered could not have actually come from the bishop.⁶⁶⁴

It was March before Hope contacted Tait to inform him that he could come to inspect the church as it was nearing completion although the plans

⁶⁶³ *Ibid.* p. 167.

⁶⁶⁴ *Tait Fulham Papers*, Vol. 111, ff 196-197.

were never submitted to him.⁶⁶⁵ All Saints was completed in April 1859 and Tait preached at the consecration. However, he refused to begin until the altar frontal had been covered.⁶⁶⁶

It was not only the episcopacy that created problems for Hope in the course of the project. His relationship with the architect William Butterfield completely disintegrated. Although Butterfield had worked with Hope twice before, their dealings at All Saints descended into something of a farce, and this was not in the least beneficial to the appearance of the building. P. Thompson remarks that 'many of the discordant features of All Saints', the clash between the glass and the tilework, and the discordance between the scheme of the chancel and the scheme of the nave, resulted from the conflict between Hope and Butterfield, and certainly had not been intentional on Butterfield's part.'⁶⁶⁷

In a letter to Webb in the early 1850s, Hope admitted that he felt that the work was failing as a 'pan High-Church work', and implied that all responsibility was being shouldered, practically, by himself, and financially, by Henry Tritton.⁶⁶⁸ This may well have been the case, yet Hope was determined not to share the responsibility or credit for the project with anyone else. His feelings towards Butterfield illustrate this point. All Saints' was Hope's church and he was concerned that his contribution to the project would be overlooked and that Butterfield would receive credit for the building. He disclosed this fear to Webb,

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid., Vol. 112, ff 314a – 316.

⁶⁶⁶ Law, p. 168.

⁶⁶⁷ P. Thompson, 'All Saints, Margaret Street, Reconsidered' p. 73-84, in *Architectural History* 8 (1965) p. 81.

⁶⁶⁸ Law, p. 166.

The artistic invention of the design is fully as much due to me as to him. I do not wish to rob him of any advantages in the eyes of the world which he may gain as architect of All Saints, but as between him and me I must have it understood how much of the work is due to me and in how much he has only been executive... I am certain that I am co-originator with him of the Church. He will, I fear, get more and more wild, and will not stop until he finds himself Butterfield against the world.⁶⁶⁹

Hope was so determined that Butterfield should not be credited with his ideas that he went on to regale Webb with a full list of all the architectural suggestions which he had made. These included the use of granite, alabaster and brick externally and the frescoing of the east end.

By 1853 Butterfield had completely fallen out of favour with Hope who accused him of ceasing to act like a gentlemen as well as 'pushing one side of Catholicism into heresy.'⁶⁷⁰ Thompson believes that Hope had become 'neurotically hostile' towards the architect—a state which led him to pen a series of anonymous and scathing attacks on the architect in the 1850s. This was no small matter considering Hope's position and influence within the Ecclesiological Society by this point.⁶⁷¹ Brooks has suggested, and one is inclined to agree, that Hope was so convinced that the All Saints' project was an expression of his own architectural aspirations that there was an inevitability to his conflicts with Butterfield. Hope's inability to distance himself from the project left Butterfield unable to assert himself creatively and the relationship broke down beyond repair.⁶⁷²

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 176-77.

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid., 175-6.

⁶⁷¹ Thompson, *William Butterfield*, p. 17.

⁶⁷² See C. Brooks, , "'The Stuff of a Heresiarch": William Butterfield, Beresford Hope, and the Ecclesiological Vanguard', in C. Webster & J. Elliott (ed.) *'A Church as it Should Be', The Cambridge Camden Society and its Influence* (Stamford, 2000), pp. 121-48.

Upton Richards also found it difficult to meet the standards Hope expected of his clergyman. The patron found him excessively ritualistic and described him to Tritton in December 1852 as a 'narrow minded fiddling little fellow,' with a, 'shifting character and a love of power', who displayed Romish tendencies that had to be resisted. The stipend paid to Upton Richards was partially funded by Hope and the clergyman revealed to Tritton that this subjection to Hope was 'far worse than Papal domination.'⁶⁷³

Hope was not unaware that there was a pattern emerging and, as usual, confided his concerns to Benjamin Webb. He remarked that 'people will show me as the man who tried to build the model Church and quarrelled both with parson and architect before that Church had got a floor on it.'⁶⁷⁴ The disagreements that occur raise questions about the source of Hope's motivation for the project. It certainly seems that the expression of his own architectural tastes was the key incentive. Yet this should not be taken as evidence that bricks and mortar were necessarily more important to him than Anglo-Catholic ideals. The reason the architecture was so vital to Hope was because he believed that the building would be the embodiment of those very ideals. The design of the church building should reflect all of the tasks that were to be carried out within its structure. As such Hope saw the ideal church as the embodiment of the Prayer Book,

The right and wrong side in church building I wish simply to deduce from the Prayer Book... I wish to show that the building which is called the Church, in contradistinction to the institution which has the same name, is a simple

⁶⁷³ Thompson, 'All Saints' Church, Margaret Street, Reconsidered', p. 74.

⁶⁷⁴ Law, p. 176.

mathematical deduction from the book which is called the Prayer Book. The "Church" is a petrification of the Prayer Book.⁶⁷⁵

Those who were involved most intimately with All Saints' Church derived little enjoyment from it. Hope's distain for Upton Richards prevented him from attending worship at the church until after the clergyman's death and even then he was unhappy with the degree of ceremonial at the church. Henry Tritton, who had contributed so much financially, rarely attended and Butterfield left the congregation after he was apparently insulted by a verger.⁶⁷⁶

Although this was Hope's most famous project he was involved in other building work, but not on the same scale. There was the renovation of two churches under his family's patronage, one at Kilndown and the other at Sheen in Staffordshire. At the latter, the Church of St. Luke, Hope again displayed determination not to be thwarted in his plans. When a poll at Sheen revealed that the parishioners did not want their church reconsecrated, Hope's response was to threaten to question the legality of his tenants' marriages if they continued to oppose him.⁶⁷⁷

Hope's financial situation made it possible for him to make his mark as a patron. He was able to perform gestures such as becoming the mortgagee of a Scottish Episcopal church in Glasgow to prevent it from being taken over by the Presbyterian Church.⁶⁷⁸ He also contributed to the restoration of Ely Cathedral, of which his close friend, Dr. George Peacock

⁶⁷⁵ *Church Congress* (Manchester, 1863), p. 48-54.

⁶⁷⁶ Law, p. 177.

⁶⁷⁷ P. Thompson, *William Butterfield*, n. 28, p. 57.

⁶⁷⁸ Law, p. 144-5.

(born 1791, died 1858), was the Dean.⁶⁷⁹ His connection in Ireland, where he was related (through his step-father) to the Primates of the Church of Ireland from 1820-1862 allowed him to secure church building work for architects whom he favoured.⁶⁸⁰

Hope's labours in church building are a demonstration of what a man with money and influence could do to further Anglo-Catholicism. However, the degree to which Hope's projects reflected his personal tastes and aspirations cannot be ignored. This is perhaps best illustrated in a comment made to Webb after the consecration of All Saints' on May 28, 1859. 'The Church this week seems to be the great fashionable fact,' stated Hope, 'Ever so many people were talking to me about it at Lady Derby's ball last night.'⁶⁸¹

⁶⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

⁶⁸⁰ For more on this subject see John Elliot "The Architectural Works of Richard Cromwell Carpenter (1812-55), William Slater (1819-72), & Herbert Carpenter (1841-1893)" (Unpublished PhD thesis, Royal Holloway College, London, 1996).

⁶⁸¹ Law, p. 168.

Political Career

In 1841, at the age of 21, Hope became the Conservative MP for Maidstone in Kent. Law suggests that his early entrance into politics had more to do with his step-father and his wealth than any real talent or commitment as a politician.⁶⁸² Hope held the seat for nine years before deciding that he could no longer maintain it under the conditions of the time which often required politicians parting with large sums of cash to secure their position. Hope remarked that the people of Maidstone, 'made demands on me so extortionate that neither my conscience or my pocket allows me to attend them.'⁶⁸³ His chances of being elected to another seat were hampered by his unpopular decision in 1851 to vote against the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill which proposed denying Roman Catholic bishops titles to English and Welsh sees. The Pope had created new sees, in the hope that this would make them acceptable to the English authorities.

He made his return to the political scene in 1857, and he was elected MP again for Maidstone, where he had stood as a non-party candidate. Hope's lack of oratorical skill was famously noted by Disraeli who remarked upon the 'Batavian grace' of his delivery⁶⁸⁴. He also commented upon Hope's ineptitude as a speaker in a letter to his wife. 'George Beresford, coming into the House said to Augustus O'Brien "How did Beresford Hope speak? He is my cousin"', relayed Disraeli, "'My dear fellow,' said O'Brien, 'if he were your own brother he could not have spoken worse.'"⁶⁸⁵

⁶⁸² Law, p. 134.

⁶⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

⁶⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 200. Disraeli was referring to the fact that the Hopes, though of Scottish origin, had arrived from the Netherlands.

⁶⁸⁵ Law, p. 200.

Hope appears to have been almost as passionate about stopping the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill from passing as he was about architecture. This was the subject which, in 1858, prompted him to make a speech lasting an hour and a half in House of Commons covering Levitical Code, Canon Law, and the inexcusable position which the housekeeper sister-in-law would be placed in if the Bill was passed.⁶⁸⁶ Hope was already active in opposing the Bill through the London Church Union⁶⁸⁷ and his own published work. In 1858 the LCU had sent a copy of a petition against the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill to every parish in England and Wales. Out of 14,000 copies sent out, there were only 300 replies.⁶⁸⁸ Hope was angered by the lack of interest displayed in defending the marriage laws, from Anglo-Catholics as well as those outside of the movement. He believed that the most important defensive work to be carried out by the movement was the maintenance of what he termed the 'residue' of the marriage laws, and the defence of the Prayer Book. Who is to watch, asked Hope, 'lest public morality should be utterly sapped by the nefarious and execrable Divorce Act – who is really to sound the Alarm if that Act should be still further extended?'⁶⁸⁹

In 1865 Hope was elected as the MP for Stoke on Trent, but the seat that he coveted was that of Cambridge University. In 1859 he considered standing for election to it but changed his plans when it became clear that there was little support for him from the colleges. This was in large part due to the level of ceremonial that Upton Richards was practising at All Saints' Church. Despite the fact that Hope had endeavoured to distance himself

⁶⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

⁶⁸⁷ Which did not affiliate with the English Church Union, an organisation which Hope himself never joined.

⁶⁸⁸ Hope, *Church Cause and Church Party*, p. 33.

⁶⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

from the ultra-ritualists within Anglo-Catholicism, he was still considered too much of an extremist at this point. The master of Jesus College remarked that he was 'a gentleman of great acquirements and high character but unacceptable to conservatives on account of his eccentric and unstable character.'⁶⁹⁰

Edward Henry Perowne (born 1826, died 1906) of Corpus Christi wrote to Hope and informed him that many of the senate who would have supported his candidacy for the Cambridge parliamentary seat were put off by his links to the 'semi-Romanist practices at All Saints', Margaret Street.' Hope, moreover, had been so publicly involved with All Saints' that it was difficult for the heads of college not to identify him with those 'semi-Romanist practices'. To silence such criticisms, Perowne suggested that Hope should publicly deny any connection with ultra-ritualism. Hope felt no difficulty in making such a denial. As we have seen, Hope had very little time for Upton Richards and he disapproved strongly of the extreme ceremonialism that was gaining popularity within the Anglo-Catholic movement.

Hope took Perowne's advice and his denial was published in the *Cambridge Chronicle* on 30 March 1859. He later judged this to be the 'chief political mistake' of his life. Despite the fact that the letter did accurately portray Hope's position in relation to ritualism, it was interpreted as a move based on mere political expediency. This was in large part due to the fact that Hope had initially been elected to Parliament as a Conservative party candidate and had later presented himself as a Liberal in an attempt to obtain

⁶⁹⁰ Law, p. 204.

a seat in an Irish constituency. For those who saw him as inexorably connected with the ritualist events at All Saints', his denial was worth very little. When it became clear that he would lose, Hope withdrew from the running. Perhaps by 1868 it was easier to distinguish the true ultra-ritualists from the more traditional Anglo-Catholics such as Hope, since he was then elected to the Cambridge seat that he would hold for the rest of his life.⁶⁹¹

Hope was a politician almost continuously from the age of twenty one until his death. He spent twenty years as the MP for Cambridge University, and thirty years vigorously campaigning against the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill, but his political career brought him little glory and he was destined to be remembered for his connections to Anglo-Catholicism and the Ecclesiological Society rather than for his time in Parliament. This is illustrated by a letter in Archbishop Benson's collection, in which the Master of Trinity College, Henry Montagu Butler, replied to Canon Mason's inquiries regarding a suitable memorial to Hope. He stated that he felt that a memorial was due from the Church of England, which he would support,

But with every cordial feeling to himself, I do not see any way to taking the initiative. Unless I am much mistaken, Cambridge will not take a very active part in any such work, and Trinity, I am confident, will not take any active part at all. His whole life is connected in our thoughts, as in his acts, with ecclesiastical energy, and – we must not deceive ourselves – interest in ecclesiastical energy is not especially in vogue in our dear college just now... a Trinity memorial certainly, and I think a Cambridge memorial, would fall flat.⁶⁹²

⁶⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pages 204, 205 & 207.

⁶⁹² *Benson Papers*, Vol. 58, ff 392-395.

For Butler, Hope's achievements lay solely in the ecclesiastical sphere, and one suspects that Hope himself would have readily agreed with this inference.

Conclusion

Robert Brett and A. J. B. Beresford Hope are examples of that influential class of laymen who were confident enough in their own position within the Church to oppose the episcopacy. Both men were involved in the construction of churches where the will of the laymen who contributed substantial amounts of money could supersede that of the clergy. Such patrons are of particular interest to this study because they highlight the fact that Anglo-Catholicism was a movement which was greatly influenced by the laity. Neither Hope nor Brett conform to the stereotype of the 'Puseyite' that was perpetrated by the likes of *Punch* magazine. They were instead professional men who used whatever means they had to promote Anglo-Catholic ideals.

Equally fascinating is the difference between the religious views of the two men. One happily accepted the mantle of Ritualist, while the other staunchly opposed to the term. They held contrasting views over whether Ritualism was in the natural progression from Tractarianism. Their very different approaches to Anglo-Catholicism are a microcosm of the movement itself from the mid-nineteenth century. Both men wanted to construct model Anglo-Catholic churches, and their motivations and ideas concerning this were very different.

Robert Brett gave the needs of the poor as the justification for the construction of St. Matthias's, but Blomfield rightly questioned this from the start. It rather seems to have been the case that the church was built because a group of well-to-do laymen decided that they wanted to worship in a purpose built Anglo-Catholic church. This is an interesting premise as it

shows the laity taking the initiative and making personal and financial sacrifices so that they could have a certain type of clergyman performing a specific type of service. The fact that the voluntary offertory system worked and produced returns of around £1000 per annum demonstrates that the congregation were supportive of the nature of the services.

For Brett and his associates a model Anglo-Catholic church was one in which the Six Points of Ritual were practiced and where pews were free and the income of the church provided by the voluntary contributions of appreciative worshippers. The ideals of the movement were expressed through what took place within the church, the ceremonial and the service. Making sure that these ideals were upheld took precedence over any allegiance to an episcopacy that Brett deemed to have lost its way. It was therefore the laity that decided what the appropriate level of ceremonial was to be. The incident with S. W. Mangin, in which Brett over-ruled the judgement of Tait which Mangin it was prepared to adhere to by removing the altar lights, illustrates the level of control which a layman could wield within a parish.

There can really be no question about Hope's motivation for renovating various ecclesiastical buildings and constructing All Saints: it lay in his love of architecture. The Gothic Revivalist style reflected the ideals of Anglo-Catholicism for Hope and although he expressed his desire to build his model church in a poor area, there is no indication that meeting the religious needs of the poor was his real motivation. Rather, his motive was apparently to make his personal architectural tastes a reality, and he possessed the money and the influence to do so. He pursued his disagreements with the episcopacy while the building works were in

progress, because he knew that once the project was finished his influence over the church's appearance was also finished. One also suspects that his disputatious nature reflected the fact that a man of his wealth and social status was not used to being opposed or instructed as to what he could or could not do. There does not seem to be any valid reason why he refused to let Blomfield look at the plans in his own time, other than that Hope did not want them out of his possession.

The attitude of both men towards the clergy, at all levels, is also worthy of note. Brett and Hope were in no way deferential towards the clergy in their churches. Brett caused Mangin to be moved out of the diocese and Hope was consistently critical of Upton Richards and his successors at All Saints, Margaret Street, as well as the clergy at Kilndown. Similarly, their relations with the episcopacy show them to be laymen who had little regard for the authority of the episcopacy and were more than happy to oppose their bishops. Yet there seems to have been a general anti-episcopal tone running through Anglo-Catholicism precisely because of the weight which Anglo-Catholics placed upon Apostolic Succession. The all-too-human actions of individual nineteenth-century bishops had convinced many Anglo-Catholics that the bishops had lost their way and were failing to exercise their true spiritual authority.

While Robert Brett and A J B Beresford Hope held very different views about Anglo-Catholicism, both were committed to its promotion. They were men who very much wished to retain control of the vast projects which they undertook, and perhaps this is not surprising when one considers the amount of personal effort and risk which they assumed. Both were prominent men in their communities and social circles and they have been

rightly remembered for their achievements. Just as important are some other laymen who have faded into obscurity. Those who contributed substantially to church building quietly or secretly, such as Richard Foster and Henry Tritton, also helped to ensure the future of the Anglo-Catholic movement and future research should take this into consideration.

The Lay Contribution to the Anglo-Catholic Movement in the Church of England, 1845 to 1901.

Conclusion

Through its examination of lay groups and individuals within the Victorian Anglo-Catholic movement, this study has drawn out key themes and illustrated different characteristics of the movement. As we have seen, Tractarianism developed out of the idea that the Church of England could only become a stronghold against Latitudinarianism if it were strengthened internally. Emphasis was thus placed upon the importance of doctrine. While the early Anglo-Catholic movement was dominated by dons and scholars, this emphasis on doctrine also became important for the laity. The Church could only be preserved as a true Church of Christ if the laity understood and adhered to its doctrines. An understanding of Anglo-Catholic teachings and role of the Church of England as the *Via Media* between Rome and Geneva was essential among the Church's laity, as well as its priests and doctors.

In 1845, after not inconsiderable spiritual torment, John Henry Newman left the Anglican Communion and joined the Roman Catholic Church. His secession was heralded at the time as signalling the death knell for the Anglo-Catholic movement. Here then was the outcome that so many had been waiting for; proof that the Tractarians had no real belief in the *Via Media* and that all Anglo-Catholic roads did in fact lead to Rome. Developed in the academic environs of Oxford, its critics further maintained, Tractarianism could not possibly appeal to the laity of the Church of England. Who, apart from impressionable youths, would be convinced by the

teachings of these Roman Catholics in all but name? Tractarianism was clearly a system developed with doctrine, theology and semantics in mind, and not with the practical needs of the laity in the parishes of Protestant England.

Those impressionable youths who had come under the influence of the likes of Pusey, Keble and Newman in Oxford, and by their counter-parts in Dublin and Cambridge, formed the new generation of Anglo Catholics who took what they had learned from the old guard of the Tractarian movement and adapted it to suit their roles as curates and incumbents in the parishes of England. This study has shown that there was a significant section of the laity that responded positively to the Anglo-Catholic message and attempted to live according to its tenets and ideals. It has also demonstrated that the Tractarian journey from Oxford to the parishes did not always lead to Ritualism and that Ritualism was not in fact a major concern among the laity. This is illustrated in the activities and organisation of the English Church Union, Church of England Working Men's Society, guilds and sisterhoods; and also in the deeds of the lay patrons of the Anglo-Catholic movement.

The diversity of religious opinion within the Anglo-Catholic movement is reflected in the opinions of prominent lay figures. As has been shown, for Alexander Beresford Hope Ritualism was nothing short of a dirty word. Yet for Hope's contemporary Robert Brett Ritualism accurately summed up all that he believed and aspired after. These two men are excellent examples of the broad spectrum of opinion that was covered by the term 'Anglo-Catholic' in the second half of the nineteenth-century. Robert Brett was convinced that if the hierarchy of the Church of England did not

allow for more ceremonial than the numbers converting to Rome would increase. In sharp contrast to this, Hope found the ultra-ritualistic side of the movement abhorrent and considered it to be a wholly inaccurate reflection of the ideals of Anglo-Catholicism. For him ritual was 'a direct invitation to public outbreak.'⁶⁹³

The English Church Union, while concerned chiefly with the defence of the Church against the perceived Erastianism of the state, was not about the wholesale defence of ritualism. For them, the key issue of contention was not whether ritualism was right or wrong. It was instead that the state had no right to make legal judgements pertaining to a Church which, they believed, held its authority through virtue of its bishops being in the unbroken line of Apostolic Succession and not on the basis of being established by the law of the state. However, as the chapter on the Union has demonstrated, there was a wide spectrum of opinion within the organisation on such matters. This ranged from the old guard, such as Pusey and Keble, who were relatively unconcerned about ritual, through to those who desperately wanted the E.C.U. to sanction activities that went well beyond the six points of ritual.

Surprisingly, for a group that had been formed in response to the prosecution of Mackonochie for illegal acts of ritual, the Church of England Working Men's Society was concerned very little with acts of ceremonial and their legality. Anglo-Catholicism attracted them with its vision of an ideal Church – one without pew rents in which all men were free and equal before God. Ritualism held little appeal for the average working man, although the

⁶⁹³ Hope, *Church Politics and Prospects*, p. 31.

working classes were not averse to the beauty of holiness. What most attracted them to Anglo-Catholicism was the promise of self-improvement, the sense of human dignity and respectability and the attractive personalities of those Anglo-Catholic clergymen who had ventured into the slums to work side by side with the labouring classes.

It was the guild movement that most clearly illustrated that Anglo-Catholicism in the Victorian era was about much more than Ritualism. Ceremonial was not a priority for the guilds, although a rule of life borrowed in part from the religious communities of the continent did often play a role in their activities. In fact, guild activities illustrate most clearly the spiritual demands made by Anglo-Catholicism upon its adherents. Beyond the hours of church attendance the guilds carried out a host of tasks that were designed to strengthen and develop the spiritual life of their members. The work of the guilds was not defensive in spirit and is representative of a positive and concerted commitment to Anglo-Catholicism.

With the female religious communities we see this commitment that was present in the guilds taken much further. The work that was carried out by the sisters within the framework of Anglo-Catholicism allowed them to live a life in which they felt valued and useful. Despite the high level of ritual present in the lives of the sisters, their mission was not to promote ceremonial or Anglo-Catholicism, but to carry out essential social work within a supportive spiritual structure.

The guilds were the group that devoted the most energy to spiritual development. The work of the English Church Union, the Church of England Working Men's Society, and the lay patrons was essentially

practical. The guilds exemplify the extent to which the Anglo-Catholic ideal of the Eucharistic Community did become, to some degree, a reality for Anglo-Catholics in this period. If Anglo-Catholicism from its time in Oxford was at its essence concerned with protecting the Church of England through the strengthening of its doctrines then these groups are the main defenders of the Catholic character of the National Church.

To be an Anglo-Catholic meant positively and actively participating in the life of the Church. At the centre of this involvement was the sacrament of the Eucharist and, to a lesser degree, the practice of confession, self examination and denial. The Anglo-Catholic laity who participated in these activities had to understand why they were important and this was the main focus of the guilds' emphasis on spiritual development and mutual support. The Church could only be protected from the forces of religious liberalism by a laity that understood the Church's ancient doctrines and incorporated these teachings into their everyday lives.

While the guilds and sisterhoods illustrate a conscious effort to be part of the Eucharistic Community, the influence of this was felt in all sections of the lay movement. To be an Anglo-Catholic was to make certain commitments. Frequent church attendance and communion were essential and often confession was also expected. Such activities led to higher levels of lay contact with the clergy than would be found in most non-Anglo-Catholic parishes of the Church of England. For many critics of Anglo-Catholicism this was further evidence of the controlling nature of the 'Puseyite' clergy who polluted the impressionable minds of young people and nurtured unhealthy relationships with devotees. What it actually meant was that the laity were much more involved in the life of the Church.

It certainly does not seem to have been easy to be a half-hearted Anglo-Catholic. The sisterhoods had strict entry procedures, as did many of the guilds, including the guilds that operated at a local level. In the 1890s the historian of the English Church Union was moved to comment that perhaps the organisation had been hasty in admitting some members in the earlier days, as some within the Union lacked the necessary commitment and moral character. Although not a member of the English Church Union, Beresford Hope fell foul of the same charge from the eminent Anglo-Catholic John Mason Neale, who remarked that Hope would always find it difficult to commit totally to Anglo-Catholicism because of his social standing and the company he kept. Despite his impressive record of church patronage, Hope was still not considered dedicated enough by Neale. Perhaps Neale did have a point: Hope did lead a life of aristocratic privilege and did not seem particularly keen to take up self denial.

Previous studies of Anglo-Catholicism have focused heavily upon the theology of the movement and on the activities of its clergy. Indeed, it was my concern over the lack of serious attention to the English Church Union, the Anglican sisterhoods and guilds, the Church of England Working Men's Society, and the lay patrons of the movement in the historiography of Anglo-Catholicism that prompted my decision to undertake this thesis. The wealth of information available on these groups proved astounding, and any one of the five groups I have studied could well have served as the subject for an entire thesis. I chose to examine all five groups, as this has allowed me to take a more thematic approach in which key characteristics of the Anglo-Catholic laity could be identified. By investigating the five organisations together, I have also been able to provide a more complete picture of the

Anglo-Catholic movement of the 1850s and 1860s, a movement that was vibrant with much lay activity. This vibrancy is even more surprising, when we recall the secessions of leading Anglo-Catholics from the Church of England that took place in the late 1840s and early 1850s.

It has become apparent through this study that Ritualism was not the primary motivation in these organisations. While ceremonial had an important role to play for Victorian Anglo-Catholics, it was not a central concern for the five lay groups I have examined. Contrary then to the views of many at the time, Anglo-Catholicism was not solely about aesthetics and the movement attracted a much broader range of people than the critical literature of the time would suggest.

One of the key criticisms of the Anglo-Catholic movement from contemporaries was that the clergy were somehow 'sneaky' and that they tricked people into becoming involved with the movement with the eventual aim of bringing them to convert Roman Catholicism. This obviously says much about the anti-Catholicism that pervaded nineteenth-century English society but it is also revealing with regards to the Anglo-Catholic laity. It has become apparent in the course of this study that the involvement of the clergy in the lay groups was often fairly minimal. Certainly with groups where one would expect a large degree of clerical involvement, such as the sisterhoods, it is notable by its absence. The Church of England Working Men's Society made a point of constantly stressing their autonomy from the clergy, as did many of those who advocated an entirely lay-led guild movement. With figures such as Beresford Hope and Robert Brett there is even an expression of contempt for those clerics, and more specifically those bishops, who did not share their point of view.

This is somewhat surprising considering the emphasis on the spiritual authority of the clergy that was such a key part of Anglo-Catholicism and the source of so much criticism, especially when that authority was exercised in form of private confession or spiritual guidance for women. What we see instead is a laity that was organising itself in order to play a significant role in the work of the church. With the sisterhoods especially we see a group that would not have been as successful as they were, had they been under close episcopal control. Their ability to travel across diocesan boundaries would have been curtailed and the quality of their work damaged by the failure of the majority of male clergy to understand their motivations and the extent to which they felt that they had been called to their work by God.

The Anglo-Catholic laity were certainly inspired by the clergy with whom they came into contact, but they were not in general controlled by them, and definitely not in the way that was suggested by many nineteenth-century opponents of the Anglo-Catholic movement. Pusey is mentioned on several occasions as a spiritual guide for prominent Anglo-Catholic figures. No where is the inspirational quality of a clergyman more apparent than in the person of Alexander Heriot Mackonochie. His influence on the early Church of England Working Men's Society was immense and for members of that organisation he was the embodiment of what, not just a member of the clergy, but also a man, should be.

Despite the strong affection for Mackonochie, however, the Church of England Working Men's Society was keen to establish itself as a group which operated entirely as a lay organisation and without clerical control. There had been no clerical involvement in the foundation of the society. This lack

of clerical control was also a characteristic of many of the guilds and sisterhoods. There was a strong desire on the part of the Anglo-Catholic laity to use their skills, whether this was the ability to carry out nursing on the part of the sisterhoods, or the repairing of the church porch by members of the Working Men's Society, to benefit the Church and their communities.

There has been an assumption in the bibliography of the nineteenth-century Anglo-Catholic movement that the clergy were in control of the lay groups which formed. Recent work by those such as Susan Mumm on the sisterhoods and Frances Knight on nineteenth century Anglicanism have gone some way to begin to redress the balance and look at the ecclesiastical history of the period beyond the clerical hierarchy. Without the laity there is no national church and there is no Anglo-Catholicism.

This study has demonstrated that there was a vibrant laity associated with Anglo-Catholicism and that they represented a broader spectrum of social class and religious opinion than is immediately apparent. This was a movement in which the general secretary of the Church of England Working Men's Society, Charles Powell, was as much an Anglo-Catholic as aristocratic Beresford Hope despite the difference in their understanding of what Anglo-Catholicism entailed. It has become apparent in the course of this research that the Anglo-Catholic laity were prepared to show astonishing levels of commitment to the movement, whether this was through their spiritual development in the case of the guilds, or in their dogged determination to construct churches which reflected the ideals of their religious persuasion.

The laity were concerned with a broad range of activities and interests in relation to Anglo-Catholicism and were not pre-occupied with ritualism or

opposition to the Public Worship Regulation Act of 1874. These were undeniably important issues for members of the Anglo-Catholic movement but there was much beyond them that has been examined in the course of this study. For some Anglo-Catholics it was the work that could be done in their immediate community that inspired and occupied them as has been seen in the case of both the guilds and the Working Men's Society. The ability to lead by example was valued by the movement as much as the defence mounted against the Public Worship Regulation Act.

This study has also allowed for some of the lesser-known figures of the movement to be examined and their contributions to Anglo-Catholicism assessed. Charles Powell was a fascinating and engaging man who deserves to be recognised as an important personality within the movement. A similar figure was Robert Brett, who worked tirelessly to promote Anglo-Catholicism through his church building efforts. What is most appealing about these men is that they do not necessarily fit the criteria of the Anglo-Catholic which has been presented in the past. They, along with Charles Wood, Beresford Hope and Anglican sisters like Emily Aykbowm, were not weak characters under the control of the clergy, but strong and forceful individuals who did much to advance the Anglo-Catholic movement in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Their failings are also as important as their achievements. The inability of Brett, Hope, and Charles Powell to accept the rulings of the episcopacy and their constant challenging of the hierarchy of the Church of England say much about the way in which many Anglo-Catholics actually felt restrained by the episcopacy which was key to the understanding of their movement. Powell's financial scandal and the pettiness of Beresford Hope add colour to the picture of the Anglo-Catholic

movement and illustrate how its appeal was not restricted to impressionable young men and women.

Each of the groups investigated had a membership that expanded across the entire country. In the case of the English Church Union, the Church of England Working Men's Society and the guilds, complicated local and national structures were in operation. In some cases this caused conflict and for both the E.C.U. and the Working Men's Society financial irregularities were to prove damaging. In the early bibliography of the movement and in the largely hagiographical biographies of its leading figures, Anglo-Catholicism was presented as something almost ethereal and its clergy beyond reproach because of their dedication to the movement. These financial scandals go some way to presenting the Anglo-Catholics as ordinary men and women with faults and failings.

The English Church Union was also subjected to its fair share of disagreements between members. During Colin Lindsay's presidency his leadership abilities were challenged by John Cutler who alleged that the council of the ECU were purposefully concealing the financial difficulties of the organisation from its members. Charles Wood also had to act as an arbiter between members who were quick to judge their fellow Anglo-Catholics as not quite Anglo-Catholic enough.

Within the Church of England Working Men's Society the bickering was much more pronounced and Charles Powell did little to defuse the atmosphere which developed around his financial difficulties. There were clearly petty jealousies over who had access to the accounts and it did not go unnoticed that the General Secretary seemed to be able to go gallivanting

around North America while the ordinary members struggled to raise funds back in England. The way in which other Anglo-Catholics reacted to the actions of the Working Men's Society are also interesting and illustrate that class divisions were as pronounced within Anglo-Catholicism as in any other group in Victorian society. When the financial irregularities came to light the members were reprimanded in the *Church Times* like a bunch of naughty school boys who should never have been trusted to govern themselves in the first place.

Class divisions were also apparent with the sisterhoods who, although they did much to challenge the acceptable role of women in society, did little to promote any changes to the class system. Only women of a certain standing were permitted to join the female religious communities as full sisters and those who were lower down the social stratum were expected to become lay sisters. This essentially meant that they carried out the menial tasks in the community. Despite the fact that the sisters were the champions of working-class women and children, and directed their efforts very much towards helping this group in society, behind the doors of the community they perpetuated the divisions of the age.

This study has done much to address the issue of the lay contribution to a movement that has previously been regarded only in the context of the leading clerical figures that were so important to its foundation and development. There is, however, much further work to be done. The scope of this work did not permit further investigation into lay patrons although there are other key figures whose contribution now requires examination. The study of men such as Henry Tritton, who gave vast sums of money in order that Beresford Hope could achieve his ambitions in ecclesiastical

architecture, and George Josiah Palmer, the first proprietor of the strongly partisan *Church Times*, would offer further insight into the lay efforts of Anglo-Catholics. No study had previously been conducted into the Church of England Working Men's Society and there is perhaps now scope to investigate in greater detail the workings of local branches and to discover exactly what happened to the enigmatic Charles Powell. Similarly with the English Church Union there is much work yet to be done on internal tensions and the relationship between the leadership and the local branches.

The guilds are another group that had previously been viewed almost exclusively in terms of Stewart Headlam's Guild of St. Matthew. It is now clear that Headlam's group was far from typical of the movement and that hundreds of guilds existed across the country that were focused on the spiritual development of their members and took little interest in social reform movements. Again there is further scope for study here, perhaps focusing upon the devotional literature of the guilds and concentrating upon the spiritual aspect of their nature.

This study has, for the first time, examined the Anglo-Catholic laity in terms of the organisations to which they belonged and the work they carried out. The picture that emerges is one of a vibrant and sometimes volatile group. They were passionate about the ideals of the movement and did more than merely pay lip service to them. Anglo-Catholicism became an essential part of their personal identity and not something they participated in only on Sundays. This group also operated largely beyond clerical control and, while they expressed great respect for the clergy, they were not afraid to criticise and challenge them. The efforts of the laity, in their various groups

or acting independently, illustrate that to some degree the Anglo Catholic ideal of the Eucharistic Community could become a reality.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Anglican Sisterhoods Founded in England 1845-1901⁶⁹⁴

Date	Name	Location	Notes
1845	Sisterhoods of the Holy Cross	Park Village West, London	Amalgamated Society of Most Holy Trinity 1856
1846	Sisters of Charity	St Paul's, Knightsbridge	
1848	Community of St Mary the Virgin	Wantage, Berks	Founded by W.J. Butler
1848	Society of the Most Holy Trinity	Devonport	Founded by Lydia Sellon
1848	Nursing Institute of St John's House	London	Became Nursing Sisters of St John the Divine 1883
1851	Society of the Holy & Undivided Trinity	Oxford	Founded by Marian Rebecca Hughes
1851	Community of St Thomas the Martyr	Oxford	Founded by Thomas Chamberlain
1851	Society of St John the Baptist	Clewer, Windsor	Founded by T.T. Carter
1851	Society of All Saints	London	Founded by Harriet Brownlow Byron
1851	Sisterhood of St Michael & All Angels	Bussage, Gloucestershire	
1854	Community of All Hallows	Ditchingham, Surrey	Founded by Lavinia Crosse
1855	Community of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Brighton	Founded by Wagner
1855	Society of St Margaret	East Grinstead, Surrey	Founded by John Mason Neale
1857	Community of the Holy Cross	Wapping, London	Founded by Elizabeth Neale
1858	Sisterhood of St Mary the Virgin	Ipswich	
Date	Name	Location	Notes

⁶⁹⁴ P.F. Anson, *The Call of the Cloister*, p.591-593 and S. Mumm, *Stolen Daughters, Virgin Mothers*, Appendix I, 211-214.

Where the foundation date is unknown the community has been identified through the research of Mumm using the records of other sisterhoods and contemporary literature.

1858	Sisterhood of St Peter	Horbury, Yorkshire	Founded by Canon John Sharp, Vicar of Horbury, pupil of Pusey
1858	Community of the Holy Rood	Middlesborough	
1860s	St Mary's Community & Orphanage	Lambeth, London	
1860	Sisterhood of the Blessed Virgin	Tenterden, Kent	
1861	Community of St Peter	Brompton, London	Founded by Mr Lancaster (a wealthy City merchant) and his wife.
1863	Community of Mount Galway	Norwich	
1863	Community of the Good Samaritan	Coatham	
1864	St Martin's Home	Blenheim Street, Liverpool	
1864	Sisterhood of the Compassion		
1864	Sisters of St Joseph of Nazareth		
1865	Community of the Holy Name	Vauxhall, London	Involvement from Rev. George Herbert, of St Peter's Vauxhall
1865	Community of St Mary at the Cross	Shoreditch, London	Founded by Rev. Daniel Nihil. First Superior was Harriet Skinner, sister of James Skinner, curate at St Barnabas, Pimlico.
1866	Community of St Wilfred	Exeter	Involvement from Rev. John Gilbert Pearse
1866	Society of the Sisters of Bethany		Founded by Ethelreda Anna Bennet, friend of Harriet Brownlow Byron.
1867	St James Sisterhood	Liverpool	
1867	St Ethelreda's Sisterhood		
1868	Sisterhood of SS Mary and John	Chiswick, London	
1868	Sisters of Charity	Bristol	Involvement from Rev. Arthur Hawkins Ward. Friend of Butler, Carter, and JM Neale.

Date	Name	Location	Notes
1868	Benedictine Nuns	Feltham, Middlesex	Founded by Fr Ignatius. When most of the sisters questioned him he excommunicated them. Only 3 remained faithful to him. Ignatius believed that he was the divinely appointed apostle of Christ.
1869	Community of St Cyprian	Dorset Square, London	
1869	St Lucy's Home	Gloucester	
1869	Community of Reparation to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament	Southwark, London	Involvement from Rev. A.B. Goulden.
1870s	Community of Hospitaller Nuns	Osnaburgh Street, London	
1870	Sisters of the Church	Kilburn, London	Founded by Emily Ayckbowm
1871		Folkestone	Name of community unknown, operating in parish of St Peter's.
1871	Community of the Paraclete	Croydon	
1873	Sisterhood of St Etheldred		
1874	Community of St Laurence	Norwich	Small community with involvement from Rev. E.A. Hilyard.
1877	Servants of the Cross	Fulham, London	
1878	St Michael's	Croydon	
1879	Community of St Katherine of Egypt	Fulham, London	Founded by Paulina Mary Granville. Small community that operated without publicity.
1879	Missionary Community of St Denys		
1880s	Sisters of the Saving Name	Hackney, London	
1881	Community of the Name of Jesus	Great Maplestead, Essex	
1881	Sisterhood of the Holy Child	Clapton	
1883	Community of the Epiphany	London and Maidenhead	Founded by George Howard Wilkinson, Bishop of Truro.

Date	Name	Location	Notes
1884		Llangfrassfechum, North Wales	Name unknown. Sisterhood headed by Sister Parry
1884	St Gabriel's House of Rest	Folkestone	
1884	Sisterhood of St Agnes	London, Leeds & Bradford	
1884	St Cyprian's Sisterhood	Dorset Square, London	
1886	Sisterhood of St James	Kilkhampton, Cornwall	
1887	Sisterhood of Faith, Hope, and Charity		
1890s		Clerkenwell, London	Name Unknown. Community operating in parish of Holy Comforter.
1891	Sisterhood of the Holy Ghost of the Comforter	Worthing, Essex	
1891	Community of the Holy Comforter	Edmonton, London	
1891	Sisterhood of the Holy Ghost of the Comforter	Worthing, Essex	
1892	Community of the Compassion of Jesus	Deptford, London	Founded by Mother Mary Margaret (lay name not given).
1894	Community of the Ascension		
1894	Society of the Incarnation of the Eternal Son	Plaistow	Founded by Gertrude Bromby, daughter of the Rev. C.H. Bromby, later Bishop of Tasmania.
1894	Community of the Ascension	London	
1894	Sisterhood of the Holy Childhood	Oxford	
1895	Community of St Michael and All Angels	London	Founded four women, three of whom had belonged to other communities, under guidance of Mother Ellen (lay name not given) and Rev. A. Tidcomb.

Date	Name	Location	Notes
1897	Servants of Christ	Upton Park, London	Founded by Mother Elizabeth (lay name not given). Took her vow of chastity in 1892 and was trained at Warminster College for Women Missionaries.
1898	Community of Sacred Compassion	Reading & Hastings	
1898	Community of the Holy Family	London	Founded by Agnes Mason.
1899	Community of the compassion of Jesus	Deptford, London	
1899	Community of Our Lady of Nazareth	Dover	
Not Known	St Catherine's Convent	Folkestone	
Not Known	St Thomas' Home	Elson, near Gosport	
Not Known	Benedictine Community of SS Mary and Scholastica		
Not Known	Community of the Visitation		

Appendix 2

Membership Figures for the English Church Union 1860 to 1894

Year	Membership	Numbers who joined	Rise/Decrease in Membership	Difference between rise/decrease in membership and numbers joining.
1860	205	145		
1861	436	231	+231	0
1862	842	406	+406	0
1863	1,431	620	+589	-31
1864	1,674	375	+243	-132
1865	2,300	622	+626	+4
1866	3,215	1,001	+915	-86
1867	4,594	1,470	+1379	-91
1868	5,889	2,099	+1295	-804
1869	6,755	1,513	+866	-647
1870	7,895	1,210	+1140	-70
1871	8,675	1,134	+780	-354
1872	9,312	1,001	+637	-364
1873	9,806	1,741	+494	-1247
1874	10,517	1,240	+711	-529
1875	12,602	2,860	+2085	-775
1876	13,877	2,038	+1815	-223
1877	16,498	3,416	+2621	-795
1878	17,423	2,150	+925	-1225
1879	17,656	1,448	+233	-1215
1880	17,736	1,180	+80	-1100
1881	19,420	2,619	+1684	-935
1882	20,530	1,912	+1110	-802
1883	21,164	1,503	+634	-869
1884	21,165	1,503	+1	-1502
1885	20,870	832	-295	-1127
1886	21,470	1,614	+600	-1014
1887	22,017	1,755	+547	-1208
1888	23,289	2,504	+1272	-1232
1889	27,164	5,870	+3875	-1995
1890	30,861	5,388	+3697	-1691
1891	32,975	4,032	+2114	-1918
1892	33,760	3,108	+785	-2323

Year	Membership	Numbers who joined	Rise/Decrease in Membership	Difference between rise/decrease in membership and numbers joining.
1893	34,761	3,082	+1001	-2081
1894	35,034	2,710	+273	-2437

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