

The Episcopate of Bishop Benson 1877-1883
and the beginnings of Truro Diocese and
Cathedral:
The Umbrella and the Duck.

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Abstract

The first Bishop of Truro, Edward White Benson, saw the building of a Cathedral as the centre piece of his vision for Cornwall. The foundation stones were laid in May 1880, only three years after his enthronement. The building itself, the ability to raise money for it in impoverished Cornwall and the use of Cathedral Canons for training, education and mission for the whole diocese were intended to inspire faith and make the Cathedral the mother church for all Christians in Cornwall. The Cathedral revived an imagined vibrant medieval Church in Cornwall, some of whose saints were named in the Canons' stalls and whose bishops, Benson believed, were his predecessors. Benson failed to unify Cornish people around this vision. Methodism was far too strong in Cornwall and remained so for many decades after he left Cornwall in 1883 to become Archbishop of Canterbury. Here Benson was no more successful implementing the vision on a wider stage. The state, not the church, became the umbrella organisation that started to reach everyone at local and national level. Nevertheless, Anglicanism in Cornwall did revive in Benson's time and disagreements between Anglicans over styles of worship and other matters were partially sorted out by Benson, both as Bishop of Truro and as Archbishop of Canterbury. Benson's interest in history further encouraged Cornwall's interest in its Celtic past. An increasingly pluralistic culture enabled a reviving Anglicanism to take its place alongside Methodism in Cornwall, without ever coming close to replacing it.

Shortly before Benson arrived in Cornwall, a Baptist minister suggested that the sturdy non-conformist people of Cornwall needed a Bishop no more than a duck needed an umbrella. Cornish people appreciated Bishop Benson and the

Cathedral he helped to inspire. By and large they chose not to shelter under the umbrella of the Church of England. In the words of Edward Fish in a letter to the *Royal Cornwall Gazette* published on the 5 January 1877:

“Looking around on this great Non-conformist county we did not need a bishop any more than a duck needs an umbrella. My statement as a Non-conformist is this, and I do but echo the opinion of thousands in the county, we do not need a bishop.”

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Chapter 1

The background to the new diocese: the development of diocesan consciousness in Cornwall.

The Diocese of Truro was created in 1876 when, on 11 August, the Bill establishing the Cornish bishopric was finally passed by Parliament, and the Order in Council was made on 15 December 1876. Edward White Benson was chosen to be the first Bishop of the new Diocese. He was consecrated Bishop at St Paul's Cathedral, London on St Mark's Day, 25 April 1877 and enthroned at St Mary's, Truro amid much celebration on 1 May 1877.¹

The area of the new diocese was to be the old archdeaconry of Cornwall, which included the whole of the county of Cornwall, the Isles of Scilly and five Devon parishes – Werrington, North Petherwin, St Giles in the Heath, Virginstow and Broadwoodwidge (this last parish was taken back into Exeter Diocese in 1922).² These bald facts disguise a pre-history to the event, which had lasted the entire 19th century and, by some accounts, much longer than that. Firstly, the more immediate history of the attempts to create a new Cornish diocese can be traced to the early years of the 19th century. In 1804 John Whitaker, the Rector of Ruanlanihorne published a book entitled "The Ancient Cathedral of Cornwall" which was allegedly "widely-read and esteemed".³

A generation later, Henry Phillpotts became Bishop of Exeter in 1831, and that year undertook a tour of his vast diocese which then included Cornwall as well as Devon. He interviewed clergy and laity and found much that needed reform. His proposals to solve the problems that he inherited included the

creation of new parishes and the building of many new churches.⁴ In 1859, the newly-created Exeter Diocesan Kalendar recorded 693 benefices and 900 serving clergy in the undivided diocese. The diocese had nearly as many clergy in 1848, when Phillpotts estimated the number of clergy in it at 800. "No bishop could even attempt to remember the names of the parishes, let alone the personal details of clergy and churchwardens, ecclesiastical state and needs of so many and so diverse parochial units".⁵ In 1842 Phillpotts called for the division of the massive diocese in his visitation charge of that year.⁶ This was a bold step by Phillpotts. The Royal Commission on the Established Church had done nothing in the Established Church Act (1836) to reduce the size of the diocese, having earlier confirmed that the Isles of Scilly were to form part of it. Parishes, church buildings and clergy were all becoming more plentiful, and the geographical area was enlarging under the new energetic Bishop of Exeter. In 1842 Phillpotts made a proposal which was to reverse the process by splitting the large diocese into two. He remained in post as diocesan bishop for 38 years from 1831 to 1869, one of the longest tenures of office that any Anglican post-reformation bishop has had.⁷ This gave him the time to work out how he might implement the proposals he had made that the large, unwieldy diocese of Exeter should be split.

The immediate attempt to create a new diocese came to nothing. C H Frewen proposed an unsuccessful private members Bill in 1846. In 1847, a Bill for the Manchester bishopric was introduced into Parliament and made its slow path through the legislative process.⁸ Phillpotts was one of those in the House of Lords who argued that this should presage an increase in the number of bishops and dioceses throughout the Church of England. The majority of the Lords believed that more dioceses would increase the influence of bishops

sitting in the House of Lords, where it was presumed any new bishop would sit. To avoid this, it was suggested that the dioceses of St Asaph and Bangor in Wales should be amalgamated, thus making room for another bishop in the House of Lords, but this was rejected.⁹ In the course of the debate on forming Manchester diocese, it was revealed that the provision of a bishop for Cornwall was also under consideration. On 13 July 1847 Lord John Russell, Prime Minister, stated in the House of Commons that it was intended 'if necessary' to nominate a bishop for Cornwall under the title of Bishop of Bodmin. The idea of having a diocese for Cornwall, and also to make its ecclesiastical centre at Bodmin was reinforced by the statistical survey of John Wallis, vicar of Bodmin from 1817 to 1866, in the Bodmin Register (1838) and in the Cornwall Register (1847), the latter periodical thus achieving a circulation throughout Cornwall. Wallis estimated the population of the undivided diocese of Exeter to be 900,000 and asserted that for a population only 30,000 more at 930,000, Wales had four bishoprics. Cornwall's population, which Wallis believed was increasing by 10,000 every 10 years, was approaching 400,000, which would exceed the population in 13 existing English dioceses, including Oxford, Bristol and Worcester. Wallis also argued that Bodmin church was the largest in Cornwall, the Assizes and Sessions were held in Bodmin, the Archdeacon's Registry with 70,000 wills was in the town and Bodmin was geographically in the centre of Cornwall.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the agitation to create new dioceses besides Manchester in 1847 was not continued in Parliament. According to Morrish, Russell had gone too far in saying what he had said - it was a "rash statement". Miles Brown attributes it to jealousy towards increasing the power of bishops in the House of Lords. Increasing their number would increase their voting power.

Many MPs had come into Parliament in the years following the great Reform Act of 1832 hoping to limit it.¹¹

Miles Brown indicates that it possibly did not help that in the same year, 1847, Truro was also proposed as the ecclesiastical centre of the diocese. Writing under the pseudonym "Z", a correspondent to the *Royal Cornwall Gazette* pointed out the possible inadequacies of Bodmin, which was situated on a branch line of the railway. "Z" also argued that though Bodmin church was "noble", it could not be enlarged, whereas St Mary's Truro, though much smaller, could be enlarged and made into a suitable cathedral church. While this was remarkably prescient, it did not help the cause of the Cornish cathedral that two towns within Cornwall presented rival claims. In a later issue of the *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, a correspondent named "Moderator" upheld the case for Bodmin, prompting a riposte from "Z" that the original Commission had not mentioned the see town, only the possibility of a bishop in Cornwall. The number of churches in and around Truro, three of which had daily services and frequent communion, was also used as an argument in favour of Truro, since diocesan activities in any Truro-based Cathedral would not displace townspeople who would have other churches to attend.¹² Those promoting the Truro case could also query Bodmin's claim to be the mediaeval centre of the church of Cornwall. They argued that on historical grounds St Germans had an even greater claim through its association with the Saxon bishops of Cornwall, but with the added comment that St Germans church and parish were too small to be the site of a new see town. One other argument which "Z" held against Bodmin was that it had vigorously opposed Bishop Phillpotts' controversial attempt in 1844 to insist on the wearing of surplices (when preaching throughout the diocese), which R A Burns argues can be interpreted as an

aspect of growing diocesanism, or "diocesan consciousness". "Reviewing events, Phillpotts' 1845 charge stressed that it was the diocesan bishop's duty to secure uniformity in ritual practice if not doctrinal belief among his clergy and that the canonical obedience to the Bishop was the foundation of unity".¹³

The ruling provoked the so-called "surplice riots" in Exeter and opposition in other parts of the diocese, including Bodmin. The surplice, often seen in modern times as a normal part of low-church Anglican clerical attire was then seen as Catholic, so the opposition to the edict that followed in Exeter, Bodmin and elsewhere was anti-Catholic in character. Phillpotts argued in his 1845 charge that the opposition proved the "impotence of pastoral rule among us. And impotence it must be, so long as men are not taught to see in their spiritual Ruler a character more sacred than that of a mere functionary of an Establishment, and therefore to obey and revere his directions, as bearing a higher sanction than the penalties of a written law".¹⁴ Wallis, the Vicar of Bodmin, writing in later issues of the *Cornwall Register* was dismissive of Truro's claims, arguing that places like Kilkhampton, Launceston, Maker and Calstock were further from Truro than they were from Exeter and that Bodmin was 63 miles nearer Truro than Exeter was. Truro could not be considered the centre if the whole of Cornwall was taken into account.¹⁵ Parliament did not continue to pursue the matter of a Cornish bishopric after the summer recess of 1847. The feeling that Russell had gone too far "embarrassed subsequent less enthusiastic administrations".¹⁶ It was perhaps one reason why the matter was quietly dropped at parliamentary level. Another reason "was undoubtedly the jealousy of the influence of the church and opposition to the increase in the number of bishops".¹⁷

The dispute between Truro and Bodmin as possible see towns also encouraged fence-sitting in at least some of those areas that would become part of the new diocese. Powder Deanery Chapter meeting in Tregony on 10 September 1847 with 26 clergy present expressed great satisfaction at the proposed appointment of a Bishop for Cornwall, but hoped that there would be further deliberation by the government and Ecclesiastical Commissioners before a final decision was reached as to the seat of the see. This resolution was to be sent to other rural deans, Members of Parliament, the landed proprietors, Archdeacon and Bishop.¹⁸ 'Further deliberation' was a recipe for postponement of the decisions, to which parliament was not adverse, though the postponement of the decision in parliament did not stop what Morrish calls agitation "through the normal channels of Victorian pressure-group politics-public meetings and private lobbying, pamphlets, letters to editors, decisions in such assemblies as Convocation, Church Congress and diocesan conferences".¹⁹

The next stage in the initiative to bring a diocese to Cornwall came from the rector of St Columb Major, Samuel Edmund Walker, who was presented to the living by his wealthy father in 1841 and remained as rector until 1869. Walker's father had considerable wealth based on his career as "a solicitor given to speculation".²⁰ When he died in 1851, Samuel Edmund Walker inherited £250,000. St Columb was then one of the most lucrative livings in Cornwall with about £1300 of yearly income and a large parish church. In 1854 Walker offered the church and his house as a contribution to the new bishopric of Cornwall. St Columb was initially looked at favourably by correspondents to the *Royal Cornwall Gazette* and elsewhere. It was certainly a way out of the impasse between deciding whether Truro or Bodmin should be the ecclesiastical centre

and it also would solve the problem of where the new bishop should live. Walker's scheme also gave new impetus to the idea of having a bishopric, an idea which by 1854 was seven years away from the parliamentary consideration of the idea in 1847, and needed its profile raising again. It was for a while "the only game in town" and therefore supported by those who wished to see a Cornish bishopric. Walker made his proposal in July 1854 and in September a meeting of clergy was called to rally support. Walker's proposal also rallied support among lay people. Edmund Carlyon from St Austell, who worked hard for the creation of the diocese and cathedral until his death in 1911, began his public expression of interest with a letter to the *Royal Cornwall Gazette* in September 1854, asking why lay people should not be called together for the same purpose as the clergy.²¹ The *Royal Cornwall Gazette* of 6 October carried an article supporting the bishopric which the clergy conference in September had recommended, with St Columb as the see town. Despite Walker's generosity, money was still an issue, but ameliorated by Phillpotts' proposal to the meeting of clergy in September that he would be willing to forego £500 of his annual income to help the project and that he was ready to hand over the patronage he had of Cornish livings to a new bishop.

The Exeter Chapter thought that the income that Phillpotts was proposing should come from the estates of the Bishop of Exeter, which had been handed over to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and were partly in Cornwall. Morrish goes into this in some detail. "Up to the middle of the 19th century bishops of Exeter had enjoyed the Cornish manor of Lawhitton which seems to have been held continuously by the see since the tenth century. However, the estates of the bishopric were vested in the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1869 and though Exeter provided £800 annually after 1876 for the partial endowment of

Truro, neither the Truro Act nor the Commissioners' accountancy required or permitted any particular property to contribute to that subsidy. The agitators had hoped for some such earmarking but eventually had to realise that it was not possible".²² The source of endowment from Exeter was a lively issue of debate in the 1854 discussions. Bishop Phillpotts' eldest son, William John Phillpotts, who was both Archdeacon of Cornwall and Chancellor of Truro Diocese wrote to the (Church) *Guardian* newspaper on 4 October 1854, stating that he had expectations of endowment from some such source. The Cathedral Commissioners recommended earmarking episcopal property in Cornwall for this purpose but the Ecclesiastical Commissioners minuted that such a proposal was *ultra vires* from their point of view, as the law then stood. "Thus the matter rested for a while" is Miles Brown's succinct summary of where this left the proposal.²³ Endowment of the new see, despite Walker's generosity, was not the only problem which those seeking to promote new diocese faced. St Columb was seen as being at a disadvantage by not being on the main train line, which was becoming increasingly important as a means of transportation and communication across Cornwall. In fact, it may be said that the location of St Columb away from the railway was the greater problem in its bid to replace Truro or Bodmin as the front-runner in the race to decide which town in Cornwall should become the see town. Endowment remained a problem whichever town was chosen. The Cornish claim to endowment from Exeter estates was repeated by the Cornish deputation to the then Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston, who was totally uninterested.²⁴ The argument was also made in a petition from the deanery of Kerrier in 1865. Reginald Hobhouse, later to become the first Archdeacon of Bodmin, "was still demanding such a windfall as late as 1875 by when it was a lost cause".²⁵ But the demand for St Columb to

be the see town was not repeated and re-animated with such force after the events of 1854 –1855.

Most, but not all, of the developments in church politics during the 1850s favoured those who wished to see more dioceses formed. The Cathedral Commission confirmed episcopal commitment to an enlarged number of bishops. The second and third reports of the Cathedral Commission recommended that legislation be drawn up sanctioning division. St Columb was not to be the only beneficiary. Southwell, Westminster and re-dividing Gloucester and Bristol were suggested as well. Secondly, the return of overseas bishops like George Selwyn highlighted some of the perceived growth and pastoral impact in those new dioceses abroad, even though they were poorly funded. Ripon and Manchester dioceses within the Church of England could also be cited as examples of growth and improved pastoral impact thanks to the subdivision of the larger diocese out of which they were formed. A comparison could also be drawn with the subdivision of large parishes.²⁶ The restoration of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in 1850 and the creation of new English sees, though opposed by many in the Church of England as "Papal Aggression", nevertheless gave a helpful precedent for the creation of new dioceses within the Church of England. The growing infirmity of several of the first generation of reforming bishops, such as Phillpotts and Blomfield, coupled with the near impossibility of bishops to retire, was a further factor in favour of extra episcopal provision. It was said by a later advocate of reform that there was not a healthy bishop between London and St Ives.²⁷

Favourable as all these factors were to the creation of new dioceses, the problem which was overriding them all was the problem of money and the

attitude of the Ecclesiastical Commission towards it. In 1850 the merger of episcopal and general funds took place as part of the general improvement of the Commission's efficiency. Reforming bishops such as Blomfield and Wilberforce were hoping to contribute to the endowment of new dioceses from their own revenues and were unsuccessful when they sought an explicit acknowledgement that the new dioceses could be endowed from the amalgamated fund. Burns argues that the Act uniting the two funds was the main obstacle to the creation of new dioceses in the 1850s and 1860s.²⁸ The 1850 Act made the case for more dioceses more controversial at the same time as it became more popular. Since there was only one fund, which united episcopal and other revenues controlled by the Ecclesiastical Commission, a definite case had to be made if Commission funds were to be sought, and any money given would be at the expense of any other project that anyone sought these funds for. The arguments from practical expediency, proximity to a train line, the excessive size of the undivided Exeter diocese, (both in population and geographical extent), and the availability or possible availability of a suitable church in Bodmin and St Columb, or a possible site in Truro, could not by themselves suffice. Others, especially the Ecclesiastical Commission, also on grounds of practical expediency, could argue that the money could be spent for a variety of other purposes.

Throughout the long struggle for a diocese, practical considerations had to be augmented by historical and ethnological ones. The argument from history was present in Whittaker's 1801 book reminding his readers of an ancient cathedral at St Germans. John Wallis, Vicar of Bodmin, was a man of antiquarian interests and in his 1847 publication he observed that the division of the diocese would be "an act of tardy justice" because for 800 years "we have been

deprived of our ancient see." Wallis also noted that Cornwall had been proposed as a diocese by Henry VIII.²⁹

Morrish argues that Wallis's originality "was not so much in the discovery of ancient precedents which were well documented, but in pointing to their relevance". When agitation for a diocese started again 1854 with Walker's offer of church, rectory and money, the historical arguments were again used. In July 1854, the *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, which generally supported the establishment, reported Bishop Christopher Wordsworth's reference in Convocation to a see in Cornwall in ancient times.³⁰ When the clergy met at Bodmin in September, Wallis linked the two ideas. He argued that if the revenues of the ancient see of Cornwall were appropriated to the renovation of the diocese, there would be no need to go to Dr Walker or anyone else to finance the project. Wallis's suggestion thus overcame the practical difficulty that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners were difficult to persuade, if the distribution of assets had not been specifically authorised in 1836; but Wallis did so in a way which may have been intended to suggest "that all episcopal assets in Cornwall whether acquired before or after the 11th century were morally Cornish and had been misappropriated to support a bishop in Exeter".³¹ Wallis succeeded in becoming Honorary Secretary of the committee formed by the clergy at its September meeting. The "minutes of proceedings", which were subsequently circulated, bear the subtitle "Restoration of a Bishopric to Cornwall". From this time it became standard for the new diocese that was being campaigned for to be described as "restored" rather than created. The petition from the inhabitants of Truro at about the same time mentioned that Cornwall had its own diocese in early times.³²

When the Bodmin committee was reconstituted in 1859, it was specifically charged to work for the "restoration" of the bishopric to Cornwall. The committee sponsored a pamphlet written by Arthur Tatham. Tatham argued for "the re-establishment of an episcopal see in Cornwall" and that "the diocese of Exeter has a claim, prior perhaps to all others for subdivision, and that the county of Cornwall ought to be constituted a separate see." This was a reworking of an argument which Rev W. Rogers had used five years earlier at the time of the Walker proposal, that if a Cornish see had seemed reasonable to Henry VIII, it would be even more so in the 1850s with a greater population. Again, history and practical considerations were intertwined. A leading article in the *Royal Cornwall Gazette* neatly combined the two arguments. "Exeter is thus unduly large because it was formed by the union in 1050 of two dioceses, Crediton and St Germans."³³

History, by itself, did not provide conclusive arguments to justify a new diocese. Indeed Reginald Hobhouse, later first Archdeacon of Bodmin, observed in 1860 that antiquity was against Cornwall because Cornwall had had no Bishop for so many centuries. Hobhouse instead advanced an ethnological argument when he wrote in the same book that the Cornish were "of a different race and of a different tone, habits and disposition, to those of Devonshire."³⁴ The ethnological argument had earlier been used by the Vicar of Kenwyn, Harold Browne at the Bodmin meeting of September 1854. Browne referred to the "peculiar and very interesting condition of the Cornish people". Browne's point was included in the 1855 petition from the archdeaconry, which observed that the Cornish were a people "with their own peculiar needs and feelings". Browne in his 1854 speech attempted to expand on what he meant by the distinctiveness of the Cornish: "the fact of there being a very large

proportion of the Cornish people a great mining population, and some of them engaged in our fisheries, renders them an independent and intelligent, and a self-relying people. And therefore, in some respects they are more difficult to manage; and yet, when managed and rightly led, they are more likely to form a noble and vigorous people".³⁵

During the early 1860s, Browne returned to the subject of a separate diocese for Cornwall on a number of occasions – at Church Congress in 1861 for instance. Addressing the Canterbury Province Convocation in 1865, Browne introduced the ethnic argument as well as the occupational argument. It was not just that farming predominated in Devon and that mining and fishing predominated in Cornwall, or that the established religion predominated in Devon and Wesleyanism in Cornwall. Browne also asserted that Devon was Saxon and that Cornwall was Celtic. The (Church) *Guardian* in an editorial commented on the distinctive race and occupation of the Cornish.³⁶ One reason why Browne is significant is that after his time as a vicar of Kenwyn, he became a senior bishop within the Church of England and, at one time, a candidate to become Archbishop of Canterbury. Therefore he could communicate his ideas in the House of Lords and thereby have a high profile with which to influence public opinion. A speech which Browne made in the Lords in 1867 was complemented by another peer, who referred to the "Celtic and Wesleyan propensities of the Cornish".³⁷

Up to the second half of the 1860s, appeals by the Cornish for a separate diocese had largely fallen on deaf ears. Many other counties wanted their own diocese and these concerns had been taken up by Lord Lyttelton in parliament from 1861.³⁸ Lyttelton's proposal was that there should be some form of general

legislation to permit the Church of England to increase the number of its dioceses at will. Neither the parliamentary debate on Lyttelton's Bill nor the discussion in Church Congress achieved anything, nor did the visit of Charles Longley, Archbishop of Canterbury, to Cornwall in 1863 to discover local feeling and report back, though he communicated with the Home Secretary, Sir George Grey.³⁹

Bishop Samuel Wilberforce of Oxford presented proposals to the Lords and to Convocation in 1863, and again to Convocation with Harold Browne in 1865. The reporting in the local press of the latter move clearly shows that an attempt was made by at least one sympathetic newspaper to win support for a Cornish diocese by promoting it as a pan-protestant initiative. The *Royal Cornwall Gazette* in an editorial condemned Saxon influences and the introduction of an "Italianate priesthood under St Augustine (which) almost extinguished the light of the ancient British church". The fact that Henry VIII had supported the proposal to have a separate Cornish diocese was also mentioned in the *Royal Cornwall Gazette* editorial, further enhancing the protestant credentials of the proposal.⁴⁰ While Henry VIII remained staunchly Catholic in his private devotions, his name more than any other was associated with the break with Rome.⁴¹ In 1867 an article originally contributed to the *Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall* by Rev. J J Carne was printed in abridged form in the Exeter Diocesan Calendar and Clergy List. This article was reported in each annual edition of the Calendar and Clergy List until the diocese was divided. The bishops of the earlier diocese were listed, beginning with Bishop Conan in 936 and ending with the union of the two dioceses of Crediton and Cornwall under Bishop Lyfing in 1042. Carne's commentary added that before this Saxon

episcopate there had been an independent British church in Cornwall refusing obedience to the Roman see.⁴²

In November 1868, Gladstone became Prime Minister. The tactical battle which Gladstone had won against Disraeli during the election campaign concerned the disestablishment of the Anglican Church in Ireland, a proposition which Gladstone supported. Nevertheless, Gladstone was still seen as an enthusiastic member of the Church of England, the reform and welfare of which was close to his heart. Ten months after his election as Prime Minister, the Rev. W. S. Lach-Szyrma addressed a pamphlet to Gladstone, which presented the various arguments in favour of a separate diocese for Cornwall. Born in Devonport, the son of a Polish emigre, Lach-Szyrma held preferments in Cornwall until 1890, with the exception of a brief spell in the early 1870s. He deployed all the arguments at his disposal and treated the ethnological argument with particular zeal. In his pamphlet to Gladstone Lach-Szyrma put forward seven reasons in favour of separating Exeter Diocese. Firstly, the existing diocese of Exeter was too large and with too great a population. Secondly, the reasons why the Cornish diocese was merged with Crediton no longer applied. Thirdly, the people of Cornwall were largely of a different race and occupation. Fourthly, the practical and pastoral problems of Cornwall could only be met by a resident bishop. Fifthly, funds were available. Sixthly, public opinion was in favour of the move. Lastly, objections to the project were unimportant. "A distinct race requires a distinct mode of treatment, and a course of ecclesiastical policy that might be very judicious and desirable for Devon would be imprudent and objectionable for Cornwall".⁴³

Despite the change in atmosphere that Gladstone's time as prime minister brought, it was not under Gladstone but under Disraeli that the final stages of the campaign were brought to successful fruition. The great achievement of Gladstone's first term of office as Prime Minister (1868-1874), in relation to Anglican church reform, was the revival of suffragan bishops in 1869-1870. This might be seen as antithetical to the proposals to divide dioceses, since a suffragan bishop enabled more bishops to be working in the dioceses without the need to split the dioceses concerned into smaller parts. According to P.T. Marsh it was Harold Browne, as Bishop of Winchester, who found a way round the difficulty that any funding for new dioceses from the Ecclesiastical Commission would be at the expense of money the Commission would have given to poor clergy.⁴⁴ The fact that the agitation in many places was for bishops to be more frequently resident in their dioceses and less frequently in parliament gave Browne the opportunity to propose, in the autumn of 1874, to sell Winchester House in St James' Square, London and buy a smaller replacement. Winchester diocese at that time included South London and it was in order to provide better provision of clergy for this area that Browne made his offer. The Home Secretary, R. A. Cross, met with the Bishops of Winchester, Rochester and London and members of the Ecclesiastical Commission to discuss the details. Out of these discussions came the decision to create a new diocese of St Albans to include Essex and Hertfordshire, which had been within Rochester diocese. Rochester would take east and mid Surrey, which included South London, from Winchester and one parish from the Diocese of London. As soon as £2000 a year was forthcoming, the see of St Albans would be created. The Bishop of Rochester agreed to sell his country house, Danbury, and out of the proceeds pay for a new house for himself and a house for the proposed

Bishop of St Albans, though in the event the Bishop of Rochester became the Bishop of St Albans and the house in Rochester was used for his successor. The Bill, which the Home Secretary R. A. Cross introduced into parliament in March 1875 authorised the Ecclesiastical Commission to put the scheme into effect. Though the parliamentary majority was 273 votes in favour to 61 against and the Bill was quickly enacted, Marsh maintains "the apparent ease with which this took place was deceptive. Any opposition could be enough, particularly in such a hard working session as this one was, to choke a Bill out unless the government firmly supported it. Furthermore, the care with which Cross had worked out the Bill's details weakened the opposition by depriving it of all but abstract ground for attack".⁴⁵

Also in the early part of 1875, Edmund Carlyon called a meeting at Plymouth, attended by the Earl of Devon, Lord Eliot and many other clergy and lay supporters, which resolved to set up a committee for promoting the division of the diocese of Exeter. The timing of the meeting took advantage of the momentum that was taking place in parliament and also the return of a Conservative government under Disraeli in 1874. Though Gladstone was seen as personally sympathetic towards the Church of England, the Conservative party was seen as the party which would be more sympathetic to what was proposed. A deputation went to Downing Street on 28 May 1875. The government assured the delegates that it would sponsor legislation, but it stressed that funding of the see would have to be raised locally.⁴⁶ In 1876 Cross repeated the strategy for Cornwall that had been successful at St Albans. Instead of the sale of Winchester House, which had made St Albans diocese possible, this time it was a wealthy benefactor, Lady Rolle, who gave £40,000, which could yield an income of £1200 per annum. Lady Rolle, whose maiden

name was Trefusis, was an elderly Cornish widow who lacked heirs. She insisted that the offer would hold good only if the see were formed in her lifetime.

In both cases, more money was needed to augment the money provided by the sale of Winchester House and the generosity of Lady Rolle. In 1840 at the time of the reform of cathedral chapters, Bishop Phillpotts had cleverly secured a fifth canonry for Exeter Cathedral, when one of the main planks of the reform was to reduce the number of residential canonries in each cathedral to four. Phillpotts did this with the farsighted intention of giving one of the canonries, each valued at £1000 per annum, to the new diocese. In correspondence between Cross and the Archbishop of Canterbury, A. C. Tait, both knew that this had been Phillpotts' intention, but High Church conservatives who had played a key parliamentary part in the campaign for new dioceses such as Beresford Hope were against reducing cathedral funds to pay for them. Cross told Tait, "I think I could undertake to introduce a Bill the first night of the session, if I could see my way clear to the money up to £3000 a year without the canonry... But I'm very anxious that the matter should be carried through".⁴⁷ Tait therefore issued an appeal for both dioceses. Though the Bishops of Rochester and Winchester had jointly offered £1000 for St Albans, and the Bishop of Exeter £800 for Truro, this had to be supplemented by other private contributions. By early June 1876 support was sufficiently forthcoming for Cross to introduce the Cornish Bill in parliament. He also secured the government's agreement to another Bill which would provide for the eventual creation of three or four more dioceses without the need to approach parliament over each. This was ambitious since Lord Lyttelton, Gladstone's brother-in-law,

had frequently brought in bills to Parliament since 1861, urging the formation of new dioceses, including one for St Albans, and each time had been defeated.

Despite the vehemence of the opposition, the Cornish bill passed the third reading on August 1876, moved rapidly through the Lords and so was enacted. Cross followed through by seeing that funds required to put the Act into operation were assembled quickly. Both St Albans and Truro dioceses were able to begin in 1877, the legislative work having been completed by the end of 1876. In May 1877, the same month as Benson was enthroned as Bishop of Truro, Cross introduced his Bishops Bill in Parliament. The four new proposed dioceses, from a range of possible candidates, were Liverpool, Wakefield, Newcastle and Southwell (at this time Nottinghamshire plus Derbyshire). Although his Bill did not succeed, it was reintroduced the following year, and with Cross gaining Disraeli's personal support, the legislation passed near the end of the parliamentary session in 1878.

Opposition came from many places, both in relation to the Bishops Bill of 1878 and to the earlier creation of St Albans and Truro dioceses. Some of the opposition nostalgically looked back to an earlier era when a bishop was "of sufficient dignity to stand in social parity with the highest of the realm... hospitable and accessible without the continual invasion of his time and intellectual life". Lord Houghton looked back to an era when a clergyman "no more expected an autograph letter from (the bishop) than from the Lord-Lieutenant, or thought of interviewing him any more than the Prime Minister".⁴⁸ Houghton regretted that when distinguished scholars such as Stubbs and Creighton became bishops, they all but stopped their academic work for a life of hectic episcopal activity.

The Libertarian Society also played a part in the opposition, which campaigned for the separation of church and state. Though a member of the Society was disciplined for distributing leaflets before a service at St Agnes, the Society had a declining influence in its opposition to the establishment of the Church of England, though the Church in Wales, as with the Anglican Church in Ireland, was eventually disestablished.⁴⁹ One way for Cross to answer the liberationist objection that parliamentary time should not be wasted on the Church of England was to seek to enact the legislation quickly. The most effective opposition came from the Liberal MP Sir William Harcourt, heir to a radical tradition. "Cheap subscription bishops (financed by local contributions) by the side of the existing Bench in all their panoply of purple and gold" should necessitate a drastic redistribution of episcopal revenues, Harcourt argued. Harcourt asked whether there was a shortage of bishops anyway, especially after the creation of suffragan bishops in 1869 – 70. "In London, this deficiency of bishops was not so observable, because if you went by the Athenaeum club, every other Gentleman you met wore a shovel hat and an apron".⁵⁰ This was a dig at the fact that though new bishoprics were meant to enable bishops to spend more time in their dioceses, there were still plenty of them in London. Bishop Benson seemed to acknowledge the fact when he criticised colonial bishops for frequenting London clubs as it gave the impression that the episcopate had little work to do, when bishops from the Church of England itself had plenty of work.⁵¹ The strongest argument Harcourt presented against Lyttelton's last attempt to increase the number of dioceses was its lack of specific detail. "It was as if parliament were asked to pass a Railway Bill which proposed to sanction a line from anywhere to anywhere, and where there was no capital, no subscribers, and no directors".⁵² This criticism clearly influenced

Cross who realised the importance of funds, local support and key people committed to the project before coming to parliament.

In the case of Cornwall, the attempts to finance properly the new diocese continued apace after the Downing Street meeting of May 1875. The message that funding of the see would have to be raised locally was told to the Diocesan Conference in November 1875 and a committee was appointed to raise subscriptions. It was at its first meeting early in 1876 that Lady Rolle reputedly offered £40,000 towards the endowment. Bishop Temple of Exeter, a keen supporter, began raising funds among the clergy of the diocese, and the Additional Home Bishoprics Endowment Fund, founded in February 1876, offered grants totalling £3000.⁵³ The creation of the Additional Home Bishoprics Endowment Fund in 1876 is an important, but unheralded, event which helped to enable not just Truro, but many subsequent dioceses, to be formed. The next diocese to be created after Truro was Liverpool. "The bishops and the Additional Home Bishoprics Endowment Fund issued appeals to the public at large. As a result, the Liverpool see was set up; and in one of his last acts as Prime Minister, Disraeli was able to appoint as its first Bishop, a partisan evangelical, J C Ryle. The three other new dioceses (Southwell, Newcastle and Wakefield) had to wait, one until 1888. In old age Cross was able to claim that no one save Henry VIII and he had been concerned in the formation of six new sees".⁵⁴

As well as the Additional Home Bishoprics Endowment Fund, it was also necessary that Archdeacons, Rural Deans and Deanery Chapters should have found new ways of working in the decades previously. Without a diocesan infrastructure growing in importance and complexity through the 19th century,

there would have been no organisation in place to underpin the work of a new diocesan bishop.⁵⁵ Exeter diocese was particularly early in developing a diocesan assembly where an interchange of views could take place. "During the 1850s lower clergy increasingly objected to the visitation serving merely as a convenient platform for magisterial episcopal statements on public affairs, and hankered after a diocesan interactive meeting of mutual benefit to bishop and clergy.... Holy Communion appeared as early as 1851 in Exeter, where it was welcomed as a means of sanctifying the visitation... By the mid-1850s there existed precedents in the consultative sessions added to archidiaconal visitations. More significant in the long-term were the Exeter diocesan Synod of 1851 and the clerical conferences organised by Wilberforce at Oxford."⁵⁶

Burns also emphasises the enhanced role of the archdeacons, who performed "an ever-increasing range of services for their bishops" which included policy-formation and interviewing clergy with grievances against the diocesan hierarchy. It was Archdeacon Earle of Totnes, who was chosen to chair the committee appointed by the Diocesan Conference in November 1875 and it is clear from the papers of the Archbishop of Canterbury that Earle was in correspondence with Tait himself.⁵⁷ In Donaldson's account of the first 25 years of the diocese (1877 – 1902), Earle is thanked for his assistance "at a peculiar crisis" – though whether the difficulty was the general opposition from some quarters against new dioceses or some specific problem which the archdeacon sorted out behind-the-scenes is not made clear by Donaldson. Earle later became, successively, suffragan Bishop of Marlborough and Dean of Exeter, so it was useful for the new diocese to have a supporter at the neighbouring Cathedral.⁵⁸ The clearest evidence of the survival of a functioning ruri-decanal synod before 1800 came from Exeter diocese where Bishop Jonathan

Trelawny, bishop from 1688 to 1707, reinvigorated an office which continued to make a valuable contribution to diocesan management throughout the 18th century. Examples elsewhere are few and far between – rural deans were restored at Salisbury in 1811 by John Fisher, translated from Exeter and given an enhanced role by Fisher's successor as Bishop, Thomas Burgess, translated from St David's in Wales, where there is some evidence of episcopal appointment of rural deans at an early date. Gradually rural deans were appointed in every diocese, among the last being Carlisle and Durham (1858), Rochester (1877) and Sodor and Man (1880). The fact that Rochester acquired rural deans only when its territory was reallocated on the creation of St Albans diocese indicates that rural deans were not a "sine qua non" for diocesan reforms to happen, but rural deans did help in enabling change. "Much of the appeal of the office of rural dean to the diocesan reformer lay in its clearly subordinate character and its flexibility".⁵⁹

Though the office of rural dean was revived through the 19th century, the revival of ruri-decanal chapters was slow to take off. These had almost entirely disappeared at the Reformation, except in Salisbury diocese. The gathering of clergy instead took place at archidiaconal visitations. Exeter was again in the vanguard of the revival – at least two chapters were in operation in the diocese by 1844, one organised by Robert Hawker of Morwenstow in the deanery of Trigg Major. By 1870, chapters had been established in almost all dioceses, although progress was patchy. "In some dioceses, such as Ripon, the revival came at the same time as that of rural deans. In other dioceses, such as London and Norwich, chapters appeared later". One chief objective of the revival of deanery chapters was to promote union among the clergy. It promoted discussion between clergy and combated polarisation, and Burns sees the

promotion of deanery chapters as dear to the old High Church Anglican tradition "valuing the visible church and clerical apartness". Though "Phillpotts... learnt the hard way that fractious minorities might be able to gain control in an area as small as the deanery and so find a platform for their protests within the formal structures of the church", many observers argued that by and large deanery chapters counteracted polarisation of clergy by enabling clergy to discuss controversial topics openly.⁶⁰

Exeter Diocese also held deanery chapters where laymen were able to participate. But the holding of deanery chapters was sporadic. Archdeacon Woollcombe in 1861 observed that only a quarter of deaneries had held meetings, when giving his Visitation Charge. Exeter Diocese's pioneering Diocesan Synod, held in 1851, was in the unusual circumstance of the dispute Bishop Phillpotts was having with the Anglo-Calvinist George Cornelius Gorham. It is clear that Phillpotts summoned the Synod in order to garner support. At least 40 of the 112 people present spoke, thus enabling a wide range of opinion to be articulated, and the topics discussed were wide-ranging and included the Exeter Diocesan Training College. Thus, though the bishop may have called the synod for a particular purpose, it rapidly took on a life of its own and achieved a greater diocesan cohesiveness through the open discussion of different ideas. "Thus the Exeter synod was a well- attended, useful, and genuine exercise in diocesan management and consultation of which members took full advantage... It was also an experiment, however, and there were no plans for a second synod".⁶¹ Nevertheless the Exeter synod had shown that cooperation between different groups could serve a diocesan purpose, which was of importance for the future. Harold Browne, who had once been Vicar of Kenwyn in Truro, was credited with organising a diocesan

conference or diocesan assembly on a systematic basis between 1864 and 1868, his first four years as Bishop of Ely. Very importantly, the plan had a central role for the voice of the laity. "The laymen, especially of the little country parishes, were brought for the first time into touch with the central working of the diocese, and forced to consider important matters of policy in a general context".⁶² By 1882 all English dioceses had diocesan conferences, except London, where Bishop Jackson thought the diocese too large and Worcester where Bishop Philpott (no relation to the Bishop of Exeter) did not believe that any such machinery was worthwhile.

Burns sees the diocesan revival as exhibiting an anti-centralising tendency, exemplified in the statement of Archdeacon Julius Hare that "the rural chapters seem to contain germs of a living organisation, for the whole church, beginning, ... not from above, but from below, not with parliament, but with municipal institutions".⁶³ There were attempts to centralise the organisation, such as through the formation of the Church Institution in 1859. By 1864 no fewer than 400 deaneries were associated with the Institution which provided a national umbrella for their work. But Burns notes, "some (deaneries)... were reluctant to encourage association with a central committee in London preferring that deanery chapters remained a means of strengthening diocesan structures rather than become a branch of a national movement".⁶⁴ Other national church organisations were founded in the mid-Victorian period. The Convocation of Canterbury was active from 1851, the Convocation of York from 1860. The Church Congress, founded at King's College, Cambridge in 1861, "became a national sounding board of church opinion" until its demise by 1900. "In the last decade of the century they were freely declared to have had their day."⁶⁵ Even though such provincial or national assemblies existed, and some clergy rose to

national prominence because of them, the very assemblies could be the stage for the promotion of ideas which emphasised diocesan consciousness. "The diocese does not merely mean my Lord Bishop... It implies the diocesan synod, the synod not only of the clergy, but of the communicant laity. It implies the training college... It implies vigilant inspection of schools; it implies a common fund for supplementing church building and school inspection in the poorer parishes; it implies everything in the world which can be summed up under the one great word 'Organisation.'"⁶⁶ These words were spoken by Alexander Beresford Hope in a speech to the 1862 Church Congress. It delineated some of the features which would characterise the new Truro diocese. The development of diocesan organisation through the 19th century made possible what Truro diocese wanted to achieve in the fields of training and education in its early years. Organisation in some respects outpaced the availability of money. Despite the generosity of Lady Rolle, the work of the Additional Home Bishops Endowment Fund and the work and donations of many other people, inside and outside Cornwall, only a limited amount of money was available to be used when Truro diocese was created. Sufficient money had been found to satisfy parliament that the diocese could be established, but to build a cathedral would be a monumental act of faith. To this extent, Truro differed from all the dioceses founded in the 19th century, with the possible exception of Liverpool, which eventually gained a cathedral, though its first Bishop took "no action to secure a Cathedral for Liverpool when he needed so much money to extend the ordinary work of the diocese."⁶⁷ Newcastle, Wakefield and Southwell reconstituted parish churches. St Albans was founded around the old (previously dilapidated) Abbey with no provision made for Dean and Chapter.

Only Truro would need a massive amount of money the building of a cathedral required, though it would soon be joined in that quest by Liverpool.

In this survey of the revival of diocesan consciousness, it is possible to see some moments when the attitude and behaviour of dioceses far away from London played a key role in enhancing the importance of the diocese. At the time when the Ecclesiastical Commissioners proposed new sees to serve the industrialising north at Ripon and Manchester, the existing anomaly of the diocese of Sodor and Man, the one diocese whose bishop did not sit in the House of Lords, was to be rectified by its incorporation into the diocese of Carlisle. A lively debate took place within the Isle of Man since many there believed that there was no justification for the change, except constitutional expediency. The ailing Bishop, William Ward, rallied Manxmen and lobbied peers to secure a reprieve of the diocese. "Protests emphasised the pastoral implications, and stressed the geographical, ethnic and constitutional homogeneity of the diocese... In the face of concerted local resistance, the proposed merger was abandoned in 1838... Moreover the reprieve of Sodor and Man, as later acknowledged, was a turning point."⁶⁸ In order to allow the new bishops of Ripon and Manchester to sit in the House of Lords, and to avoid constitutional repercussions, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners also recommended the amalgamation of Gloucester and Bristol dioceses and also St Asaph with Bangor. This was to enable the number of bishops sitting in the House of Lords to remain the same – to increase the number of bishops at a time when many radical MPs had been elected to the House of Commons in the wake of the Great Reform Act of 1832 would have courted disaster. An episcopal reshuffle allowed the creation of Ripon and the compensatory union of Gloucester and Bristol dioceses to proceed in 1836. It was a different story in

Wales where the attempt to amalgamate St Asaph and Bangor dioceses met with strong resistance. In particular, the Earl of Powis took a leading role in introducing Bills to prevent the merger. "Since protesters were loath to sacrifice the Manchester bishopric it had been designed to accommodate, resistance to amalgamation was perforce a call for a moderate increase in the number of dioceses. Powis' solution to the constitutional issue was to propose that no additional bishops should sit in the Lords, but that the junior bishop should be admitted, according to seniority as vacancies arose."⁶⁹

Bishop Blomfield of London had earlier aggressively defended the conclusions of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners as preferable to the creation of new non-parliamentary bishops. The discussion surrounding the creation of Manchester diocese, and whether it should involve the amalgamation of St Asaph with Bangor dioceses, changed the intellectual climate concerning new bishoprics. "The changing climate was indicated by the gradual appearance of... Blomfield ... (who was) among those who came to acknowledge the need for an increase, abandoning the constitutional priorities which had guided them in drawing up the 1836 report".⁷⁰ Thus the important concept of non-parliamentary bishops was made possible by creating Manchester diocese without amalgamating St Asaph and Bangor. This removed one large obstacle in the way, which had prevented the formation of new dioceses, although other obstacles referred to earlier, prevented their formation for a further 40 years. Again, it was protests from "the Celtic fringe", from St Asaph and Bangor, which led to the change taking place. In the debate, the protest against losing the Bishop on the Isle of Man, and the survival of the diocese of Sodor and Man, had an important part to play. Sodor and Man provided an example of a Bishop who did not sit in the House of Lords (because of the Isle of Man's own

parliament in which he sat) and "an early rehearsal of arguments for the value of a diocese".⁷¹ It was from the "Celtic fringe" that the message came that increasing the number of dioceses did not necessitate increased episcopal representation in the House of Lords.

Owen Chadwick also mentions the importance of Scotland in the church reforms of the 19th century and early 20th century, not simply because three of the five archbishops of Canterbury between 1868 and 1942 were Scottish. "Archbishop Benson... tried to amalgamate the two Convocations and House of Laity into a single assembly. Then the established church would have the structure of the representative system – parish council, diocesan conference, national assembly. To this end, the foundation stone of Church House (Westminster) was laid in 1891... The 'Representative Church Council' consisting of the two Convocations and the two houses of laity met for the first time in July 1904. The bishops discovered in Arthur Balfour a statesman who, perhaps because he was a Scottish presbyterian, believed in due autonomy for the Church of England. A Scot (Aberdeen) did most to restore Convocation and another Scot (Balfour) did much to create a national assembly".⁷²

Desire for local independence and habits of thought developed in the Isle of Man, Wales and Scotland may have played a part in the reform of the Church of England in helping to achieve a diocesan consciousness and a movement in the direction of giving the church a democratic character. Morrish considers not only the historical arguments but also the ethnological arguments put forward in support of Truro diocese. He concludes that both arguments were used to good effect by men as different as Wallis and Carlyon. Wallis and Carlyon were, Morrish claims, thoroughly committed to the cause and it was into the Carlyon

family that Harold Browne, a great supporter of a separate Cornish diocese from his time at Kenwyn through to his later years as Bishop successively of Ely and Winchester, married.⁷³ Frederick Temple, the last Bishop of Exeter whose diocese included Cornwall, was descended from the influential Cornish Carveth family on his mother's side and married in Probus church. Morrish shows that the historical argument for the use of the term "revival" rather than the "creation" of a Cornish see was supplemented to good effect by ethnological arguments that the Cornish were a distinctive people. "Both Hexham and Coventry had had some episcopal dignity in earlier times. In these cases, however, the historical argument was not pursued with such vigour as it was in Cornwall".⁷⁴ Practical and pragmatic arguments were largely used in the discussion which led to the creation of Newcastle diocese. As a result, the see was founded in the largest and most industrialised town, Newcastle. A similar pragmatic argument was used when Birmingham diocese was formed out of Worcester. In both cases it was the need for the church to serve better the massive populations of Newcastle and Birmingham which provided the most important argument for the creation of the new dioceses.

The fact that the historical argument and the ethnological argument were both used in Cornwall may have helped the historical argument to be regarded as valid – though, from a Celtic revival point of view, certain parts of the historical argument were extremely shaky. The Bishops of Cornwall from Kenstec, c 865 through to Burhwold 1018 – 1027, after whom the bishops were called Bishops of Cornwall and Crediton, were essentially Saxon bishops. Though eminent 19th-century historians wrote about British bishops in Cornwall before this date, their existence and chronology is nebulous. Morrish argues that since the discovery of the Crawford charters through the work of historians

in the 1930s "it is widely believed that a separate Saxon diocese for Cornwall was not created until 994 and that Bishop Conan and his immediate successors were not diocesan bishops, but chorepiscopi subordinate to Crediton".⁷⁵ Morrish makes a useful distinction between county and urban dioceses. Liverpool, Newcastle and Wakefield all fitted into the latter category, as did Bristol (1894), Birmingham (1905), Southwark (1905), Chelmsford (1914), Sheffield (1918) and Coventry (1918), the greatest period of expansion since the Reformation. St Edmundsbury and Ipswich (1914) was a county diocese linking the largest town in Suffolk with its most historic building. The intention of the Bishop of Lichfield, who ceded Derbyshire, and the Bishop of Lincoln who ceded Nottinghamshire, was that two county dioceses would be formed. The fact that this did not happen when the diocese of Southwell was formed proved controversial. Eventually local identity won out. Derby separated from Southwell diocese in 1927, and in 1935 the diocese of Southwell transferred from the Province of Canterbury to that of York.⁷⁶ Using Morrish's categories of urban and county dioceses, urban dioceses were clearly more successful in being formed in the late Victorian period than were county dioceses. Even St Albans, founded in 1877, though centred in Hertfordshire was not coterminous with the boundaries of the county, taking in territory in Essex and North London as well.

The one diocese formed on what was nearly a country boundary in the Victorian era was Truro, and with St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, one of only two such dioceses formed out of the twelve created in that great period of increase of dioceses from 1876 to 1918. To what extent the ethnological argument, highlighting the differences between Cornwall and Devon, Celtic and Anglo-Saxon, enabled this to happen is open to interpretation. The ethnological was clearly one argument used among many. We have seen in Lach-Szyrma's open

letter to Gladstone that Lach-Szyrma advanced seven reasons for a separate diocese.

What can be said is that in the sometimes vitriolic debate, when all arguments were subjected to scrutiny and arguments against a separate diocese were put forward as well as argument in favour, it is difficult to find any person advocating a position that the Cornish were not a distinctive people. An opponent of a separate Cornish diocese might write to the Bishop of Exeter in August 1876 that the Cornish people "are at present too exclusive and clannish. It may be the creation of a new see will foster and increase the feeling".⁷⁷ The man in question, Samuel Rundle, incumbent of Stockleigh Pomeroy, acknowledges Cornish distinctiveness but uses it as an argument against a separate diocese. It is safe to say that the ethnological was one argument among many for the formation of the diocese, almost entirely based on the county of Cornwall. It is less safe to regard the ethnological as the most important argument employed, though examples provided by the Isle of Man, Wales, and possibly Scotland indicate that local identity and feeling were evident in those areas on the periphery of Britain, if London is judged as the centre. This is evidenced by the early adoption of rural deans and deanery chapters in Cornwall and West Wales and by the same policies adopted by bishops of other dioceses, who had worked in these areas.

It would have been possible for Cornwall to have simply received a suffragan bishop, working under the Bishop of Exeter. That, it could be argued from a historical perspective, might well have applied to the earlier Cornish bishops (though of course that was not what was felt by Victorian historians). The mechanism to put a suffragan place had been legislated for in 1870. That year

saw two suffragans appointed -Bishop Parry of Dover to help the Archbishop, and Bishop MacKenzie of Nottingham to help the Bishop of Lincoln (whose generosity made the second appointment possible). The first full ordination by a suffragan was held at Southwell Minster in 1878.⁷⁸

This was not the way that Cornwall was to go. In 1877, Benson was appointed as Bishop of the new or revived diocese. Morrish usefully points out that the words "new" and "revival" were used by the same people at different times, often judging which might be more expedient politically and therefore more likely to enable a new diocese to be formed.⁷⁹ Diocesan consciousness had helped to overcome some of the problems that had presented themselves up to that point. There would be plenty more problems that lay ahead. Clearly diocesan consciousness is not the same as Cornish consciousness. One has been demonstrated to be a growing factor throughout the Church of England in the 19th century, the other was confined to Cornwall and its supporters further afield. In Cornwall, diocesan and Cornish consciousness clearly overlapped and both were vital for the creation of a new diocese.

Footnotes to chapter 1

¹ H Miles Brown, *The Catholic Revival in Cornish Anglicanism: a study of the traditions of Cornwall 1833-1906* (St Winnow, 1980) p.91. John Beckett and David Windsor *Truro: Diocese and City in Cornish Studies*, 11,(ed. Philip Payton) (University of Exeter, 1983) p.222; A B Donaldson, *The Bishopric of Truro: the first twenty five years 1877-1902* (London, 1902) pp.52-3.

² H Miles Brown, *A Century of Cornwall: The Diocese of Truro 1877-1977* (Truro, 1977) p.20.

- ³. H. Miles Brown, *The Catholic Revival* p.83. P. S. Morrish, 'History, Celticism and Propaganda in the Formation of the Diocese of Truro', in *Southern History*, 5, 1983 (Trowbridge, 1983) pp.249 – 50.
- ⁴. Donaldson *Bishopric of Truro* p.23: "A new era of church life and work began when Henry Phillpotts was consecrated Bishop of Exeter in 1831. He was a man of great bodily and mental vigour. .. What he did for Cornwall, in the gradual restoration of discipline and removal of abuses, may be gathered from the comparison of the number of clergy resident and non-resident in 1830 and those in 1869, when his episcopate ceased".
- ⁵. H. Miles Brown, *The Catholic Revival* p.83.
- ⁶. Morrish, *History, Celticism and Propaganda* p.239: "probably the first public step towards launching the agitation for division was some remarks made by Bishop Phillpotts in his *Charge* in 1842". See also Beckett and Windsor, *Truro: Diocese and City* p.220.
- ⁷. Winnington-Ingram (Bishop of London 1901-1939) and Brownlow North, half-brother of Lord North Prime Minister, (Bishop of Winchester, 1781-1820) are the only two other bishops I can find whose tenure of office was of comparable length .
- ⁸. P. S. Morrish, The Manchester Clause in *Church Quarterly*,1,(1969) pp.319 – 326.
- ⁹. R. A. Burns, *The Diocesan Revival in the Church of England c.1800-1870*, (Oxford, 1999) p.196.
- ¹⁰. H. Miles Brown, *The Catholic Revival* p.84, for this and for material in the last two paragraphs.

¹¹P. S. Morrish, *History, Celticism and Propaganda*, p.239; H. Miles Brown *Catholic Revival* pp.84-85.

¹² H. Miles Brown, *The Catholic Revival; Royal Cornwall Gazette* 6/8/1847; 30/7/1847, 13/8/1847. In fact Phillpotts himself thought the number of clergy in the undivided diocese nearly as large in 1848: "The modern puritans of my own diocese are wondrously few. I doubt whether they number thirty out of a body of clergy of 800." Burns p.141, quoting a letter dated 2 September 1848 found in G. C. Davies *Henry Phillpotts Bishop of Exeter 1778-1869*, (London, 1954) p.236.

¹³ Burns, (1999) p.141. See also Owen Chadwick *The Victorian Church Part 1* (London, third edition 1971) pp.218–219 for the practical outworking of Phillpotts' view in Helston, with a curate who introduced high church practices.

¹⁴ Burns, (1999) p.142; J. A. Thurmer *Henry of Exeter and the later Tractarians* in *Southern History* 5 (1983) p.213; Miles Brown, (1980) p.85.

¹⁵ Miles Brown, (1977) p.10.

¹⁶ Morrish, (1983) p.239.

¹⁷ Miles Brown, (1980), p.85.

¹⁸ Miles Brown, (1980), p.85.

¹⁹ Morrish, (1983) p.239.

²⁰ Miles Brown, (1980), p.85 – 86.

²¹ *Royal Cornwall Gazette* 18/8/1854.

²² Morrish, (1983), pp. 253-4; 263-4.

- ²³. Church Commissioners file 1837/i, Miles Brown, (1980) p.86. The next significant stage in the process came in 1859 with the publication by Arthur Tatham (Rector of Braddoc and Boconnoc 1832-1874; Prebendary of Exeter from 1860) of *A Cornish Bishopric –The Necessity and Means for its Restoration* TCM 155 and also in the same year *A Statement of Facts*.
- ²⁴. (Church) *Guardian* 23/5/1860, columns 4, 5, 6. The petition was signed by 1433 laymen and 238 clergy. The deputation to Palmerston was led by the Earl of St Germans. See Miles Brown, (1977), p.18
- ²⁵. Morrish, (1983), p.264. Church Commissioners file 1837 i; (Church) *Guardian* 16/6/1875, 771, column 2.
- ²⁶. Burns, (1999), p.198 and footnote.
- ²⁷. Burns, (1999), p.204.
- ²⁸. Burns, (1999), p.199.
- ²⁹. Morrish, (1983), p.241.
- ³⁰. *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 28/7/1854, 6: columns 4 – 6; Morrish, (1983) p.241.
- ³¹. Morrish, (1983) p.242.
- ³². Church Commissioners 1837/i petition annexed to letter from Palmerston to Ecclesiastical Committee 21/10/1854; Morrish, (1983) p.261.
- ³³. *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 30/12/1859 p 4, column 6; Morrish, (1983) p.243.
- ³⁴. R. Hobhouse, *The Cornish Bishopric* (1860) pp.15-18; Morrish, (1983) p.247.
- ³⁵. *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 29/9/1854, p5, column 3; Morrish pp.246, 262.

^{36.} *Guardian* 12/4/1865, p. 365, vol. 3; Morrish, pp.247, 262.

^{37.} Hansard 3 clxxxv (1867) 1302; Morrish p247.

^{38.} "Cornwall was not unique in its desire for a bishop. John Sandford, Archdeacon of Coventry, advanced the claims of his former see city: Coventry signatures featured prominently in the 1860 lay memorial. Gloucester and Bristol clergy wondered if independence might not suit them also. Berwick-upon-Tweed's expressed an interest as increasingly did the clergy (and from 1869 the bishop) of Lincoln. At St Albans... a major restoration of the church anticipated a future role as a cathedral." Burns,(1999), pp.201-2.

^{39.} Morrish, (1983) p.244 cf. Burns,(1999) p.203: "Gladstone...made a promising speech in favour of further, non-parliamentary bishops in 1850."

^{40.} *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 24/2/1865 p. 4 columns 5-6, for Convocation's debate see Chronicle of Canterbury Convocations (CCC) 1865 pp. 1837 – 45, 1875 – 6 and 1893.

^{41.} Nevertheless Morrish argues that bringing Henry VIII into the argument and the pejorative tone of the phrase "an Italianate priesthood" "would seem to have been journalistic tricks to seduce all good protestants to the aid of the Cornish party." p.244.

^{42.} Exeter Diocesan Calendar and Clergy list for 1867 pp. ix-xi. c.f. Morrish, (1983), p.245. "The historical argument was used more widely again in the later 1860s." TDC156/31 Brown to Tatham 5/3/1867 (St Piran's Day); Tatham had used the ethnological argument in his *Statement of Facts* (1859): "the Cornish people, especially that portion of them engaged in mining are in character, habits and religious wants widely different from the inhabitants of Devonshire,

and require a particular treatment at the hands of their spiritual pastors.” Miles Brown, (1977) p.18.

⁴³. Morrish, (1983), pp.245- 8.

⁴⁴. P.T. Marsh, *The Victorian Church in Decline: Archbishop Tait and the Church of England 1868-1882* (Pittsburgh and London, 1969), pp.201-7.

⁴⁵. Marsh, (1969), p.202.

⁴⁶. John Beckett and David Windsor, *Truro: Diocese and City* p.221.

⁴⁷. Tait to Cross 9/12/75. Cross papers Add. MSS 51, 271 f.104; Beresford Hope to Tait 5/3/75. Tait papers vol. 94ff 115-116; Cross to Tait 22/12/75; Tait papers, vol. 216 ff. 388-389; Cross to Tait 13/3/76, vol. 216 f. 381. Tait also sought to take steps to make sure Rolle's offer was taken up. Tait to Archdeacon Earle 14/2/76, copy in Tait papers vol. 217 ff. 203-6.

⁴⁸. Marsh, (1969) p. 206.

⁴⁹. CRO P2/2/46-48; 22/2/1883 “ I, Preston Vincent Tregellas humbly apologise to the Clergy, Churchwardens and Congregation of St Agnes Parish Church for my misbehaviour in that church on Sunday 28 January last in disturbing them during Divine Service by distributing a tract issued by the Liberation Society.”

⁵⁰. Marsh, (1969) pp.202, 204.

⁵¹. A. C. Benson, *The Life of Edward White Benson sometime Archbishop of Canterbury* 2 volumes (London, 2nd edition, 1900) vol. 1 p.389.

⁵². Marsh, (1969) p.204.

⁵³. Beckett and Windsor, p.222.

- ⁵⁴. Marsh, (1969) p.207.
- ⁵⁵. Jeremy Morris, 'George Ridding and the Diocese of Southwell: A Study in the National Church Ideal' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* vol. 61, no 1, January 2010), p.126.
- ⁵⁶. Burns, (1999) pp.37-8.
- ⁵⁷. See footnote 47.
- ⁵⁸. A. B. Donaldson, *The Bishopric of Truro 1877-1902*, p.54.
- ⁵⁹. Burns, (1999), pp.76, 78, 81.
- ⁶⁰. Burns, (1999), pp. 94, 95-6,100.
- ⁶¹. Burns, (1999), pp.232-3.
- ⁶². Chadwick, (1970), vol. 2, p.360.
- ⁶³. Burns, (1999), p.273.
- ⁶⁴. Burns, (1999), p.101.
- ⁶⁵. Chadwick, (1970), vol. 2 pp.362 – 3.
- ⁶⁶. Burns, (1999), p.261; Chadwick, (1970), vol. 2 p.364.
- ⁶⁷. Chadwick, (1970), vol. 2 p.391.
- ⁶⁸. P. S. Morrish, 'The Manchester Clause', *Church Quarterly*, 1 (1968-1969) p.320; Burns, (1999), pp. 94-95.
- ⁶⁹. Burns, (1999), p.196.
- ⁷⁰. Burns, (1999), p.197.

⁷¹. Burns, (1999), p.196.

⁷². Chadwick, (1970), vol. 2 p.365; Tait, Davidson and Lang were Scottish.

⁷³. Morrish, (1983), p.258.

⁷⁴. Morrish, (1983), p.259. See also W. S. F. Pickering *A Social History of the Diocese of Newcastle*, (Northumberland 1981) chapter 2; P. S. Morrish, 'The Struggle to Create an Anglican Diocese of Birmingham', (*Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 31, 1980) pp.59-88.

⁷⁵. Stubbs and Carne cited by Morrish, (1983), p.252.

⁷⁶. P. S. Morrish, 'County and Urban Dioceses: Nineteenth Century Discussion on Geographical Dioceses', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 26, (1975) pp.289-300; See Jeremy Morris 'George Ridding and the Diocese of Southwell: A Study in the National Church Ideal', (*JEH*, 61, 2010) pp.125-143 for a discussion concerning the attitude of Christopher Wordsworth towards separating the large diocese of Lincoln and George Ridding towards the new diocese that was created. See J. V. Beckett *City Status in the British Isles, 1830-2002*, (Aldershot, 2005), p.36 for the 'mundane' reasons why the new diocese of Southwell included both Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire.

⁷⁷. Morrish, (1983), p.256.

⁷⁸. Chadwick, (1970), vol. 2 p.345.

⁷⁹ Morrish, (1983), pp.248-249

Chapter 2

Putting Cornwall in the British context.

So far we have considered initiatives, particularly in Cornwall, which led to the creation or restoration of the Cornish Diocese with its centre at Truro. We have seen the practical, historical and ethnological arguments employed in Cornwall, which led to the formation of what Burns calls “the growth of diocesan consciousness”. Burns applies this concept to the whole of the Church of England in the 19th century. We concluded the chapter by arguing that in Cornwall, to some extent at least, diocesan consciousness overlapped with a growing consciousness of Cornish identity as separate from Devon. The proposition that the Cornish were a distinctive people was affirmed by those who promoted the ethnological argument for the separation of Exeter diocese into its Cornish and Devonian constituent parts.

Burns sees the development of diocesan consciousness as exemplified in the growing importance of, among other things, resident bishops, the office of archdeacon and rural dean, deanery chapters and diocesan assemblies. Burns quotes with approval the statement of Archdeacon Julius Hare: "The Rural Chapters seem to contain the germs of a living organisation of the whole Church, beginning, as the organisation of a state ought, not from above, but from below".¹ This statement of Julius Hare applies in some measure to the growth of diocesan consciousness in Cornwall. It came not "from above" but "from below", from people living in Cornwall – whose ideas tested the rulings of national institutions like the Ecclesiastical Commission concerning the proliferation of dioceses. The difficulty in enabling new dioceses other than

Ripon (1836) and Manchester (1847) to be created until the time R A Cross became Home Secretary was in part caused by the delay in the national parliament "catching up" with developments which were already taking place in Cornwall and elsewhere. A private member like Lyttelton simply did not have the power or influence in parliament to bridge this gap, despite his valiant attempts to introduce Bills in parliament from 1861 onwards. He was well-connected, being Gladstone's brother-in-law, but he was not Home Secretary. By the time Cross became Home Secretary in Disraeli's 1874 cabinet, not only did he have far more influence than Lyttelton but the debate had rumbled on for another 13 years.

It is now time to consider the place of the Church in the Victorian state, to view the church from a national perspective and to see how these factors influenced the "top-down" approach to managing the dioceses, which in some ways complemented and in other ways contrasted with the "bottom up" initiatives already discussed. The problem with looking at the church from a national perspective is the tendency to make gnomic generalisations which do not fit every circumstance. Owen Chadwick begins with one such generalisation in the opening lines of his magisterial two-volume history of the Victorian church: "Victorian England was religious... Men of Empire ascribed natural greatness to the providence of God and Protestant faith. The Victorians changed the face of the world because they were assured. Untroubled by doubt whether Europe's civilisation and politics were suited to Africa or Asia, they saw vast opportunities open to energy and enterprise, and identified the progress with the spread of English intelligence and English industry. They confidently used the word English to describe Scots, Welsh and Irish".²

Generalisations need to be based on detailed study of facts and data, as Chadwick himself clearly demonstrates in the remainder of his work. In this chapter we will look at some of the perceived inadequacies of the Church of England, not just in its diocesan and parochial structure, but in its cathedrals and the attempts to reform them. We shall look at the statistical data provided by the 1851 religious census. We shall also look at the Tractarian movement, especially as it spread out into the parishes, once clergy educated at Oxford, or elsewhere, in the first phase of the Oxford Movement (1833 – 1845) took what they had learned into the parishes that they served once they were ordained. The growth of Catholic ritual in some churches in practically every diocese disturbed many in Parliament. Their unease led to widespread consultation, and once consultation was completed to the passing of the Public Worship Regulation Act of 1874. The national reform of ecclesiastical institutions, including cathedrals, the 1851 census and the growth of, and response to, Tractarianism will now be considered.

The Role of the Church in the Victorian State.

The role of the church in its relationship to the state, shortly before Victoria ascended the throne in 1837, changed dramatically with the passing of the Great Reform Bill of 1832 and other major legislation of the period 1828 – 32. With the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, Catholics and Protestants who were not members of the Church of England were enabled to take public office at every level of national life, including membership of Parliament. The House of Commons was no longer the House of Laity of the Church of England. During the agitation which led to the passing of the Bills, the majority of bishops who were sitting in the House of Lords were widely seen as obstructive of

change, and some bishops and other clergy suffered personal abuse during the agitation, especially around Guy Fawkes Day in 1831.³

These profoundly changed political circumstances stimulated at least four new initiatives, two of which were supported and encouraged by the state. Firstly, the overhaul of the church's central administrative machinery was encouraged by Prime Minister Robert Peel, with the support of a number of reforming bishops, notably Bishop Blomfield of London. Secondly, a fresh look was taken at cathedrals, culminating in the Act of 1840, which removed many of their endowments and left most of them with only four canons. Thirdly, on 14 July 1833. John Keble preached the Assize sermon at the University Church in Oxford against the right of Parliament to amalgamate dioceses in the Church of Ireland and thereby collect for itself revenues. His vision was of the Church of England with the right to take its own decisions, not dependent on a parliament which was now no longer wholly composed of members of the Church of England. John Henry Newman saw the sermon as marking the beginning of the Catholic revival in the Church of England; though a high church tradition had been evident in the Church of England in the decades leading up to 1833, Newman and others deliberately downplayed its influence. For Newman, 1833, a year after the passing of the Great Reform Bill, marked the beginning of revival. The fact that July 14 was Bastille Day was not lost on Newman or his audience. A radical break with the past was proposed and succeeded in being implemented. Fourthly, the intake of MPs following the passing of the Great Reform Act included many who were unsympathetic to the Church of England. A Bill introduced in 1834 by G W Wood MP, a Unitarian, to enable non-Anglicans to enter Oxford and Cambridge was defeated in the House of Lords.⁴ At the same time, also in 1834, petitions were presented that University College

in Gower Street might receive a charter as the University of London. It was a non-Anglican foundation with no chapel or teaching of theology. Although by 1833 charters had been granted to King's College in the Strand, to Lampeter in Wales and to Durham, opposition to University College was still considerable. A charter eventually was granted to University College London in November 1836, so it could take its place alongside King's College London. The coexistence of King's College and University College exemplified the tension between Anglican and non-Anglican, which now coexisted in public life. The passing of the Great Reform Act and other Acts in the period 1828-1832 helped to develop a pluralist culture, by enabling elements that had previously been excluded from public life to take their part fully within the institutions of the nation.

Not everyone within the Church of England was opposed to these developments. Two Whig-appointed bishops had actually voted for the Great Reform Bill and six bishops abstained, but the vast majority voted against when the Bill reached the House of Lords after passing its second reading in the Commons in March 1831. The long Tory-led administration of Lord Liverpool had ensured a near monopoly of Tory-sympathising bishops on the bench. With every bishop appointed having a vote in the House of Lords, politically inspired appointments were inevitable. Whether or not a clergyman was sympathetic to reform or not, it was necessary for everyone involved to become used to the changed circumstances. Thereafter the role of the Church of England in relation to the state changed, and in the eyes of many declined in influence as the 19th century progressed. This is certainly the thesis of P.T. Marsh who sees Archbishop Tait's time in office as marking "the last serious attempt to make the Church of England the Church of the English. The heights of the Church of England's mid-Victorian strength and security sloped away to inconsequential

lowlands".⁵ Marsh's research is exceptionally detailed and even Owen Chadwick who resisted his conclusion that under Tait the Victorian church was in decline, applauded the thoroughness of his research into Tait's papers and those of his contemporaries.⁶ However, Marsh mentions Archbishop Benson only four times in his book and there is no sustained attempt in his thesis to develop his statement that under Tait's successors "the Church of England's mid-Victorian strength and security sloped away to inconsequential lowlands". It is certainly true that Benson was not the strong parliamentary performer that Tait was, grounds on which Benson was criticised by the future Prime Minister Balfour.⁷

Marsh is particularly critical that: "Forays against ritualism after his (Tait's) death were sporadic and half-hearted".⁸ Although Marsh is undoubtedly right that popular tastes and prejudices were very largely Protestant, society was also increasingly pluralist. Political union with Ireland, passed in 1800-1801, had brought five million Roman Catholics into the United Kingdom. Many of them had migrated to England, particularly after the famine caused by potato blight in the 1840s. The sporadic and half-hearted forays against ritualism after Tait's death acknowledged the pluralism of late Victorian Society and the growth of Roman Catholicism and Anglo-Catholicism within the largely Protestant country of Britain. The wider issue of the relationship between Church and State had been put on a new basis by the establishment of the Ecclesiastical Commission in 1835. Its initial membership consisted of seven politicians and five bishops, and its early meetings were chaired by the Prime Minister, Robert Peel in his own drawing room. Brose suggests that church reform was seen as a necessary prerequisite to the church performing its national function. She argued that the most influential plans for church reform assumed that reform

would be a joint enterprise between church and state.⁹ It became the essence of Peel's policy to make the church the instrument of its own regeneration.¹⁰

The Ecclesiastical Commission was founded to produce reports for improving the state of the church, reports that soon were enshrined in Acts of Parliament. The relationship between church and state did nevertheless change as a result of the Ecclesiastical Commission's work. Thompson regarded the methods implicit in reform by the Commission as emphasising the church's usefulness to society, especially maintaining social control and stability, but also saw the creation of the Commission as a sign that the church was increasingly receiving delegated powers from the state for its own agencies and officers.¹¹

Under the Established Church Act in 1836, parliament became virtually redundant to the Commission's day-to-day operations, as Orders in Council with the full legal force of statutes were prescribed as the legislative method of the Commissioners, and these were merely laid before parliament each January. "It was a sign that Parliament that had ceased to be exclusively Anglican was taking less interest in Anglican affairs, and that encouraging it to do otherwise could be dangerous for the interests of the Church".¹² Against the thesis of Marsh, it could therefore be argued that the Church of England ceased to be the Church of the English, even in public life, long before the time of Archbishop Tait. Nor was it the problems of Catholicism and the failure to enforce the Public Worship Regulation Act against ritualistic clergy in the Church of England which changed the Church of England's role in relation to the state. These changes had taken place in the wake of the Great Reform Act, when the Oxford Movement was still in its infancy.

Another monumental change, enabled in part by the Ecclesiastical Commission, was to change the vision of the bishops who sat on the Commission. According to Best, and cited with approval by Soloway, before the Great Reform Bill "bishops' seals and signatures mattered much more than the bishops themselves, whose natural habitats were the West End and the universities. In their dioceses they were viewed as annual migrant visitors ordaining and confirming the year's accumulation of new clerics and new communicants".¹³ According to Soloway: "Well might the Archbishop despair when the Bishop of the largest...diocese in the country (Lincoln) did not recognise until 1838 the seriousness of urban difficulties". Kaye, a devoted, hardworking prelate confessed in an open letter to Archbishop Howley that it was only as a member of the newly established Ecclesiastical Commission that he formed an "adequate conception of the destitution of the manufacturing districts and of the larger towns". Bishop Kaye's observations indicated both the dangers of a Bishop not engaging sufficiently with the diocese he was responsible for and also the fact that power within the state was beginning to shift from the landed aristocracy to the urban centres. Kaye conceded that much political power had shifted to the towns. Thus "of the present generation, many have been estranged from us; some, it is to be feared by our own remissions; more by our inability to supply the spiritual wants of the rapidly increasing population".¹³

The rapidly growing population, much of it non-conformist in religious affiliation, as well as those influenced by the utilitarian desire for rational order, wanted the removal of anomalies. The Ecclesiastical Commission was, in the words of Geoffrey Best, "the manifestation, in the ecclesiastical sphere, of the general reforming spirit of the age, professional, pious and (in no precise

philosophical sense) utilitarian". J C D Clark's work on the Church of England through 'the long 18th century' describes an Anglican Ancien Regime, even "a confessional state".¹⁴ The increasingly pluralistic culture which replaced the hegemony of the Church of England is attested to by local studies of religion and society through the 19th century. Influential studies by James Obelkevich, and more recently by Sarah Williams, have highlighted the sheer diversity of religious belief and practice in places as far apart as rural Lincolnshire and urban Southwark in the middle and latter part of the 19th century. Williams continues her story into the early 20th century. In the words of Obelkevich: "secularisation, easier to document than to interpret, remains the riddle of modern religious history... Christianity had never fully established itself in European society, either as a belief system or as a pattern of worship and observance... It shared the field with superstition. Yet whatever the balance between them, they can be seen in South Lindsey both to have prospered together, in the same kind of agrarian social setting, and to have declined together, during a period of disruptive social change".¹⁵

Obelkevich speaks of a joint religious domain. Many aspects of paganism and other belief systems subverted Christian doctrine and the Christian calendar, especially on the eve of great feasts. "The last week of Advent was marked not only by preparations for Christmas, but also by the visits of the Morris dancers with their non-Christian cast that included Tom Fool, the Lady, the Fiddler and the Farmer's Son." Besides the interpretation of the different religious systems, Obelkevich also describes and analyses the interplay of the Church of England with Wesleyan and Primitive Methodism. He shows the fitful attempts of the Church of England to reform in the decades after the 1820s: "by the 1820s many churches had fallen into disrepair, both internally and

externally, and the reconstruction of church fabrics was one of the commonest aims of reformers". Yet, "until well after 1850 most churches in the area were unheated ... this may help explain not only the small church attendance in winter but also the appeal of Methodist chapels, which were generally heated, as well as being 'warm' in spirit". Even when, generally after 1860, churches were provided with a stove, their effectiveness in larger churches was not great and "few churches could be made as cosy as the average chapel".¹⁶

Moreover, churches were generally kept locked from Sunday to Sunday. Anything like a church perpetually open for prayer was unthought of. Repair, restoration and rebuilding of the church were often unpopular with parishioners, whose attitude was often "it has done for our fathers, and it will do for us". Nevertheless in South Lindsey between 1840 and 1875 major works were undertaken on 127 churches - the climax came in the 1860s, with an average of eight major projects completed every year. Much of this work was undertaken by a small number of people. Another contrast with Methodism was the enhanced role of lay people within the Methodist churches compared with the Church of England. "Even in the 1870s the Visitation Returns indicate that in many parishes the only lay assistants were the wife and daughters of the parson. The parish clerks, mainstay of the 18th century parish church were a disappearing race by the late 1860s...The parish clerks had survived the first wave of musical reform - they had mastered the barrel organ - but the advent of the harmonium and the organ made them all but obsolete". This followed on from the 1840s when the clergy began "an ambitious reform programme intended to suppress the bands in the west gallery and replace them with choirs in the chancel ... The final stroke was to introduce hymns in an effort to encourage congregational singing ... In principle the new music was more

beautiful, more varied, and more congregational than the old, but in practice results were mixed".¹⁷

Obelkevich avers that: "the clergy's largest single accomplishment was to alter the balance between the sexes in public worship, expanding the role of women while reducing that of men. Whatever the earlier pattern was, females now shared a higher propensity for religious practices than males at every age beginning in childhood. Girls appear to have been apter learners than boys in Sunday school and were more likely to be confirmed". There was also a "growing differentiation of the religious life of adults from that of children. This had its origin in the growing social differentiation between children and adults ... The Sunday schools, a religious innovation that accorded with the changed social reality, prospered".¹⁸ Differentiation could also be an appropriate word to describe what Obelkevich and David Thompson researching in Leicestershire detect from the 1870s: "If the clergy in the past had ministered to the entire population of their parish ... they now began to concentrate on the loyalists - the 'church people' - and on the cultivation of 'church feeling' ... the ideal parishioner was defined not by his creed or his spirituality ... but by his behaviour, his institutional loyalty. He was a regular communicant as well as attendant, and above all he never strayed into chapel".¹⁹

Benson left an appointment at Lincoln Cathedral to become Bishop of Truro, so Obelkevich's conclusions have a certain pertinancy for Truro diocese as well as Lincoln: Ministers in the Lincoln District feared in 1873 that the interests of Methodism were "seriously affected by the great activity of the Ritualistic section of the Church of England". Obelkevich concludes: "At the local level relations depended almost entirely on the attitude of the individual

clergyman. When he was friendly to the Methodists, they were friendly in return, and when he was hostile they were as well. In 1875 many of the clergy were still tolerant of Methodism, but the tendency of the Anglican revival was to turn clerical attitudes from friendship to mere tolerance and from tolerance to hostility". "But what the clergy had still to discover in 1886, (according to the charge of Bishop Edward King) - the 'spiritual capacity' of the people - was what the Methodists had known for more than a century, and Methodism consequently dominated the religious life of South Lindsey". In the account of Edward Steele, curate at Skegness, he was told by a parishioner: "We comes to church in the morning to please you, Sir, and goes to chapel at night to save our souls". Obelkevich comments that the very attempts to house the parson in a well-to-do home so that he could live in the parish, which often came before the restoration of the church, had the effect of distancing the parson from his parishioners. "Scattered evidence in local newspapers suggests ...that curates may have been more likely to win popular esteem than incumbents. When parishioners presented farewell gifts to clergymen leaving for another parish, the silver salvers went disproportionately often to curates".²⁰

Obelkevich speaks of "the churches' varying influence on social life, with an increase noted about 1870, then a gradual decline". Early Methodism created for its members an all-encompassing way of life which broke decisively with traditional village mores. Primitive Methodists in particular were persecuted in their early years and later became an accepted part of the village scene. Obelkevich sees this transition of religion from public duty to private inclination as evidence of secularisation. Even withdrawing from church and chapel worship "would require not a defiance of public opinion but be a purely individual decision". Religious practice itself was being privatised, evidenced by

the growing dislike of congregational baptism and a growing preference for marriage by licence and not after the public calling of banns of marriage. Obelkevich's ground-breaking book investigated alternatives to overt Christian practice. He argues that one of the most striking features of popular religion was the virtual absence from it of the figure of Jesus Christ. Not even His miracles engaged popular imagination. The third Person of the Trinity was still less evident - except of course in Methodism. "All sorts of pagan customs were observed. One instance of this is the 'telling the bees' on the night of a death in a household: 'if this was neglected, either the bees would die or a further death would occur in the household'. Halloween surprisingly does not feature in the book but many of the same ghostly phenomena appear on St. Mark's Eve or 24 April as are now associated with Halloween. Villagers envisioned a Nature that was still alive, that had not been neutralised or desacralised by the Reformation or by science.²¹

Sarah Williams in her study of popular religion in the Southwark area of South London shows the same dependence on charms and other alternative religious practices in an urban context. This leads her to modify Obelkevich's conclusions in three important ways. Obelkevich, following Keith Thomas, states that: "popular superstition is 'conservative' in a rather different sense: as old stock declines, it is ordinarily not replaced by new growth".²² Yet popular religion in Southwark had adapted as people migrated from the countryside to the towns, taking their customs with them. Secondly Williams disputes the relatively sharp distinction which Obelkevich makes between Christianity as a 'higher' religion and popular superstition. She argues that instead of the "disjuncture between Christianity and popular religion," the two were in reality intertwined. Thirdly, because Obelkevich sees paganism and Christianity as

opposites at war with each other, he sees it as a war which one side must dominate. He sees the stronger influence on the individual in everyday life as pagan not Christian until both declined in the later Victorian period and "the degeneration of magic into luck was irreversible".²³ Because Williams sees pagan and Christian influences as intertwined she sees the continuing adaptability of both in popular culture rather than their disappearance.

In reaching her conclusions Sarah Williams draws on the work of David Clark who explores the North Yorkshire fishing village of Staithes where Methodism was the dominant religion. Here there was a link with Cornwall. "Between the years 1851 and 1861 the population of the parish increased by the unprecedented figure of 835 persons. Many of these came from the contracting tin mines of Cornwall and Devon and brought with them a strong brand of religious nonconformity; elsewhere in Cleveland they formed Bible Christian (or Bryanite) groups, whilst in Staithes some of them appear to have become involved in the life of the Primitive Methodist chapel". New housing was built, a small miners' cottage hospital was established and "the new industry gradually usurped the pre-eminence of fishing along the coast". Williams agrees with Clark when he argues that "the religion through which the villagers made sense of their lives consisted of a combination of 'official' and 'folk' religion". Clark highlights the divergent traditions from which these two kinds of religiosity sprang but argues for their complex interconnection in the social setting into which the ordinary villager was born. "Popular religion is more appropriately defined, therefore, as a generally shared understanding of religious meaning including both folk beliefs as well as formal and officially sanctioned practices and ideas, operating within a loosely bound interpretative community".²⁴ Williams also draws upon the work of John Rule in Cornwall whom she cites

approvingly. "He describes the convergence of popular Methodism with the indigenous beliefs of the people. ... Village people, therefore, possessed a background of beliefs which were partly Christian and partly magic against which they sought to understand the realities of the human situation".²⁵

The effect of the reforms initiated by the Ecclesiastical Commission was to make incumbents, as well as bishops, closer to the parishes they served with all their diverse religious practice. Knight highlights the importance of the Pluralities Act (1838) which she sees as the most influential of the Acts of Parliament introduced by the Ecclesiastical Commission. The gradual removal of clergy who held more than one appointment simultaneously transformed the curate's role from being in sole charge of parishes in the absence of the incumbent, appointments which could last many years, to becoming assistants to resident clergy. Many curates lost their jobs altogether as incumbents became resident in their parishes. The appointment of curates terminated at the death or resignation of an incumbent. "When the freehold passed to another incumbent, he would not necessarily keep his predecessor's curate, any more than he would feel bound to retain his domestic. This meant that the status of a curate was little better than that of a servant".²⁶ Knight is scathing about the impact of these reforms on ordinary rural clergy, though she acknowledges that the fact that the church was seen to be reforming itself may have helped its standing with lay people. Lack of finance and insecurity of tenure continued to be the two main problems that affected curates. "From the point of view of the rural clergy the (Ecclesiastical) Commission became synonymous with a betrayal of their interests".²⁷ In earlier times it was possible to be resident in one parish and act as someone else's curate, and also be an absentee vicar and pay a curate to do the work in the parish where you were incumbent. Those who had a head for

figures could pay a curate out of the tithe income they received and have something over, and supplement this income by acting as curate in the parish where they lived. The notorious parson of Helston and Wendron from 1784 to 1837, Thomas Wills, kept a curate "passing rich" on just over one pound per week while receiving £200pa in tithe money. Richard Gerveys Grylls was one of his curates. He lived close to Helston church, where he took many services, and was also Vicar of Breage which had an annual income of £400. ²⁸

Not only did the residence of the parson in the parish change in a way that affected both incumbent and curate. Also, the role of the clergy in society changed. Diane McClatchy, in a pioneering study of clergy in Oxfordshire, emphasised the strong church/state connections illustrated by the large number of clerical magistrates, though this was a declining number as the Victorian age progressed.²⁹ The role of the priest as dispenser of state aid to the poor also changed during the Victorian era. Under the old poor law, relief had been organised on a parish-by-parish basis. Justices of the Peace, who were often clergy, overseers of the poor and churchwardens controlled and supervised the charitable endowments and rates for the poor, which were used to alleviate need. The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 altered the direct link between the parish and poor relief. It set up a non-parochial administrative unit, the poor law union under the direction of elected guardians. "The secular and ecclesiastical functions of the parish were being prised apart". Concomitant with this development was a development in the understanding of political economy "that tended to make life less pleasant for the poor themselves". In McClatchy's words: "if we hear less about the administration of parochial charities in the mid nineteenth century, it may be that thrift and not charity was becoming the more fashionable parochial virtue, to be invoked from the pulpit and given expression

in the numerous clothing clubs, rent and shoe clubs and provident societies which were such a feature of the 1840s ,1850s and 1860s".²⁹

The clergy of the period appear to have been assailed from two directions on the matter of relief for the poor. On the one hand, they were not distributing as much relief as they once did. Knight, citing examples from Devon, comments, "as this transition in the provision of poor relief took place, the overseers of the poor ceased to record in their account books that they had met with the churchwardens, the clergyman and the principal inhabitants in order to decide who would receive pay from the poor rate. The basis of payment of annual charitable doles was also altered, as both clergy and Charity Commissioners began to question the legal validity of charitable distributions for which no written record existed".³⁰ On the other hand, Robert Lee in his important study of rural society in Norfolk principally argues that it was the giving out of dole that made the poor resent the clergy. Lee's contention is that "somewhere during the course of the 19th century, despite its ubiquitous involvement, the Church of England lost contact with rural society and lost its relevance to the lives of the labouring poor".³¹ Lee supplies much evidence from clergy themselves, unhappy at their lot in administering the iniquities of the Poor Law. Particularly poignant is the anti-Poor Law handbill written by Rev. Ambrose Goode of Terrington in Norfolk: "Men must live - they have a right to live by labour at home and if the legislation will not find the means the little strife now begun ... will become a torrent ... The voice of the people becomes an angry surge. Unheeded it becomes a record of blood". However, too often the clergy acquiesced to the will of the squire, or in Nigel Scotland's evocative phrase the "oligarchal troika of parson, squire and farmer". Enlarged rectories and entry at the best tables of the parish contributed to a feeling that clergy

were feathering their nests "as if this earth and its affairs were the chief thing after all". The net result was a sullen resentment. One Vicar's wife wrote of the labouring man, whom she calls 'Hodge', in relation to parsons. "He hates them, but he conceals his hatred as well as he can, so that he may still benefit from their kindness". The rural historian Keith Snell has put a name to the animosity behind the public face of compliance: he calls it "deferential bitterness".³² Such resentment could be whipped into flames by incipient trade unions, some of whose rhetoric was decidedly anti-clerical. The Reverend John Cokes Egerton witnessed a union meeting at Burwash, Sussex in 1873 and provided his version of what was said in the yard of the public house: "The Harristocrats (sic) and the Farmers the tyrants, the labourers the slaves: the Farmers rolling in luxury, on their pianos, and plate and carpets, 100 and 150 guinea hunters, waggonettes, dry carts etc., the poor man's children crying for bread".³³ 1873/1874 marked the high water mark of rural unionism. Its main union, the National Agricultural Labourers' Union, fell from 80,000 members in 1874 to 24,000 in 1879. The so-called 'Revolt of the Field' was strongest in the South and the East, and weakest or non-existent in the West and the North. Although the Royal Commission on Labour stressed the weakness of formal trade unionism in the 1890s, it still found several instances of strike activity and forceful negotiation on the part of industrial groups of workers. In Probus, for instance, a gang working on a threshing machine forced a farmer to reinstate one of their number by stopping work.³⁴ In relation to the 18th and 19th century church's role in society, the terms 'pessimists' and 'optimists' are frequently used depending on whether the historian considers the role of the Church of England in society to have been effective and influential or not. For instance Mark Smith seeks to demonstrate the vitality of church and chapel life in

Oldham and Saddleworth, Lancashire, from 1740 to 1865.³⁵ He argues that the churches were able to participate in a common culture influenced strongly by evangelicalism and tries to show how the churches co-operated with each other as much as possible rather than engage in denominational conflict. For Michael Snape, "Smith's book makes no attempt to investigate the role of the church courts in local society or the place of religion in local politics notwithstanding the bitter politico-religious climate." Smith argues in reply that "such material generally reflects the pathology of parochial life rather than its normal condition." It is clear that where one starts from (whether with the plight of the rural poor, or - as Frances Knight does - with the problems that curates faced) helps to determine the outcome of one's studies. The view of a clergyman from the dock of a church court is very different from that of a bishop's palace.³⁵

Lee argued that the resentment of the poor towards the clergy was caused not just by the participation of the clergy in courts, ecclesiastical and secular, as clerical magistrates. It was also brought about by the use of clergy to deliver welfare under the terms of the Poor Law Act. If, as the 19th century progressed, the voluntary nature of all churches meant that these statutory provisions became less important, it did not necessarily make the clergy any more popular or the churches any stronger. An American scholar has argued that the decline in providing welfare led to a decline in the influence of the churches themselves. Although he admits to calling it "a considerable over-simplification", Jeffrey Cox writes: "I am tempted to describe the structure of religion in Lambeth as a churchgoing, middle-class, building churches and providing social services for the non-churchgoing working class and poor". The Church of England has always "assumed responsibility for much more than the maintenance of public worship and the encouragement of private devotion". Philanthropy provided a

network of links between the churches and what Cox calls “diffusive Christianity”, but did little to provide definite Christian belief. The network of clubs attached to churches was another link and so were baptisms, marriages and funerals: "Slum churches were often crowded on Christmas Day when clergymen conducted several marriages at once". According to Cox, "Ideologically the philanthropic auxiliaries were more important to clergymen, patrons and ordinary churchgoers than to participants, for good works supplied a major rationale for the church's existence".³⁶

The paradox, as Cox sees it, is that Church attendance was irrefutably declining as social conditions improved even though a variety of Christian movements, including Dr Barnardo's and the Salvation Army, had helped bring this about. Yet social conditions had by no means improved everywhere. Desperate poverty remained, and in late 19th century Britain it was not just the churches who ministered - Cox draws attention to the evident success of alternative institutions which emerged after 1870. This conclusion is supported by the work of Jeremy Morris into Croydon during the period 1840 to 1914. "The failure of voluntarist forms of action to remedy the social problems thrown up or exacerbated in the course of urbanisation paralleled the failure of the churches to achieve the programmes of moral and religious regeneration they had taken upon themselves in the mid nineteenth century". Morris develops Cox's argument in an important way. Cox had drawn a parallel between the failure of voluntarist and church action and the rise of the welfare state, and saw the replacement of church welfare by other bodies as a central state initiative. Morris prefers to focus on the rise of the local state. The rising authority and prestige of Croydon Town Council newly incorporated in 1883 "put an end to the claims of Anglicanism to act as the focus of community loyalties. The

Corporation naturally usurped the position of prestige in the town the Parish Church had once held. The new Town Hall ... containing the Public Library, Law Courts, Council Chamber and offices and Corn Exchange (comprehended) ... within its walls the principal administrative functions of the borough". Morris stresses that he is not arguing that the decline of religion in late Victorian and Edwardian England is accountable solely or even largely in terms of the rise of reformed local government. But because in the Victorian period the churches carried so many of the aspirations of society, "their perceived failure to put these aspirations into effect, and the attractiveness of the alternative method of local control, municipal government, drew local leaders away from active church involvement into a quite different, separate sphere of action".³⁷

Frank Prochaska emphasised the continued role of church-based philanthropic action, even in an era when central and local state action was more in evidence. "By the 1880s, most organisations dealing with poor relief sponsored mothers' meetings, and commentators as diverse as Lord Shaftesbury and Charles Booth thought this to be among the most practical and successful forms of philanthropy...Supervised by ladies, often with the assistance of working-class missionaries, meetings typically had about fifty or sixty regular members, who listened to stories or lectures while bowed over their needles." Prochaska acknowledges that the state in many instances took over the role of the philanthropic organisation. "The Home Office severely restricted charitable activities in prisons after they took over full responsibility for them in 1877 ... Poor law officials too, particularly workhouse masters, made life difficult for volunteers who wanted to visit workhouses". Notwithstanding the growing role of legislation, state action and voluntary philanthropy existed side by side. "In a society in which lighthouses are run by the state and lifeboats by

philanthropists (the Royal National Lifeboat Institution was founded in 1824) the citizen may be excused for believing that much muddle persists".³⁸ Thus there is a continuing role for the church-based charity - so important to the *raison d'être* of the church in Cox's thesis - but it is a role that has to be adapted according to the needs of the society it served. But in the period under review, which Morris characterises as a municipal age (and where local government made strides to organise the rural areas too with the advent of parish councils), the status and the public profile of these church-based projects was often much reduced from an earlier time, though not necessarily less effective.

Simon Green also sees a great deal of vitality in religion during the period 1870-1900. He argues for a tailing off in church activity in the first decades of the 20th century. Green takes as his examples church and chapel life in the three West Riding towns of Halifax, Denholme and Keithley, three of the towns most associated with the coming of worsted wool. Green argues that the power of the ideal to associate with others is itself a religious ideal. What he calls exogenous factors may force people to live in close proximity to each other (e.g. urbanisation and industrialisation); but he also highlights endogenous factors which include soteriological doctrine, recruitment techniques and church building programmes. "Whatever else it is, religious belief is a powerful motive for organization ...It is in the very nature of religious organisation that the justification for that motivation is essentially doctrinal in the first instance". So long as the associational ideal was fresh and vital, churches and chapels would thrive. Green sees the power of the associational ideal as contributing in no small measure to the recruitment drive and church building. It was the failure of the associational ideal in the early 20th century which led to the crisis in religion and to decline - the concept which forms the title of his book. The last chapter

is entitled 'Organisational stasis and the crisis of the associational ideal in early twentieth century religious institutions'. Green therefore takes issue with Stephen Yeo who has written another influential local study based on his researches into Reading, mainly during the period 1890-1914. Yeo writes that "the book is informed by one simple idea: that there may be a common situation or context for voluntary and other organisations ... rather than a series of discrete situations for different subject-areas for organisations such as religion, production, sport, education, welfare or politics". For Green it is the associational quality of religion which makes it distinctively different from the other forms of association.

Green makes the case for considering money in a religious context differently from other contexts. "It was a theory of organisational finance rooted in the Christian duty of self-sacrifice. Its practical demands, conceived from the point of view of the donor, were remarkably simple. It required that each person should give as much as he or she could give, and as frequently as he or she could give, so that through the sum of individual donations so given the work of God's church on earth could proceed". The act of giving was invariably conceived as an act of worship and as an act of self-sacrifice. Green quotes two Anglican clergy based in Halifax to this effect and he gives examples of similar utterances from clergy of other denominations. This association in a religious context has a different meaning from other contexts: it involves worship as well as self-sacrifice even in the use of money. Green makes his point in relation to an argument concerning secularisation: "If the future of religion is so unpromising and if its past was so glorious (an additional assumption which the prophets of decline are wont to make) then there must have been at some historical moment, in some historical place, for some

historical cause, a moment, place and cause of decline. And for most of these modern prophets, whether theologians, sociologists or even historians ... the moment was the last two decades of the nineteenth century. The place was the industrial town. The cause was the process of secularisation in urban industrial urban society". What Green does find to be true is "the intrusion of more worldly forms of financial organisation into the political economy of religious associations". This was caused in no small part by the ambitions of so much church building where churches had to raise the money that they had already spent. Following a model of secularisation proposed by Charles Glock, Green suggests tentatively that the 20th century decline of the churches may be a consequence of their secularisation, rather than the secularisation of the world around them. Green also traces a mood of anxiety in the churches of all denominations in the early 20th century when their schemes for expansion had not been fulfilled in the ways that they hoped. Church membership was by no means keeping up with the growing population of the country. This led to a critical, inward-looking attitude by the churches, even in some cases despair.³⁹

It is fascinating to compare Stephen Green with Stephen Yeo's researches into Reading in Berkshire. They come to strikingly different conclusions though there are distinct parallels in the evidence they adduce. For instance, Yeo cites the minister of Trinity Congregational Church in Reading, the Rev Ambrose Shepherd who "was one of the most active religious spokesmen in Reading in the early 1890s. He ran a chapel that flourished. Trinity grew to be an organization with many sub-agencies and a £2,000 a year budget ... By 1902, a few years after he left Reading, he had become bitterly disappointed. He had been keenly aware of how poverty and snobbishness restricted the class composition of his congregation". Although Yeo's material would not clearly

divide between the late 19th century and early 20th century, many other of the points which Green is making are backed up by Yeo's evidence. The disillusioned Ambrose Shepherd, for instance, urges what Yeo sees as an inward-looking approach in his annual report of 1894: "let us, more and more, make Trinity the centre of our prayers, and toil and love. It may seem at times a very narrow thing to belong to a single church and to love it with all our heart." The secularisation of the churches themselves is well illustrated by Yeo when he quotes an anonymous contribution to the letters page of the *British Weekly* from 'A Constant Reader'. This is headed 'Pulpit Notices or the Latest Advertising Medium' and complains "after some ordinary notices as to a coming bazaar, the following appeal was made: 'In connection with this bazaar a well-known firm of coal merchants has promised us that if all our friends here will combine to buy all their coal off them, they will then, in proportion to the quantity of coals purchased, do so and so for as ... to do this you must order all coals off our friend Mr. ___ whose address is ___!' Need I say more? What a fine scope it opens up for Pear's soap and Coleman's mustard, but is it not time we drew the line somewhere?"⁴⁰

Green also studies the increasing reliance by churches on bazaars which some agreed with and others detested: "It was a real contest, vigorously joined. At the very moment when the Halifax Council was commending the values of the institution to its readers, the Vicar of Halifax was denouncing bazaars to his congregation". According to Green, "Bazaars and their like, conceived not simply as a regular but actually as the principal component of ordinary chapel income constituted, so these cities believed, a fundamental threat to the essential basis of a specifically religious political economy ... detaching the moment of worship from the gesture of giving. As institutions of mutual

exchange, they irrevocably compromised the idea of personal sacrifice." "In the decline of one of the most prominent responsibilities of associational membership, lay the seeds of the demise of the wider ideal".⁴¹

Yeo, on the other hand, does not see what Green calls the "making broader and shallower" of the associational affiliation as the primary problem. Linking religious and other voluntary and charitable organisations much more closely, Yeo sees this development as virtually inevitable. Given the improvement of communications, the prominence of advertising and the increasing role of the state in providing the money needed for most projects to do with social welfare, the churches found themselves touching people at a shallower level. Yeo sees churches as part of the leisure industry, and sees a growing detachment of performer from audience in leisure activities such as the music hall. He sees this attitude in the churches themselves. The Primitive Methodist church, for instance, in 1890 differentiated between its members and its hearers - those committed to its ideals and those who simply came along to hear. Yeo also points out that "Reading itself was no longer so important in Reading affairs". He quotes a Reading inhabitant as saying in 1913: "Up to the 1890s ... Reading's tradesmen were all natives, but today the natives are in a minority, and many have been superseded by the local branches of vast firms with shops all over the country". Green writes from a standpoint where it is essential for the church to retain its unique identity. Yeo writes from a standpoint where state intervention is good. "A larger State meant, in ideology and to some extent in fact, a more accessible and benevolent State". In large measure Yeo welcomes it. "The central fact which religious and many other organisations should have faced during the period 1890 to 1914 in Reading was that twentieth century development was not going to be the fulfillment and

embodiment of the local and voluntarist aspirations". What concerns Yeo is the response of the churches to the "growing hegemony of the organizations" (of the state, national and local). Two opposite or complementary responses were noticeable in Reading before 1914 - the churches either opposed these developments by becoming more exclusive with stricter criteria for membership and "intensity in the style and format of meetings of the group". Or the response was to withdraw from civic life altogether - "the home orientated response, frequently although not always correctly confused with apathy". Secularisation happened when the churches withdrew from the public stage or adopted the character of a sect with exclusive criteria for membership (Yeo) or when the churches adopted the methods of secular society and thereby became largely indistinguishable from it (Green). The interesting thing is that a similar process was going on in Halifax and Reading, although differently interpreted by the historians. The following example which Yeo gives would also fit in with Green's argument. "The Primitive Methodists may have adopted a business form for their Chapel Aid Association, but they obviously thought that there was something wrong with 'a church in which livings are sold like shares in a gas company'".⁴²

Hugh McLeod also has important things to say about secularisation. He looks at an earlier generation of historians such as Wickham and Inglis, both of whom thought that the Victorian "religious boom was an overwhelmingly middle-class phenomenon" (except for Primitive Methodist and Roman Catholicism)". Neither of them thought that secularism was of much importance, but both concluded that religious indifference was widespread among the working class". McLeod shows that more detailed research on the 1851 Census shows that registration districts with very high levels of attendance included many with substantial

populations of industrial workers or miners, including Truro. Other historians have also shown that working-class people were not altogether absent from the churches. Keith Snell has shown that in the north midlands Wesleyans and Primitive Methodists both had a largely working-class membership. Mark Smith's work on Oldham and Saddleworth around the middle of the century also shows that most congregations were predominantly working-class and that many included a considerable proportion of factory workers. In a more recent study, Snell shows that the distribution of new 19th century Church of England churches "is a very close match to the nineteenth century urbanisation, or the density of population ... The Church of England has often been criticised for failing to adjust to nineteenth century urbanisation, but in fact ... it made a dramatic and expensive attempt to do so". Snell cites new dedications in the Cornish mining areas, the enlarged naval dockyard at Devonport adjacent to Plymouth and the new resort town of Torquay: "The most striking characteristic ... is its urban basis. Snell quotes Green approvingly regarding "the Victorian notion of sacred progress measured in bricks and mortar" especially in the mid nineteenth century "slowing down to a gentler flow towards the end of the century". This phenomenon is equally true of the twenty-five churches built in Halifax in the nineteenth century commented on by Green and the "elaborate churches and chapels in Reading". In both towns what Yeo says of Reading holds true. They were "in significant numbers of cases, the expression of the impulse and donations of local wealthy men, and could not have been built without them".⁴³

McLeod argues that between 1890 and 1914 business leaders were increasingly unlikely to be prominent in church or chapel or even to live in the town, and they were becoming less willing to give money to local religious

organisations. McLeod also argues persuasively that Victorian religion of "most churches had an emphatic evangelistic orientation". This also led to a measure of disillusionment as it became clear that a good proportion of society did not want to be converted. In the words of Ambrose Shepherd: "the overwhelming majority of the masses of the people (do not want) the distinctive message of the Church. Find them a religion that can make them sober without giving up the drink, that can give them clean lives without self-struggle ... and they will accept it with acclamation". McLeod also speaks of the decline of religious influence in the political sphere from a high watermark of Gladstone's government from 1868 to 1874. Religious issues were playing a less prominent part in politics and as a line of division between the parties, not least because most of the demands of the various religious minorities had been met (with the conspicuous exception of the disestablishment of the Church in Wales). P T Marsh sees the period of time between 1868 and 1882 as a period of decline but the ending of Anglican hegemony in the universities and the opportunities for board schools to exist alongside the national schools could also be seen as important markers on the necessary journey of the Church of England to be one church among many. Nevertheless in the longer period from the 1870s to the First World War, McLeod acknowledges that the role of religion and the churches in education and social welfare was diminishing - in some areas very rapidly, thus reinforcing Cox's view that social welfare ensured that some link existed between the churches and the working class. This diminished when that social welfare role of the churches was replaced by local and central state intervention.

For McLeod, a lack of money, disillusionment among church leaders, the decline of paternalism and an increasing welfare role for the state, all

contributed to a consciousness of religious crisis between 1890 and 1914. It was hard for the churches to know how to respond. As Yeo and Green have shown, withdrawal into exclusivity or adapting so that the distinctive voice had gone both carried dangers with them. The effect was that the church's message was not heard in society or became so diluted it was indistinguishable from other voices. Bernard Deacon also appraises the shift from a close-knit community to a more anonymous society. He surveys the writings of historians who take issue with the "old narrative of secularisation" including Callum Brown who provides "the most radical revisionist re-assessment".⁴⁴ Brown sees the crucial period for secularisation as the 1960s with the rise of pop culture and girls' magazines such as *Jackie*, providing a very different role model for women from "the angel in the home", bringing up the family on bible stories. Though Deacon emphasises that Brown sees the decline in religious participation between 1890 and 1914 as exaggerated (Deacon cites the *Daily News* census of churchgoing in London in 1902-1903, which Brown argues under-recorded as much as forty per cent) he marshals other evidence and fairly states: "Such evidence therefore points to a secularisation pushed forwards in time but still located in the social changes of the 1880s to 1910s". Albion Urdank has a more definite view of the Church of England's decline in his study of an area of Gloucestershire between 1780 and 1865, as the parish church in Nailsworth was completely eclipsed by the Shortwood Baptist Church. Urdank charts its transformation during the period from "introversionist sect" to denomination. "Denominationalism symbolised the secularisation of society ... its emergence as a denomination by 1851 led soon thereafter to a dilution of religious feeling". This process coincided with a period of de-industrialisation in Nailsworth as the weaving and clothmaking for which it was famous was gradually replaced by the

factory system. As Deacon argues, "the former account of a religious collapse setting in during the nineteenth century is now challenged". If Urdank places secularisation earlier and Brown later than the period under review, a large number of scholars, perhaps a majority, see the period 1870-1920 as significant in this process. Green contrasts the optimism of the former date (1870) with the pessimism of the latter date (1920), and suggests that both were exaggerated. Green sees both as interconnected because the hopes for evangelisation were so high in 1870 that it led to doubt, depression and disaffection by 1920 when those hopes had not been realised.⁴⁴

The imprecision of dating the secularisation of Britain is exacerbated by the variety of uses to which the word is put. Urdank sees the spreading out into the world of religious knowledge as an aspect of secularisation. This is a usage not far removed from the Catholic distinction between secular and regular clergy - the former working 'in the world' in a parish, the latter living under a rule usually as members of a religious order. A more common usage among historians and sociologists of the Victorian period is to regard secularism as the doctrine that morality should be based solely in regard to the well-being of humanity in this present life, to the exclusion of all considerations drawn from belief in God or a future state. This was a point of view promulgated by George Jacob Holyoake (1817-1906) and underpinned Charles Bradlaugh's (1833-1891) successful attempt to take his seat in the House of Commons, having several times been duly elected from 1880 as MP for Northampton without first having to swear an oath of allegiance invoking the deity. This finally happened in 1888 under the Parliamentary Oaths Act which provided for depositions by atheists. Since Holyoake and Bradlaugh were active in late Victorian society it further locates the crucial years in the period 1870 to the First World War. At the opposite

extreme from Urdank would be Callum Brown who enumerates the persistence of a religious thought world until the radical changes of the 1960s. Brown argues that church membership grew through the second half of the nineteenth century and achieved a peak in England and Wales in 1904 and in Scotland in 1905.

This brief survey of the development of pluralism and secularism shows disagreement among historians, from the optimists like Mark Smith to the pessimists like Michael Snape and the different definitions of secularism seen in Urdank and Brown. This disagreement has continued to the present day. Grace Davie has argued that the decline of Christian Britain owes more to the loss of interest in public association than to a loss of faith. Here she follows David Clark who, in his researches in Staithes, makes a case for the enduring nature of popular religion. Bruce has recently reconsidered this evidence and concluded that popular religion did not survive the demise of the chapels in Staithes. Chapel culture may be seen in the strict sabbatarianism of the fishermen and in the boat names chosen in the late nineteenth century. Boats used at Staithes in an earlier period (1755-1835) had names like Midsummer, Good Intent, Industrious Farmer and Adventure. Late Victorian names of boats included Simon Peter, Good Samaritan, Rock of Ages, Rose of Sharon and Star of Bethlehem. As this overt chapel culture disappeared so did popular religion, so Bruce argues. Though Staithes, according to Bruce, was not secular it was very pluralistic with the Congregational, Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist churches all strong. When the foundation stone of the 1865 Wesleyan chapel was laid by the Marquess of Normanby, "the Marquess was at pains to point out that as a member of the Established Church he entertained a sincere veneration for the

Anglican tenets, but he did not think it proper to interfere with those who sincerely differed from him in their mode of worshipping God".⁴⁵

Pluralism and secularism both played their part in reducing the links between the state and the Church of England, but the links were not completely effaced. Even in a pluralistic society, the Church of England had a role to play. Secularism, (as Obelkevich said, easier to describe than to interpret), has been interpreted in a variety of ways, some of which postdate the period under discussion. Pluralism and secularism were certainly factors but neither prevented some links between church and state from continuing. One important area of reform throughout the period, partly, but not wholly, brought about by the influence of utilitarianism was the reform of abuses and anomalies within any system whether parliamentary, municipal, or ecclesiastical. In a culture where worshippers had a greater degree of choice, anomalies within any organisation needed to be eliminated. In the immediate post-Reform Bill era within the life of the church one of the most prominent anomalies which presented itself was the governance of cathedrals. The elimination of abuses associated with the *modus operandi* of cathedrals, was a target of reformers both within and outside the church.

In 1871 at Exeter Cathedral all four canons resided in Exeter and were without parishes. But this was by no means always the case. Even thirty years after the Act of 1840 had sought to regulate matters, leaving most English cathedrals with a dean paid £1000 per annum and four canons paid £500 per annum, and Welsh cathedrals with £700 for the dean and canons paid £350 such uniformity was not happening everywhere,(Chadwick states that the financial provisions of the 1840 Act regarding Wales were based on the

“strange assumption” that Welsh clergy could be paid less). At Carlisle in 1869 only one canon lived within 50 miles of the cathedral and in Norwich none did. Even at Exeter the canons “depended on the dean, who had to reside for at least eight months, according to the provisions of the 1840 Act”. In many cases it was the dean who initiated the changes necessary to reform the cathedral.⁴⁶

The question was frequently raised in the 1830s, and afterwards, asking what was a cathedral for. One answer, especially favoured in high church circles, was that cathedrals ought to be centres of theological study. Theological colleges were first founded at Chichester and Wells, and later at Lichfield (1857), Salisbury (1861), Exeter (1861) and Gloucester (1868). This train of thought was to influence future developments at Truro Cathedral. Bishop Phillpotts’ success in securing a fifth canonry at Exeter in the reforms of 1840 gave some money to the future cathedral. It was this canonry which was transferred to Truro diocese on its inception, as Phillpotts intended. In the 1830s Julius Hare was one of many who believed that the reform of cathedrals would bring them closer to the rest of the diocese that they were part of. Cathedrals, he argued, “afford the best means of connecting the whole Clergy of the Diocese... that through them the Cathedral might, as it were, stretch out her arms through the diocese”. Nevertheless, many including Burns and Chadwick judged the reforms had weakened the links between diocese and the cathedral chapter. “The chapters did not approve of bishops who joined the Whig plan to reform them by taking away their money”. 382 minor cathedral offices were abolished, which had previously linked these people to the life of the cathedral. Partly to make good this deficit, the 1840 Act authorised the creation of non-residentiary honorary canons in the new foundation cathedrals, implemented gradually under an order-in-council of 1844 “in the hope that these offices might

form a link between diocesan clergy and cathedral". An earlier amendment secured in 1837 ensured that old foundation cathedrals could retain their non-residentiary canons, even when their endowments had been removed, as unremunerated honorary canons. Only two honorary canons could be appointed in one year, however, up to a total of twenty four. Such an arrangement was not without its critics, but it did bring diocesan clergy into the cathedral to teach or work in other ways.⁴⁷

The reforms of 1840 had another consequence. "The prominent feature of nearly all the cathedrals in 1870 was their poverty". The 1840 changes had taken away some of their revenues and the Act of 1868 encouraged cathedrals to hand over estates to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in return for a steady annual income. Despite some initial misgivings, "by 1880, and the age of the agricultural depression, those cathedrals were managing best who commuted and were receiving a fixed sum from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. They alone had a guaranteed income, while all the others were receiving less than the estate had been expected to produce. Nearly every cathedral in the country was in difficulty during the (eighteen) eighties... No cathedral could repair its fabric from its fabric fund. And while the money fell the expenses rose... In the early (eighteen) nineties the dean and canons of Winchester, Salisbury and Gloucester drew half their proper stipends".⁴⁸

Despite the lack of money in the fabric funds, nearly all did major works of repair or renovation during this age. It was calculated that during the 10 years after 1874, the English cathedrals had some £643,298 spent on them. There was still the need to spend and spend continuously solely to maintain such historic fabrics. Harvey Goodwin, Dean of Ely, said "in order to keep cathedrals

works going, the dean must beg". In this respect, cathedrals faced the same problems as parish churches. Between 1840 and 1876 Anglicans built in England and Wales 1727 new churches and rebuilt or restored 7144 old churches or cathedrals as a total cost of £25,548,703. The new churches were chiefly in the dioceses of Winchester (294) especially in South London, Manchester (193), Ripon (182), Lichfield (169), Durham (154), Oxford (145) and York (127). Although some money for rebuilding was found from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, Queen Anne's Bounty or Church Building Commission, public funds and endowments were very small compared to the total cost. In London diocese, the total cost of repairs was £2,708,613, of which £2,536,029 was from private sources. Even before the abolition of church rates in 1868, the levy was sometimes difficult to collect, though it did help repair some town churches. Nottingham and Helston were examples of towns where the church rate was impossible to collect: "In April (1843) a Chartist leader named Sweet attempted to stand as churchwarden (at St Mary's Nottingham), with the intention of blocking all meetings that proposed the setting of a rate. It is not clear whether Sweet was successful in the election, but St Mary's remained in a shambolic state, often locked the several months". New ways of finding money had to be found, usually by subscription. "The Anglican middle classes observed the expansion of population and responded by building and enlarging churches. This was the practical aspect of their response. Between 1831 and 1851, 2029 churches were opened, of which 849 were in new centres of population in Cheshire, Lancashire, Middlesex, Surrey and the West Riding of Yorkshire. It was an extraordinary example of middle-class philanthropy... If there were more churches with free seats, they reasoned, working people would feel them and learn to be moral". This would result in fewer illegitimate births

and less poverty and dependence on the community for welfare. Many saw the rapid rise in attendance at nonconformist chapels as due to a lack of space in Anglican churches.⁴⁹

For those who saw the rapid opening and repair of Anglican churches as an answer to immorality and the growth of nonconformist chapels, the results of the religious Census held on 30 March 1851, came as a shock. Despite the inclement weather of the day, many thousands attended church or chapel worship, and their attendance was recorded up and down the country in almost every church and chapel for the first (and only) time that such an enterprise had been attempted on that scale. In 1853, Horace Mann published the results. "There were deficiencies in the original returns... But in the larger areas, including nearly all the registration districts, the printed figures convey a reasonably accurate impression of the scale of attendance".⁵⁰ Throughout the area covered by the census, the whole of England and Wales, attendance at Anglican churches amounted to 27.6% of the population and accounted for 47.4% of all attendances in England and Wales. So fewer than half who worshipped on 30 March 1851 worshipped in an Anglican church, and those who did comprised only just more than a quarter of the population. 58.1% of the population had worshipped somewhere in the country, but the results were very patchy. Registration District 5 covered the South-Western counties of Wiltshire, Dorset, Devon, Cornwall and Somerset. In Cornwall, the index of attendance (IA) was 67.9%, higher than the national average, but lower than any other county in Registration District 5. As a proportion of the total population of Cornwall, only 19.2% worshipped in an Anglican church. The next lowest in the District was Devon which registered the Anglican attendance as 40.1% of the total population; Cornwall had by far the highest total of non-Anglican

worshippers, 48.7% of the population, 71.8% of the percentage share of those who worshipped. The vast proportion of non-Anglican worshippers in Cornwall were Methodist, 43.8% of the population and 64.5% of the percentage share. Within the registration district, the next highest non-Anglican attendance was in Wiltshire. Here, 41% of the population worshipped in a non-Anglican Church, of whom the majority were not Methodist but "old dissent" such as members of Baptist or Congregational churches. Unlike Cornwall, the high attendance of non-Anglican worshippers did not seriously affect the number going to Anglican churches. As a proportion of the population in Wiltshire 44.7% worshipped in an Anglican church alongside the 41% who worshipped in a non-Anglican church, contributing to the very high overall percentage of 85.7% of people who worshipped somewhere as a percentage of the population, the highest figure in Registration District 5.

The more detailed analysis of the figures from Cornwall revealed that the three far western districts (Penzance, Redruth and Helston) and Liskeard in East Cornwall had particularly low overall attendance. Helston's (46.5%) was the lowest in the five counties of Registration District 5 and one of only two districts (Bedminster, which included parts of Bristol with 47.2% was the other) where fewer than half the population worshipped on 30 March 1851. In the Redruth district, where 55.7% of the population worshipped somewhere, only 9.8% of the total population worshipped in the Anglican Church, which was 17.7% of those who worshipped somewhere. Though Penzance's figure of overall attendance as a percentage of the population (63.8%) was better than that of Redruth or Helston, this figure was buoyed by the strength of non-Anglican churches. Even in Penzance only 17.6% of the population worshipped in an Anglican church. The figures were generally better in other parts of

Cornwall: Launceston (90.8), Truro (84.0), St Columb (77.8), Camelford (76.7), Bodmin (74.2) Stratton (73.7), St Germans (72.7) St Austell, (72 .2) and Falmouth (68.4) were all above the national average for church attendance and some of the districts showed strong Anglican performance. Stratton, Launceston and St Germans showed Anglican attendance as above the national average. Liskeard conformed to the West Cornwall pattern and at St Austell, Anglican worshippers were only 10.9% of the overall population.

Interpreting the 1851 census is fraught with controversy; both the statistical methods employed and the usefulness of the enterprise have been questioned. Coleman, whose statistics I have used, admits "the smaller the area of study by the historian, the less satisfactory the figures tend to be" but also acknowledges "the study of religion at this period, perhaps, more than any other, requires some sense of social geography, of region and of locality, and of the various forces operating on people's behaviour in each".⁵¹ With these caveats in mind, it may be worth seeking to make a comparison with Derbyshire, which also was strongly Methodist and had a significant amount of mining.⁵² The rector of Staveley in Derbyshire, J D MacFarlane, noted in the census return that "mining populations here, as generally, chiefly Methodist". At Winster the curate wrote: "certain influential persons prevent the children from attending the Church Sunday School and Established Church Service". This suggested that, at Winster, at least, relations between Methodist and Anglican were not entirely happy. At Taddington, where the perpetual curate was one of a small number of clergy who refused to fill in the attendances (on the grounds that "I never count the numbers"), he nevertheless remarked: "there is a chert quarry on the land out of the proceeds of which the expense of building the Parsonage was partly paid. This quarry produced from 1838 to 1844 £253 4s 7d. Since 1844, the

incumbent has only received £4 2s 6d". The Anglican curate felt hard done by, but the quarry owners appear to have begrudged giving any, or at least much, of their revenue to the church. Like Cornwall, Derbyshire was situated close to counties which were more strongly Anglican. Derbyshire was on the fringe of a large area of Anglican strength which covered much of England south of a line from the Wash to the Bristol Channel. This area ran close to the Derbyshire border with, for example, very high index of attendance figures in East Leicestershire, Rutland and north Warwickshire. Despite the proximity to church-going counties, the returns from Derbyshire were lower than they were in the surrounding counties, as also was true for Cornwall in relation to Devon and other counties in Registration District 5. Tranter concludes that "17% of the population attended an Anglican service and 25% were to be found in dissenting places of worship... 38% of all attenders were at church services, 25% in Wesleyan Chapel's and 15% in Primitive Methodist meeting houses". Though the combined strength of the Methodist Churches in Derbyshire was larger than the Anglican Church numbers, (54,251 against 49,502), the divisions within Methodism allowed Anglicans to claim that more attended the Anglican Church than any other. In Cornwall, Primitive Methodism was nowhere near as strong as in Derbyshire (it had been founded in the midland county of Staffordshire) though it did have some Primitive Methodist churches, such as at St Ives. (Devon was unique in the country in having no Primitive Methodist churches at all in the 1851 census). Also, the problems among Derbyshire Methodists which led to the growth of the Wesleyan Reformers did not apply to Cornwall. Nevertheless, in Cornwall there were still many divisions within Methodism. In Cornwall it was difficult not to see the combined strength of Methodism as overwhelming and yet the figures on the Index of Attendance and

as a percentage of all attendances for Anglicans were very similar to those in Derbyshire. Tranter's figure of 17% Anglican attendance (IA) compares closely with most of the lowest figures of Cornwall's registration district (Penzance 17.6, Helston 15.0, Liskeard 18.4 only Redruth (9.8) and St Austell (10.9) were significantly lower.)

Tranter does not quantify statistics for Derbyshire in the way that Coleman does. Nevertheless, she draws attention to the "marked difference within the county... the distribution of parishes with the highest values (of attendance) appears to be unrelated to any specific topographical or economic variable. Some industrialised parishes, like Measham, Donisthorpe and Stretton... have an attendance index of 61 per cent". An earlier generation of historians connected industrialisation with non-conformity or indeed a growing irreligion. In the words of the Rector of Staveley: "The great part of the mining population is fluctuating. These strangers have no association with the parish church nor indeed, with any place of worship". Such a process was associated, not just with mining but also with other forms of industry: in George Eliot's succinct phrase "no looms here, no Dissent", with which she ends her description of the fictional village of Lowick in *Middlemarch*. This thesis appears to be accepted by writers such as Inglis and Soloway and could be made patient of a Marxist explanation. Engels had indeed written shortly before the 1851 census. "All bourgeois writers are agreed that the workers have no religion, and do not go to church. Exceptions to this are...a few of the older workers and those wage-earners who have a foot in the middle-class camp". Tranter is right to say "more recently, however, historians of nineteenth century religion have called into question these and other broad generalisations, whether they are concerned with the strengths and weaknesses of the Established Church and of Dissent".

There were more working class men and women attending churches or chapels, including Anglican churches than the statements of Inglis would allow. Nevertheless "the results of the census when published by Horace Mann in 1853, staggered the nation, especially the clerical establishment, which was dismayed at the number of absentees revealed by the figures". A.D. Gilbert has shown that the period from 1831 to 1851 saw more new churches built and old churches restored than any other time during the 19th century, but concludes that the recruitment of new priests to serve them was slower and the rise in numbers of Easter communicants was disappointing.⁵²

Horace Mann, when publishing the census, wrote an introduction which sought to diagnose the cause of non-attendance and seek out a remedy. He calculated that about five and a quarter million people failed to do their duty, mainly because they saw religion as a middle-class luxury which was indifferent to their poverty, Mann argued. The remedy, Mann believed, was mission, which he hoped the churches would embark on together. In fact, the consequence of the census was the exact opposite. Rather than encouraging a coming together, politically or ecclesiastically, the opposite was true. The Tory Lord Derby affirmed "the falsity of many of the statistics, while the Whig Lord Palmerston argued for their reliability".⁵³ Some years later, Horace Mann in a letter to the Times stated that the census made no attempt to estimate the numbers of the different denominations. But this was what the different denominations tried to analyse and it precipitated a renewed effort to do something about it. For the Church of England, the census finally established the impossibility of treating the establishment as privileged on the grounds that it was the church of the immense majority of the country. Even though the census of 1851 showed that if there was one thing the establishment did not need in the towns, it was more

churches, it did not stop them from being built, though never quite on the same scale as in the period 1831 to 1851. In the Church of England, renewal and restoration of churches and the building of new ones was in part connected to a revival in the Anglican Church associated with the Oxford Movement. Frances Knight in her researches in Lincoln diocese showed that the eight archdeacons who had encouraged restoration of churches all had High Church connections. This does not necessarily mean that they had been influenced by the Oxford Movement, for as Nockles shows there was a strong High Church tradition, which thought of itself as "orthodox", continuing from the 18th century onwards. One of the eight archdeacons, W. B. Stonehouse, wrote a series of notes on the churches in the archdeaconry of Stow in 1845 as part of his primary visitation of the archdeaconry.⁵⁴

In Stonehouse's comments on the minster church of Stow, we see a growing historical consciousness, the shortage of money and the proposal of radical solutions which attended his desire to see the church repaired. "This venerable fabric is now going fast to decay and I have been informed that the estimate to place it in a state of repair would amount to a sum of £7,000, which sum in my opinion is not likely to be raised... Some would suggest that the present fabric should be taken down and the convenient parish church erected in its place. But who can bear to part with such a relic of antiquity, connected with such associations". Despite Stonehouse's pessimism, the young architect John Loughborough Pearson was commissioned to do the work. It was this early restoration which, alongside other commissions, led to Pearson gaining a national status and later the opportunity to design Truro Cathedral. Archdeacon Goddard of Lincoln visited the archdeaconry of Lincoln assiduously over a 27 year period until 1844. He identified non-residence of clergy as the great evil in

his archdeaconry. In both Stonehouse and Goddard there was a renewed concern that the local church should be in good repair and have a resident minister. In Stonehouse's notes we see the beginnings of a preference for the gothic in architecture over the classical: "it is not a repair to remove the decayed stone tracery from a church window and replace it with a wood mullion, nor is it a repair to take off the lead, and to remove the decayed, though in many places fine, old gothic beams and replace them with flat plaster ceilings and a covering of tiles". Knight comments that Archdeacon Stonehouse preferred gothic-style open roofs, moulded beams and stone windows. Pearson was exactly the type of architect who could do such work.⁵⁵

At the same time as the Oxford Movement, the Cambridge-centred Camden Society attempted to renew architectural taste in the Church of England upon Gothic lines. When the ecclesiologist Edward Chirton became Archdeacon of Cleveland in 1846, Graeme Drewery suggests that the doctrines of the Camden Society reached the remotest parishes. Lincoln diocese was unusual in having all eight archdeacons from a High Church or "Orthodox" background. In fact, archdeacons came from all backgrounds of churchmanship from the 1830s onwards. Bishop Henry Phillpotts of Exeter, himself of the High Church "Orthodox" tradition appointed his evangelical son William Phillpotts to be Archdeacon of Cornwall. Many other archdeacons were chosen by bishops of different theological persuasion. The legislation of the 1830s enforced archdeacons' residence in the diocese for at least eight months of the year and limited them to one benefice in the diocese and another benefice or cathedral preferment (through the Pluralities Act of 1838). This meant that archdeacons spent more time looking at, advising and inspecting the churches in their care. It is little wonder that a generation of church building and repair took place.⁵⁶

The Oxford Movement also encouraged new liturgical and doctrinal thought in the Church of England and this was more controversial in a society which had strong anti-Catholic elements and where, according to Linda Colley, the prevailing British identity was centred on its adherence to the Protestant faith. Benjamin Hulme, priest of Hathersage Roman Catholic chapel, in his remarks in the 1851 religious census wrote of his chapel as "one of the oldest chapels in England – once unroofed by a gang of ruffians – urged by their no–popery zeal–something like what at present animates the soul of Lord John Russell". Samuel Walsh, incumbent of Hayfield, answered the 1851 Census questions "under a strong Protest. I consider them impertinent and inquisitorial". But he calls the church in his return "the Protestant Church of England". It was exactly this designation that was contested by those influenced by the Oxford Movement.⁵⁷

A particularly key moment in the first phase of the Oxford Movement was the publication of Tract 90 on 25 January 1841 by John Henry Newman. It was entitled "Remarks on Certain Passages in the Thirty-Nine Articles," and argued that though the Articles were the product of a protestant age they were not patient of an exclusively protestant interpretation. Newman's argument that the articles of religion were patient of a Catholic interpretation came as a shock to Oxford University. "Not even the university was accustomed to the word Catholic, not meaning Roman Catholic". At Oxford and Cambridge, the test of Anglican orthodoxy for students who wished to matriculate (Oxford) or graduate (Cambridge) was subscription to the Thirty Nine Articles. Since Oxford and Cambridge were exclusively Anglican institutions, if Newman's interpretation were accepted, it might alter the whole basis on which admission to Oxford would take place. The future Archbishop of Canterbury, A. C. Tait, then at Balliol College, drafted a letter to the press arguing that Tract 90 was dangerous

because it reduced the differences which separated the Church of England from the Roman Catholic Church. The teaching of Roman Catholic doctrine in the Church of England could not be prevented if this latitude of interpretation were allowed. On 12 March 1841 the heads of all but four of the Oxford colleges resolved to censor the Tract. Four days later, the vice-chancellor said that the tracts were in no way sanctioned by the University, the same day that Newman told him that he was the sole author of Tract 90. The Bishop of Oxford, under pressure from the Archbishop of Canterbury, commanded that the publication of the Tracts must cease. In return, the Bishop would refrain from any censure upon the Tracts in general or Tract 90 in particular. Thus Tract 90 became the last tract to be published, though it continued to be reprinted. According to Chadwick, the extended liberty of interpretation was achieved. Near Romanisers would not leave the Church of England because its Articles were impossible to reconcile with the Catholic faith. "Even in his (Newman's) letter to Bishop Bagot, he managed, as he wrote to Keble, to wedge in a good many bits of Catholicism". To the end of his life, Archbishop Tait was seen as the man who had driven Newman out of Oxford. Ironically, the Oxford Movement which had set great store on the authority of bishops, as successors to the apostles, had finished publication of the Tracts because of a command of the Bishop of Oxford. Newman used the outcry against Tract 90 as a reason for his withdrawal from a public role in the Church of England. "I considered," he recalled bitterly, "that after the Bishops' Charges and the general disavowal of the Tract on the part of clergy, it was not for me to represent or to attempt to champion, the Church to which I belonged". Though Newman remained a member of the Church of England until October 1845, by the end of 1841 he was on his deathbed as Anglican, though he realised it but slowly.⁵⁸

Though Newman and some other early leaders of the Oxford Movement became Roman Catholics, many influenced by him stayed within the Church of England, including Keble and Pusey. The diffusion of a new style Catholic interpretation of the Church of England into the parishes gradually took place. It was to be distinguished from the older "High and Dry" Catholicism of Orthodox Anglicans, which had seen the close connection between Church and State as integral to their beliefs. Central to an understanding of those inspired by the Oxford Movement was that authority for what was done ecclesiastically came not from the state, but from the church itself. Its bishops were in unbroken succession from the apostles of earliest Christian times who had received their teaching from Jesus himself. W M Jacobs argues that one of the chief agents in the dissemination of Tractarian influence were the theological colleges. These had started in the immediate post-Napoleonic era when it became clear that the universities were unable to supply enough men to serve the remoter districts. St Bees in Cumberland was founded in 1816 by the Bishop of Chester, as a "Clerical Institution." The students, who were boarded out, worshipped in the parish church, where the principal was incumbent and undertook a two-year course. In 1822, St David's College Lampeter was founded both to train clergy and to provide general education for non-graduates in South-West Wales. In 1839 Bishop Otter, formerly first principal of King's College London, founded the earliest post-graduate theological college at Chichester, where he was Bishop, although for the "first thirty years, the college at Chichester was small in numbers and precarious in existence". The second such foundation, which followed at Wells in 1840, was more substantial. It was founded by George Henry Law who, like Otter, had already been involved with ministerial training when as Bishop of Chester he founded the college at St Bees. It is in the

development of Wells that Jacob traces the diffusion of Tractarianism into the parishes where those it trained ended up working. One of the main instigators and financial backers of the project to found Wells was Lord John Thynne, brother of the Marquess of Bath, "a noted high churchman and a strong opponent of the Public Worship Regulation Act of 1874".⁶⁰

Simon Skinner has argued that the Oxford Movement, as it began to penetrate into the parishes, was interested in the social conditions of the day. Tractarians provided a vigorous commentary against what they saw as the iniquities of commercialism and the new Poor Law, utilitarian economics and the condition of the labouring poor. Skinner concludes that the parish was the social unit, which they saw as the place where they could put these views into practice. They generally sought to avoid commercial means of raising money to support the parish. They looked to the collection plate rather than the church bazaars. Critics of the Oxford Movement saw the introduction of the collection plate as an intrusion into the Book of Common Prayer just as they thought sacramental confession was. Keble went so far as to view the legitimacy of the state as depending on its Christian character. Tractarian thought considered the Church as greater in importance than the State and able to set its own laws rather than abide by the rules that the state imposed. Tractarian writers attempted "to scale new heights of clerical sovereignty on the question of establishment" but never seriously threatened to break the relationship with the state. Nevertheless, thinking as they did, crises of conscience were particularly acute in the aftermath of the Gorham Judgement (1850) and the Public Worship Regulation Act (1874).⁶⁰

George Cornelius Gorham incurred the disapproval of his Bishop, Henry Phillpotts of Exeter, when he advertised for a curate "free from Tractarian error" for the West Cornwall mining parish of St Just in Penwith. Phillpotts saw Gorham as one of a small number of Calvinist puritans that he did not want in his diocese. When Gorham wanted to move parishes within the diocese to Brampford Speke outside Exeter, Phillpotts examined Gorham over several days concerning what Gorham understood baptismal regeneration to mean. This was a concept referred to in the Thirty Nine Articles which Gorham would have to assent to when he was instituted into his new parish. Gorham believed that regeneration came through conversion rather than through infant baptism, so Phillpotts refused to institute him into his new parish. Gorham appealed against the decision and a secular court ruled in his favour that his (Gorham's) understanding of baptismal regeneration was compatible with the teaching of the Church of England. The Archbishop of Canterbury travelled to Brampford Speke to institute Gorham. The fact that a secular court had pronounced on Anglican doctrine deeply troubled some Tractarians. A number of secessions to Rome took place in the early 1850s, notably Henry Manning, Archdeacon of Chichester, a future Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster. In 1854, on the day before the Crimean war started, Gladstone, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, spent the whole evening writing to Robert Wilberforce, Archdeacon of Cleveland, (eldest son of William Wilberforce and brother in law to Henry Manning) urging him not to leave the Church of England and become a Roman Catholic. The attempt was unsuccessful, but Wilberforce was incredulous that Gladstone had attempted it at all on that particular date. Future generations would look at the date of the letter and think it was not possible, Wilberforce thought. The fact that Gladstone attempted it showed the importance he

attached to the relationship between church and state, though he came to see that this argument that he proposed in an early book came to be rejected both by many Tractarians and also by many in his own party.⁶¹

With the growing impact of Anglo Catholicism and Ritualism in the parishes after about 1860, attempts were made in Parliament to legislate, in order to place limits on what a clergyman could do in church in terms of Anglo-Catholic liturgical practice or ritual. Much parliamentary discussion in committee took place before the drafting of the Public Worship Regulation Act which was debated and passed in 1874. In particular, the six points of Anglo-Catholic ritual observance were opposed. (Eastward position at the altar, wafer bread, mixed chalice, lit candles, vestments and incense). The Church Association was founded in 1865 to counter the spread of ritualism in the Church of England and was responsible for initiating most of the attempted prosecutions of ritualist clergy under the Act. Many bishops refused the invitation of the Church Association to prosecute clergy in their dioceses under the Act, but five clergy were imprisoned following prosecution. The first priest imprisoned, Arthur Tooth, was vicar of St James's Hatcham in the Diocese of Rochester. Unwilling to recognise any authority whatsoever in the secular court to try him, he first refused to appear when told to do so, but did so when the venue was the library of Lambeth Palace. When convicted of a number of offences under the Public Worship Regulation Act, Arthur Tooth did not appeal to a higher secular court, but with the churchwardens ignored the ruling and prevented a curate sent by the Bishop of Rochester from entering the church. Tooth was arrested for contempt of court and imprisoned. Lord Penzance, Dean of Arches, was motivated by the desire to uphold secular law and saw the church as required to obey the edicts the state. He was no stranger to controversy, having tried the

Mordaunt versus Mordaunt divorce case in which the Prince of Wales was implicated. When he became Dean of Arches in 1875, the year that the Public Worship Regulation Act was to come into force, he declined to take the oath required by the Church's canons, subscription to the Thirty Nine Articles, acceptance of letters patents from the Archbishop of Canterbury and confirmation by the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury Cathedral. "He would do nothing which might seem to question the validity of his position and rights by Parliamentary statute".⁶²

Here, therefore, were two totally contrasting views of the relationship between Church and State. Penzance came close to seeing the church as subordinate to Parliament. By contrast, the ritualist clergy saw obedience to the church as taking precedence over obedience to the state. Another priest to be imprisoned under the Act was Richard Enraght, who said when refusing to attend his trial in 1879 " as I could not recognise Lord Penzance or his court which derives its authority... solely from an Act of Parliament, as having any spiritual jurisdiction over me, I was unable conscientiously to defend myself before it". Enraght's trial was known nationally as the Bordesley wafer case. One of the grounds for prosecution was that he had used wafer bread in communion at Holy Trinity Bordesley Birmingham. In order to produce evidence in a law court, a wafer was taken from a service conducted by Enraght by a person pretending to be a communicant. Perhaps the biggest outcry attended Sydney Faithorn Green's imprisonment, because it lasted 20 months and because the Church Association successfully applied to have Green's possessions sequestered in order to pay their legal costs, thus rendering his wife and children homeless from the vicarage of Miles Platting in Manchester.⁶³ Here the limit of state intervention in church affairs was revealed by the

impracticality of taking such a step. Imprisonment for contempt of court had not been envisaged by Archbishop Tait when he introduced the Public Worship Regulation Act as a private member's Bill into the House of Lords. In a country where which was still strongly anti-Catholic in many places, imprisonment won sympathy for the Anglo-Catholic cause where it had not existed hitherto.⁶⁴

The way in which the Oxford Movement developed in mid and late Victorian Britain challenged the prevailing ethos of the Protestant state. What had started as a radical vision of High Churchmanship in an era of reform became a critique of the erastian establishment. The critique was made more powerful by coming from people who were inherently conservative and paternalistic yet "entertained an almost democratic vision of the sacred liturgical space that emphasised equality of persons in the eyes of God". Skinner points to the direct parish experience of all his various protagonists – virtually all of them worked within the confines of very small landscapes – Oxford colleges, parishes and monastic settings. This meant that attacking them had to be done at local level. The Oxford Movement was a movement most active away from the corridors of power, in parishes along the south coast of England, in London and in the larger cities of the country especially. It was difficult for national organisations like parliament to react against a movement that was so local in its expression.⁶⁵

The virulence of these debates affected Cornwall. Arthur Tooth's trial in 1877 coincided with the preparations for the arrival in Cornwall of Edward White Benson as the first Bishop of Truro. In the local papers of Cornwall, reporting of Tooth's trial was consistently included. Sidney Green went to jail, saying that if he did not mix water and wine in the chalice that his own immortal soul would

be imperilled. In modern historiography the phrase "radical – reactionary" is used to describe the first Tractarians.⁶⁶ It was an unusual challenge to the Victorian state which contained a reverence for the past with a radical challenge to the status quo and a determination to implement their new vision at local level.

Chadwick singles out the riots that took place, Sunday after Sunday at the dockland parish church of St Georges in the East, London through 1859 and 1860 as being particularly significant in the development of later ritualism.⁶⁶ The combination of a Tractarian Vicar, Bryan King, with even more High Church curates who were to have notable incumbencies of their own elsewhere in London, and an evangelical church warden elected by the Vestry led to conflict. Though Chadwick concentrates on the fact that King wore vestments as the point of conflict in fact the six points of Anglo-Catholic ritual observance were all in use, and in a parish church, not in a tucked away mission church. Chadwick shows that some of the young men who acted as King's bodyguards during the riots later became clergy themselves. The riots, he argues, marked the move away from the scholarly, reserved, cloistered Tractarianism of Pusey to a more bruising encounter on the streets. The fact that on Sunday after Sunday many dock workers sought afternoon entertainment at St George's in the East, requiring the presence of the police to keep order, also precipitated a discussion that led to the formulation of the Public Worship Regulation Act. Anglo-Catholic worship had to be regulated, it was thought, in order to prevent public disturbance. If developments within Anglo-Catholicism forced the situation of making the state desire to legislate for the Church of England (Church and State being inextricably linked in the public mind, despite the attitudes of many

Tractarians), the existence of the other parties within the Church of England must not be overlooked.

Evangelicals were as varied as Tractarians, though they held certain principles in common. Some of them were Calvinists, but most of them were not, though they respected Calvinistic tenets even when they did not share them. Evangelicals owed their revival to men who were inspired by Methodism and also had much in common with "old dissent", sharing platforms with the British and Foreign Bible Society, working to distribute cheap editions of scripture. Many evangelical tracts were also printed and distributed. Pan-Protestantism had its limits as Edward Bickersteth, one of the founders of the Evangelical Alliance in 1846, discovered when many speeches from that platform advocated disestablishment of the Church of England. The Book of Common Prayer and the church/state relationship were vital to Charles Simeon, the great Anglican evangelical of the early 19th century, and adherence to both continued through the 19th century. "They did good work, sometimes great work in parishes. They were unpopular. No more unpopular than the Puseyites and normally less unpopular, they collected nearly as bad reputation". A big change in Anglicanism through the period came with the appointment of a number of them as bishops; these were the so-called Palmerston bishops. Palmerston became Prime Minister in 1855 and, with an interval of 15 months in 1858 – continued in post until he died in 1865, with his son-in-law, Lord Shaftesbury his main adviser on episcopal appointments.⁶⁷

A third great movement within the Church of England came, through the Victorian period, to be called Broad Church. Open to the issues of science and new ways of thinking, it attempted to propose a more inclusive understanding of

church open to new interpretations of scripture and the world. Particularly prominent Broad Churchmen included Dean Stanley of Westminster Abbey (and many of the canons appointed under him). Prominent churchmen such as Charles Kingsley, F W Farrar, Basil Wilberforce, B F Westcott, Hensley Henson and Frederick Temple could also be described as Broad Church. *Essays and Reviews*, published in 1860, to which Temple contributed, argued that a gap had opened up between Christian doctrine and the real beliefs of educated men and women. Christians should not be afraid of a geologist or historian investigating truth, since all truth is from God. They argued that there was no need to prove the truth of revelation by citing miracles and prophecy; the truth of revelation was rather to be known by its moral impact. Frederick Temple refused to remove his essay from *Essays and Reviews* when nominated to be Bishop of Exeter in succession to the orthodox High Churchman Henry Phillpotts, despite High Church protests especially from the Bishop of Lincoln, Christopher Wordsworth. As a result, on 11 November 1869 in Exeter Cathedral, the dean and twelve others, including Archdeacon Phillpotts, son of the previous bishop, voted for Temple. The sub-dean and five others voted against. Controversy, it could be said, surrounded all Church parties. Tweedledum and Tweedledee were words that Lewis Carroll is alleged to have invented to describe the High and Low church parties within the Church of England. Some of the tension may have been creative but it was tension none the less. The view that scientific discoveries should be incorporated into our understanding of divine truth did not meet with universal approval. The popular Victorian hymn "All things bright and beautiful" was composed as an anti-evolution hymn.⁶⁸

In its relationship to the Victorian state, one challenge that the Oxford Movement and the existence of High and Low Church parties within the Church of England posed for the church was summarised by Archbishop Tait's chaplain in a letter to the *Times*. "How to give the Church greater freedom in regulating its own spiritual affairs without weakening the bonds which unite it to the nation is a problem of the greatest difficulty, but it is a problem which must be solved if we are to continue to have a National Church".⁶⁹ This was a problem which Edward White Benson sought to solve when he succeeded Tait as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1883. Benson's time in Truro from 1877 as the first bishop of the newly-formed diocese helped to prepare him for this task.

Footnotes chapter 2

1. Burns, (1999), p.273.
2. Chadwick, (1970), vol. 1, p. 1.
3. e.g. Chadwick, (1970), vol. 1, p. 28.
4. Chadwick, (1970), vol. 1, pp. 92-4.
5. P. T. Marsh, *The Victorian Church in Decline*, (Pittsburgh, 1969), p.289.
6. Owen Chadwick, review in *The Historical Journal* (Cambridge, December 1969), Vol. 12 issue 4 p.718. "The only bad part is the title. Why the decline? The statistics show no down-turn in numbers of congregations, nor in numbers of ordinands, until comfortably after Tait was dead. When he died, *the Times* gave him credit for the "vastly strengthened" hold of the Church upon the life of the nation".
7. Balfour to Sir Richard Webster, 6/10/1896, copy, Benson papers at Trinity College, Cambridge, Various letters, vol. 2. Cited by Marsh, p.288

“Benson, the new Archbishop of Canterbury, was out of his element in Parliament and came to be treated by some political leaders such as Balfour with contempt.”

8. Marsh, (1969), p.288.
9. O. J. Brose, *Church and Parliament: The Reshaping of the Church of England 1828 – 1860*, (Stamford, and London, 1959), p.20; Frances Knight, *The Nineteenth Century Church and English society*, (Cambridge, 1998), pp.11-12.
10. Norman Gash, *Sir Robert Peel* (London, 1972), p.103.
11. K. A. Thompson, *Bureaucracy and Church Reform: the Organisational Response of the Church of England to Social Change 1800 – 1965* (Oxford, 1970), pp.3, 5.
12. Knight, (1998) p.12; G.F.A Best *Temporal Pillars: Queen Anne's bounty, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and the Church of England*, (Cambridge, 1964), p.307.
13. R. A. Soloway, *Prelates and People: Ecclesiastical Social Thought in England 1783 – 1852*. (London and Toronto, 1969), 3, pp.301, 301 – 2; Best, (1964), pp.359 – 60.
14. Best, (1964), p. 399; J. C. D. Clark, *English Society 1688 – 1832*, (2nd ed. Cambridge, 2000), p.20: "In this book, that intellectual coherence is traced in the interlocking relations between the monarchy, the patrician elite, and the church: a nexus explaining itself in allegiance not nationalism, the confessional state not pluralism or secular democracy, clientage not class".

15. J. Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsay 1825 – 1875*, (Oxford, 1976); S. C. Williams, *Religious Belief and Popular Culture in Southwark c.1880 – 1939*, (Oxford, 1999).
16. Obelkevich, (1976), pp.330, 269 – 70, 108, 110.
17. Obelkevich, (1976) pp.178, 147 – 8.
18. Obelkevich, (1976), p.179.
19. David Thompson, *The Churches and Society in Leicestershire 1851 – 1881*, (unpublished Ph.D. thesis Cambridge,1969), p.314. See James Pereiro, *Ethos and the Oxford Movement*, (Oxford, 2008), for the cultivation of an Anglican ethos at this time, e.g. p.4 where Keble is quoted as saying "set ethos above intellect".
20. Obelkevich, (1976), pp.215, 216, 183, 157, 115, 180.
21. Obelkevich, (1976), pp.326, 328, 301, 296, 279, 307, 328.
22. Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, (London, 1971); Obelkevich, p.328.
23. Williams, (1999), p.262; Obelkevich, pp.306, 328.
24. David Clark, *Between Pulpit and Pew: Folk Religion in a North Yorkshire Fishing Village*, (Cambridge, 1982), p.26
25. Williams, (1999) pp.10-11. John Rule's writings are collected in *Cornish Cases Essays in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Social History* (Clio publishing, 2006).
26. Knight, (1998), p.208
27. Knight, (1998), p.207
28. David Miller, *Helston Parish Church, 1201 – 2001*, (Helston, 2001). See also Deirdre Dare, *The Unknown Founder: the Story of Helston Grammar*

School 1550-1972 (Truro, 1996). Two of Wills' curates were also Headmasters of Helston Grammar School: William Otter (later, successively, first Principal of King's College, London and Bishop of Chichester) and Derwent Coleridge, son of the famous poet (later first principal of St Mark's teacher training college in Chelsea which joined with St John's College in Battersea to form the College of St Mark and St John).

²⁹ Diana McClatchey, *Oxfordshire Clergy 1777-1869: A Study of the Established Church and the Role of the Clergy in Local Society*, (Oxford, 1960), p.133; Knight, (1998), p.69.

³⁰ Knight, (1990), p.69. A. Warne *Church and Society in 18th Century Devon*,(Newton Abbot,1969) p.154. By 1838, only about 1000 parishes remained outside the poor law unions (Warne, pp.166, 177).

³¹Robert Lee, *Rural Society and Anglican Clergy 1815 –1914: Encountering and Managing the Poor* (Woodbridge, 2006), p.184.

³² K. D. M. Snell *Parish and Belonging: Community, Identity and Welfare England and Wales, 1700-1850* (Cambridge, 2009); K.D.M. Snell 'Deferential Bitterness: the Social Outlook of the Rural Proletariat in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century England and Wales', in M.L. Bush (ed.), *Social Classes in Europe since 1500* (London, 1992), quoted by Barry Reay, *Rural Englands: Labouring Lives in the Nineteenth Century*, (Basingstoke, 2004), pp.147-8; Lee, (2006), pp.99,6,170, Nigel Scotland, *Methodism and the Revolt of the Field: a Study of the Methodist Contribution to Agricultural Trade Unionism in East Anglia 1872 – 1896*, (Gloucester and New York 1981), p.121.

³³ Reay, (2004), p.154.

- ³⁴ Reay, (2004), pp.155-156. Reay cites *the Royal Commission on Labour: The Agricultural Labourer 1893 -4 xxxv p.280.*
- ³⁵ Mark Smith, *Religion in Industrial Society: The Case of Oldham and Saddleworth 1780 – 1865 (Oxford, 1987)*; M. Snape, *The Church of England in Industrialising Society – the Lancashire Parish of Whalley in the Eighteenth Century (Woodbridge, 2003)*. W. Gibson, *Quo Vadis? Historiographical Trends in British Studies: the Church of England in the Eighteenth Century*, www.cromohs.unifi.it/seminari/gibson2006. See also www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/444. Here Smith reviews Snape's book and Snape responds. (*Institute of Historical Research Website*).
- ³⁶ Geoffrey Cox, *The English Churches in a Secular Society: Lambeth 1870 – 1930, (Oxford, 1982)*, pp.61, 48, 93, 100, 101, 181.
- ³⁷ Jeremy Morris, *Religion and Urban Change: Croydon 1840-1914 (Woodbridge, 1992)*, pp.185, 175, 176, 184, 177.
- ³⁸ Frank Prochaska, 'Philanthropy', in F.M.L Thompson (ed.), *The Cambridge Social History of Britain, Volume 3: Social Agencies and Institutions*, (Cambridge, 1992), pp.381, 388, 389, 390.
- ³⁹ S. J. D. Green, *Religion in an Age of Decline: Organisation and Experience in Industrial Yorkshire 1870 –1920 (Cambridge, 2003)* pp.2, 24, 29, 35; Stephen Yeo, *Religion and Voluntary Organisations in Crisis: a study of Churches and Chapels in Reading and their relationship with local voluntary organisations during the period 1890-1914*, (London, 1976), p.1.
- ⁴⁰ Yeo, (1976), pp.291, 295, 320/321.
- ⁴¹ Green, (2003), pp.172, 173,177.
- ⁴² Yeo, (1976), pp.301 304, 305, 316, 319, 321.

- ⁴³ Hugh McLeod, *Religion and Society in England 1850-1914* (New York, 1996), pp.196, 216-7. K.D.M. Snell, (2009), pp.406, 408; Robin Gill, *The Myth of the Empty Church*, (London, 1993); Yeo, (1976), p.291.
- ⁴⁴ Bernard Deacon, *Religion and Community: Framework and Issues* *Journal of Family and Community History* May 2002 [www.Fachrs.com/pages/journal/journal – of –fachrs – archive.html](http://www.Fachrs.com/pages/journal/journal_of_fachrs_archive.html) pp.33-44 esp. pp.38,44 and Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*. (London, 2000); Albion M. Urdank, *Religion and Society in a Cotswold Vale: Nailsworth, Gloucestershire 1780 – 1865*, (California, 1988), p.275
- ⁴⁵ Steve Bruce, *Secularisation, Church and Popular Religion* in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* vol. 62 number 3, July 2011, pp.543 – 561, esp. pp.543, 544, 548, 549.
- ⁴⁶ Chadwick, (1970), vol. 2, pp.366, 371
- ⁴⁷ Burns, (1999), pp.146, 148.Chadwick, (1970), vol. 2, p.383.
- ⁴⁸ Chadwick, (1970), pp.366, 367.
- ⁴⁹ Knight, (2006), pp.63, 72; Chadwick, (1970), vol. 2, p.370: Gerald Cobb, *English Cathedrals: the Forgotten Centuries*, (London, 1980).
- ⁵⁰ B. I. Coleman, 'Southern England in the Religious Census of 1851', in *Southern History*, volume 5, 1983, (ed. J. R. Lowerson), pp.154-188, esp.155.
- ⁵¹ B. I. Coleman, *The Church of England in the mid-nineteenth century: a social geography*, (London, 1980) p.39.
- ⁵² Marjorie Tranter with David A. Barton and Paul S Ell, *The Derbyshire returns to the 1851 Religious Census*, (*Derbyshire Record Society* xxiii, 1995), p.163 (Staveley),p.184 (Winster) p.175 (Taddington), xviii, xiii-xiv; Soloway, (1969), p.445; K. S. Inglis, *Churches and the Working Class in*

- Victorian England*, (London, 1963); A D Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England: Church, Chapel and Social Change 1740 – 1914*, (London, 1976), p.130.
- ⁵³ Chadwick, (1970), pp.366, 368; Tranter, (1995), p.xiv.
- ⁵⁴ Knight, (1998), p.174; Peter B. Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context: Anglican High Churchmanship 1760-1857*, (Cambridge, 1994), chapter 1; N. S. Harding (ed.) *A Stow Visitation: being notes on the Churches in the Archdeaconry of Stow by W. B. Stonehouse* (Lincolnshire, 2008).
- ⁵⁵ Knight, (1998), p.172; N. S. Harding, (2008), p.12.
- ⁵⁶ Graeme Drewery, *Victorian Church Building and Restoration in the Diocese of York, with special reference to the archdeaconry of Cleveland, (unpublished Ph.D. Cambridge 1994)*; Burns, (1999), p.72.
- ⁵⁷ Tranter, (1995), pp.195, 221.
- ⁵⁸ Nockles, (1994), pp.294 – 295; Chadwick, (1970), vol. 2, pp.187-189. In Gladstone Add. MSS 44109 (British Library), Benson states that the prominent High Churchman H. P. Liddon refused ever to attend the same meeting as Archbishop Tait, such was the animosity shown towards him by those who believed that Tait had driven Newman out of the Church of England.
- ⁵⁹ W. M. Jacob, 'The Diffusion of Tractarianism', in *Southern History*, 5, (1983), p.189f.
- ⁶⁰ S. A. Skinner, *Tractarians and the "Condition of England": The Social and Political Thought of the Oxford Movement*, (Oxford, 2004), c.f. Augustine, *City of God* Book 4 chapter 4.

- ⁶¹ Regarding the Gorham case see G.C.B. Davies, *Henry Phillpotts of Exeter 1778-1869*, (London, 1954); David Newsome, *The Parting of Friends*, (London 1993 edition) pp.381- 3
- ⁶² Marsh, (1969),p.229; Chadwick (1970), volume 2
- ⁶³ Desmond Bowen, *The Idea of the Victorian Church. A Study of the Church of England 1833-1889*, (Montreal, 1968), p.126.
- ⁶⁴ D. G. Paz, *Anti-Catholicism in Mid-Victorian England* (Stanford, 1992).
- ⁶⁵ Skinner,(2004), review by Turner [www. History.ac.uk /review/review/644](http://www.history.ac.uk/review/review/644).
- ⁶⁶ Chadwick, (1970), vol. 1, pp.495-501.
- ⁶⁷ D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* (London, 1989); John Wolffe, *Lord Palmerston and Religion: A Reappraisal* in *English Historical Review*, (September 2005), 120, (488) pp.907-936.
- ⁶⁸ S. Prickett, *Romanticism and Religion: the Tradition of Coleridge and Wordsworth in the Victorian Church*, (Cambridge, 1976), pp.12, 249.
- ⁶⁹ Marsh, (1969), pp.214-215.

Chapter 3

Bishop Benson: his character and effect on Truro Diocese.

At the time when Edward White Benson arrived at Truro in May 1877, four of the themes identified in the last chapter as central to the mid-Victorian church were relevant to Cornwall. Firstly, the overhaul of the church's organisation at national and local level had contributed to the separation of Truro from Exeter diocese. There was pressure for the bishop to be more accessible and to have a manageably sized diocese. Secondly, the census of 1851 had shown the weak state of the Church of England in Cornwall in comparison with other rural dioceses in Registration District 5 and more widely in the Church of England. Thirdly, the need to reform cathedral chapters had led to the questions being asked concerning what was the purpose of a cathedral. If a cathedral were built in Cornwall, or adapted from a parish church, this question would need to be asked afresh. Finally, Church parties were evident among the clergy in Cornwall, as was the influence of the Oxford Movement in some parishes. The time of the census of 1851 was also the time of the Gorham judgement, which had exposed profound differences between the "Orthodox" High Church position of Bishop Phillpotts and the Anglo-Calvinist Gorham.

The credentials which Benson brought to his work as first Bishop of Truro may be said to touch all four areas of need. He came to Cornwall with a reputation as an efficient administrator; in terms of reviving the Church of England's fortunes in the county, Benson came to Cornwall, having created a major public school (Wellington), and a theological college at Lincoln from scratch. Benson had written an important contribution to the debate concerning

the purpose of cathedrals in the *Church Quarterly*, which he reprinted in book form in 1878. Finally, he represented in his person as well as anyone, the reconciliation between the Church parties that needed to exist at the time. Frederick Temple and Christopher Wordsworth, the one Broad Church and the other High Church, were the two bishops who presented Benson, when he was consecrated at St Paul's Cathedral, London on St Mark's Day, 25 April 1877. They were two of Benson's closest friends and supporters, but they had also been at loggerheads with each other when Temple was appointed Bishop of Exeter in 1869. Benson was also adept at speaking and praying extempore and was seen by some Methodists as "a converted man". At Lincoln, he spoke well in working-class contexts.

Against these positive achievements and attitudes there was also a negative side. Benson had a strong emotional temperament – at its best, it gave him a lifelong romantic attachment to the people of Cornwall, their traditions and history. He also had a formidable temper. Although other public school headmasters used corporal punishment, sometimes excessively, Benson's use of the cane, allied to his temper, became notorious and affected his reputation.¹ He also suffered long periods of depression. Benson took it for granted that he ruled in the diocese. Again, this is characteristic of the age and can be seen in other bishops of the period.² Many bishops had previously been headmasters of eminent public schools and they carried over their modus operandi from school to the episcopate. In the ninety nine year period from 1862 to 1961, all but two Archbishops of Canterbury had previously been public school headmasters.³ Nevertheless it could give rise to an autocratic style where the hierarchical structure of headmaster, master, prefects and boys was carried over into the governance of the church. It was said of Geoffrey Fisher, the last

headmaster/archbishop who retired in 1961, that he saw himself as the headmaster, the bishops as the housemasters, the clergy as the prefects and the laity as the students. Benson had an autocratic style – he found it difficult not to be deferred to. In part this characteristic derived from Benson's upbringing. He was the eldest of eight children. Of Yorkshire stock, Edward White Benson was born and educated in Birmingham, the son of an eccentric inventor who patented a process for manufacturing white lead. Benson's father devised great things but gained little reward for his ingenuity and brought up his family on evangelical principles, a horror of strong liquor and a respect for piety and good works. Financial acumen was lacking and when the father died in 1843, he left his wife with only a house, a ramshackle factory and a small annuity to cope with the management of a family of three boys and four girls (the youngest son had already died in 1842). Edward White Benson was aged 13 at the time of his father's death. His mother, to whom he was devoted, expected much from him: help, advice and support at a time when responsibility should properly have rested on adult shoulders. Benson was by nature precocious and became more so. He also became accustomed to having his own way at too early an age – these were two factors which made him a somewhat imperious and over-serious adolescent. Shortly before Benson turned 21 in 1850 he lost, in quick succession, his mother and his eldest sister, Harriet, who succumbed to an attack of typhus. The sense of being in charge, of having others dependent on him, stayed with Benson all his life. He made his own way in the world, and in order to do this, Benson himself depended on the help he received, particularly from two people. The first was James Prince Lee, headmaster at King Edward's School, Birmingham, where Benson was a day boy. He had been there for two years when his father died, and it was largely

due to the insistence of Prince Lee and the generosity of two of his father's friends that Benson was enabled to stay there until 1848.⁴ Benson tried to model himself on Lee, learning much from Lee's methods of teaching classics, which paid close attention to the analysis of words, drawing out shades of meaning.⁵ Lee's success was phenomenal. In a period of nine years, five of his pupils became Senior Classics at Cambridge and eight gained fellowships at Trinity College. It was in the classroom of Prince Lee at Birmingham that the foundations were laid for the great Cambridge School of theology associated with Westcott, J B Lightfoot and F J A Hort. Westcott and Lightfoot were both pupils of Lee – Westcott was a few years older than Benson, and Lightfoot was someone he walked to and from school with most days. By the time Lightfoot and Benson gained admission to Trinity, Cambridge Westcott was their tutor.

At Cambridge, poverty and his mother's death threatened to upset Benson's chances of a brilliant academic record, even though he moved from being a Subsizar to a Sizar at the end of his first year in 1849. Though Benson was personally disappointed by his grading of Eighth Classic within the first class, he also won the prestigious Senior Chancellor's Medal. In his time at Cambridge, Benson was helped by the bursar of Trinity, Francis Martin, who made sure that Benson remained solvent, and this financial help continued after Benson had left the college.

The immediate cause of Martin's help was the death of Benson's sister, (the house in Birmingham which their father had left them in the middle of the lead works factory was insanitary), to be followed a few weeks later by the death of Benson's mother from a heart attack. It was then that Benson discovered that there was very little money to live on. Francis Martin's help extended not just to

Edward White Benson. He also helped Benson's siblings and Martin left a large proportion of his money to Benson when he died in 1868. Being financially solvent improved Benson's prospects of getting married and he dutifully named his eldest son, Martin White Benson, after his benefactor.

Edward White Benson's ability to find the right people to help him and to cultivate the right friendships has led to suggestions that he was ambitious. He always had vivid dreams. One of them became the basis of Henry James' celebrated novel *The Turning of the Screw*.⁶ At Cambridge, Benson recounted a dream where he was sentenced to death for the murder of Prince Lee. In his dream he told his friend Lightfoot: "I should have been Archbishop of Canterbury if I had lived, you know".⁷ This was a theme picked up by his sister Eleanor, writing from the white lead works in Birmingham when Benson was promoted from Subsizar to Sizar. "Dearest Sizar, what a fine clever fellow, you are, really if you go on as you are you will soon be Archbishop of Canterbury".⁸ It could be said that Benson modelled not just his teaching style but his career in the church on Prince Lee. "It is curious how similar were the careers of these two men. Both were fellows of Trinity, both took up their first appointment as classical masters at Rugby (Prince Lee under Arnold), both went from Rugby to important headmasterships, and both subsequently became bishops of newly created sees".⁹ Prince Lee was not deemed a success as first Bishop of Manchester, but C.H. Longley, who made a success of a pioneering appointment as first bishop of Ripon, became Archbishop of Canterbury. Certainly Benson liked being in charge and liked being deferred to, but high office in the church brought with it many frustrations too. Benson had to live out his life as a bishop and then archbishop with periodic depression, made worse both by the death of Martin White Benson, from meningitis at the age of

seventeen and by the need to keep his explosive temper in check. Whether or not Benson chose a career that would lead to him becoming Archbishop of Canterbury cannot be demonstrated either way. Certainly there is no evidence of Benson practising his signature as Archbishop of Canterbury when newly ordained, as one of his successors as Archbishop is alleged to have done.¹⁰ Nevertheless, on graduating from Cambridge in 1852 he joined the staff of Rugby School, teaching classics to the sixth form while preparing for his fellowship examination at Trinity, which he passed at the second attempt. At the very least, Benson sought out the prestigious academic appointments as soon as he could. While Benson was at Rugby, he lodged with his cousins, the Sidgwicks, who had already offered a house to Benson's youngest sister, Ada. One member of the household was Mary Sidgwick, to whom Benson became engaged in 1857, and whom he married in 1859 at Rugby parish church with Frederick Temple as the officiant. This meant that he gave up his Lectureship and Tutorship at Trinity on marriage, in favour of running a school. Six months before Benson married Mary Sidgwick, he became the first headmaster of Wellington College.

Wellington College was founded in memory of the Duke of Wellington to enable the sons of army officers to receive an education. Many of these were orphans and Benson's own background meant that he was well qualified to take charge of such a school. Benson relied upon the testimonials of Frederick Temple who was also in a key position when Benson was appointed to Truro. Temple was by 1858 headmaster of Rugby School and recommended Benson to one of Prince Albert's advisers in the strongest possible terms. "The Prince acted at once. He sent a copy of Temple's letter to all the governors, asking their opinion: it is a remarkable testimony to Temple's standing that everyone

concluded... Only Lord Derby was anxious to get a second opinion".¹¹ The second opinion was sought from Lord Derby's nephew, who had been taught by Benson at Rugby, who also gave a glowing reference but added: "he (Benson) had of course, some to blame him, but they were chiefly found among the idle ones of his pupils, and as to the working fellow he was unusually kind so with an idle one he was more than ordinarily severe".¹¹

Benson remained headmaster of Wellington School for fourteen and a half years from January 1859. Three features of his time at Wellington had particular relevance for his later time at Truro. Firstly, there was a shortage of money. "Benson had felt severely restricted by... constant warnings, of impending bankruptcy". This did not stop the commissioning of a chapel and gateway (on a prominent site in the college suggested by Benson) from the noted architect Gilbert Scott. "Scott was an expensive architect at the height of his powers, and the eventual cost to the college was in the region of £9000". This compared with the £2500 cost which the governors originally estimated, and which was about the amount which the public subscribed.¹² Secondly, the perpetual shortage of money did not stop Benson from having great, even grandiose, ideas. Benson wrote to Temple in 1869: "To you a school is a school, to me it is a living being".¹³ The chapel at Wellington College was to be the beating heart of that living being no less surely than the cathedral was to be the heart of diocesan activity at Truro. Benson seems to have thought of institutions as an organic whole, as with the human body, where every organ of the body had a part to play in order to make a harmonious whole. It was at Wellington that Benson devised an understanding of an institution as a living being, where he was the head, and a place of worship set in the most prominent place was its living, breathing heart. Thirdly, during Benson's time at Wellington he was able to

establish the school with its own traditions. "Wellington College was new and raw, without traditions, an educational experiment. Having no roots, it needed somebody with an intense historical sense to develop for it a past to respect and a future to strive towards". Benson could "mould as he wished". He could interpret the past, highlighting those features of the life of the Duke of Wellington he wished to emphasise and give the school a vision for the future, based on the classical excellence of Rugby school, rather than the broader-based curriculum favoured by Prince Albert (whose early death in 1861 possibly prevented conflicts on this matter).¹⁴ Despite the difference of approach, Benson remained well regarded by Queen Victoria and this no doubt helped when Benson's name was mentioned in relation to Truro. The success of the school, she saw as a fitting tribute to Prince Albert. She wrote following a visit to the school in 1864: "I thought of all (that) the place owed to my beloved one, whose heart had been in this College... But though so sad, I was much gratified by all I saw. Everything seems to be going on very well, and the boys so nice and well behaved. Mr Benson knows and understands them so well, his principles and views are so excellent and sound... He is such a pleasing, nice, clever man".¹⁵

In the summer of 1873 Benson left Wellington at the invitation of the Bishop of Lincoln, Christopher Wordsworth, to become Canon Chancellor of Lincoln Cathedral. Working in the cathedral was something Benson had wanted to do since he was at school. It was a thoroughly characteristic answer that he gave to a friend who asked him what he wanted to be: "I should like to be a Canon and recite the daily office in my Cathedral".¹⁶ In his 1871 essay, Benson asked "whether any single church improvement could be more effective, or more comprehensive than the restoration of (cathedral) chapters to their primitive

idea. Not for the sake of church services only and nave sermons. If that were all, the rector with two curates might organise a more captivating ceremonial or a more popular cycle of preachers. Nay, not merely for the conservation of the more glorious type of worship... with us there are more important works not done now at all, nowhere likely to be done... unless cathedrals undertake them".¹⁷ Benson enumerates the first four of these works as the training of the clergy "in such scientific theology as the Universities may decline"; the diocesan inspection of religious education; the preparation of an order of Readers, "one of our principal wants", and the guidance of younger clergy in study.¹⁷

As Canon of Lincoln, Benson was the chief agent of the Bishop of Lincoln to make the cathedral more diocesan. Although many of Benson's plans for reform were blocked by Dean Blakesley and reform largely took place after a new dean was appointed in 1885, a certain amount of change did take place. Firstly, Benson thoroughly investigated cathedral statutes and became a national authority on the subject. This helped him to have the necessary knowledge to draw up the statutes for Truro Cathedral, which themselves became a template for newly-created cathedrals elsewhere. Benson's work in this field enhanced still further his national profile. Secondly, Benson began a training college as part of the cathedral's work, which became Lincoln Theological College – the official title "The Chancellor's College" indicates the part that the canon chancellor played in its creation. Here men were trained for ordination in accordance with the vision he had set out in his earlier essay of 1871.¹⁸ In Truro, Benson founded a theological college that lasted from 1877 to 1900. "Henry Phillpotts left a lot of money for a theological college at Exeter, and such a college existed during his last years, for he greatly admired the college at Wells. But after his death the project languished and Exeter used the

money instead to keep students at Oxford an extra year to study theology".¹⁹

Thirdly, Benson at Lincoln helped found the Society of Mission Preachers, known from its motto taken from the Vulgate of Hosea, chapter 10, verse 12 and chosen by Benson himself as the 'Novate Novale' or in English 'Break up your fallow ground'. The first fruit of the Society was a general mission throughout the city of Lincoln in 1876, in which Benson himself took a prominent role. "This was indeed a time when he and those closely connected with him, came under special influences of teaching about personal religion that are usually called 'evangelical'".²⁰ Alongside the work of mission in Lincoln came the formation of night schools in the city, where every conceivable subject was debated in an atmosphere of equality. Crowfoot was Benson's right-hand man in Lincoln at the time of the opening of the night schools for men and lads in the city. Crowfoot stated: "I remember walking down on the first night with the Chancellor and a few students, thinking it possible that we might find sixty pupils... There were four hundred waiting for admittance. As soon as its doors were opened the Chancellor mounted the table and in stentorian tones shouted, classes were soon formed, and order throughout the school was introduced".²¹

Benson's success with the night schools depended in part on him having the common touch. "In his first speech to the night school at Lincoln he began, 'Gentlemen - no - Men and boys.' 'And nippers' called out a voice ('nipper' meaning in Lincolnshire a boy of about fifteen). 'Men, boys and nippers,' he went on straight".²² When Benson left Lincoln, the men of the night schools made for him a set of dessert dishes out of bronzed metal from the mines of Coleby, procuring the material themselves and working in their limited free time. "This service he loved, and though it was not, artistically speaking, very beautiful, there were few days on which it did not appear on the dinner table for

the rest of his life".²³ One of the finest tributes that Benson ever received was from Duncan McInnes who was a member of the night school and later became foreman of the Globe Works, Lincoln and prominent in the Lincoln co-operative movement: "If he had been a working man he would have gained the support of his class and have been a trusted leader, trusted instinctively and possibly not one of his supporters would have been able to say exactly why. When with us, not through desiring so to be, but because he couldn't help it, I believe many of us, perhaps the majority, thought he had had a workshop training in his early years because he appeared to have the faculty of looking at things with a 'workman's mind. I have seen hundreds of gentlemen try to do this in my time and fail, but ... (Benson) did it unconsciously".²³ In this episode we see in embryo much of what was going to happen in Cornwall. Mission, education, organization, the common touch were all to be manifested during Benson's time as Bishop. It is also important to remember that Benson's own background as well as his personality enabled him to think as he did. From the age of seven, Benson had his first lessons, taught by his father, before he set off for his works "the boy generally accompanying him and being allowed to ramble about, talk to the workmen and ask what questions he liked. It was there that he acquired the extreme love for the conversation of simple working people which was afterwards characteristic of him. He was not always in later life a very patient listener and unnecessary digressions by leisurely people were often a trial to him, but to the lengthy explanations of mechanics or labouring men he used to extend a patience which (was) often remarked upon; 'I like to hear him explain it in his own way', he used to say".²⁴

Benson brought with him to Truro A. J. Mason, and later G. H. Whitaker. They had both been assistant masters at Wellington for a short time. Mason

became Diocesan Missioner at Truro, the first time such an appointment had been made in a diocese. Whitaker, a former fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, was made Chancellor of the Cathedral with a view to founding a Divinity School like that at Lincoln. Benson wrote to Crowfoot: "I am deeply impressed with the utter disappearance of the Missionary Spirit from the Church in Cornwall, and equally with the great fitness of Cornish men to be missionaries - able to live anywhere and assimilate with anyone, yet keeping their individuality and their religious heart".²⁵

Benson chiefly used Mason to interpret his ideas and seek to put them into practice: "Mason to spread the fire, Whitaker to broaden loving knowledge ... Can anything be more wonderful?"²⁶ The fire and the loving knowledge were for all Cornish people. The obstacle was the attitude of many of the clergy of the diocese: "Many of our unwise confident clergy are doing all they can to part themselves off in feeling, in habits of devotion, in reception of Eucharist, in judgment on Education and in Politics from the Laity ... They wish the Clergy to be separate, i.e. pharisaic. They want the Clergy to have influence, clerical influence over a few ... We have to do the Church's work without sacrificing those party men; and without giving up any principles that Dissent preserves; and without moving towards those false principles which both extreme Churchmen and Dissenters will bring in, if they can, along with themselves".²⁷

The above are both extracts from a long letter written to his curate at Kenwyn, in a successful attempt to dissuade him from leaving his work in Cornwall for work in India. It is interesting, firstly, in providing an assessment of the task facing Benson and what he calls his 'group'. It is also interesting in helping us understand what Benson understood by 'the frontier', a key concept not just in core/periphery theory but also in late Victorian society as a whole. "I am

persuaded that the restoration of the Church of England to the affections (of the people), is the work of our group of people. It may never come (isn't likely to come) in our day ... but our work is none the less to work at that restoration".²⁷ Benson then links this assessment of the work with his understanding that 'the frontier' meant India, not Cornwall. "If all our men with this heart in them are to go off on the frontier, then we shall be doing for the Church what Trajan did for the Roman Empire: Augustus had prophesied, had he not, that the Extension of the Frontier would bring the Downfall at Home. We must send out our legions of Missionaries, but the work for us who see it (it isn't everyone who does see it) is to prevent decay spreading any further at the core. The alienation is really terrific. The Dissenters are doing all they can to widen the little rift there is between the Clergy and the Laity".²⁸

The little rifts and the paradoxes were largely covered over by the force of Benson's personality. Sometime after he left Kenwyn for Lambeth Palace, "there was a fearful fight between two men in Idless, the neighbouring hamlet through which we often walked. 'Ah,' said one of the bystanders, 'this wouldn't have happened if the old father had only been here.' This was their habitual name for the Bishop. (Benson) used to say that every Cornishman that you encountered expected two things - a religious remark and a joke".²⁹ A.C. Benson remarked that "in the afternoons as a rule my father and mother and all the children at home used to go for a long vague walk".³⁰ Even those walks around the Truro area of Idless were not without a certain incongruity where seemingly incompatible traveling companions were included effortlessly in one walking party. "The odd calvalcade was generally accompanied by Watch the ... collie, and my sister's goat, Tan, who trotted along behind very comfortably; if she loitered, Watch, who kept a sharp eye on her movements, used to bring her

up in the most professional way".³¹

The remarkable Elizabeth Wordsworth, daughter of Benson's former colleague, the Bishop of Lincoln, and connected to the foundation of two Oxford colleges for women, St. Hugh's and Lady Margaret Hall, described this aspect of Benson's character as 'magnetism': "He possessed in an unusual degree that kind of magnetism which makes those in company with its owner always conscious of what he is doing, and instinctively disposed to follow his lead".³² 'Magnetism' is a good word for Elizabeth Wordsworth to use, because with a magnet, opposite poles attract. Benson instinctively combined friendship with Anglicans of High Church sympathies with those of liberal broadchurchmanship. Charles Kingsley, for instance, was a close friend and dined every month with Benson while the latter was Headmaster of Wellington College (Kingsley's rectory at Eversley was nearby).³³ Benson's son comments: "It is curious to note how difficult it is at this date to define exactly his ecclesiastical views. We find him devoted to Christian acts and traditions, using ancient forms of devotion and hymns from Breviary and Missal. Yet he permits Evening Communion and simultaneously shocks a master by calling it a Mass".³⁴ A governor forwarded to Benson a letter of complaint from a parent whose son had told her that "he had heard a very effusive Tractarian Sermon, adding that the teaching and the services were alike distressingly High Church in tone". Benson replied that the preacher in question was Charles Kingsley "my neighbour and friend, whose name is well known as a most strenuous opponent of such teaching ... I am myself neither High, nor Low, nor Broad Church, though I have myself consigned by turns to all - as often as to one as to another".³⁵ In 1869 two of Benson's friends became bishops: Christopher Wordsworth moved from being Archdeacon of Westminster to become Bishop

of Lincoln and was enthroned in March of that year. Later the same year Frederick Temple was appointed to Exeter: "There was a good deal of High Church opposition to the appointment, headed by Bishop Wordsworth, who regarded the Headmaster of Rugby as a dangerous heretic".³⁶

Benson strongly supported Temple and wrote a letter to The Times newspaper defending him from the attacks of the leading tractarian, Dr Pusey. Pusey had accused Temple of holding that the Bible story was but "a stimulant to the conscience like one of George Eliot's novels".³⁷ Although this occasioned a sharp letter to Benson from Elizabeth Wordsworth, he explained his position to her in a letter dated 16 December 1869: "Why do great good men so utterly mistake each other - when we know that they will walk with clasped hands in Paradise?"³⁸ Temple, at the time of his becoming Bishop of Exeter, was Headmaster of Rugby School, a school where Benson had taught and retained close links. Indeed he was considered as a possible successor to Temple at Rugby. Benson also worked closely with Bishop Wordsworth: "the two together were full of schemes for work in the diocese, and more especially for the Theological College".³⁹ It was therefore no surprise, but still a considerable achievement on Benson's part, that the two bishops who presented him to the Archbishop of Canterbury for consecration on 25 April 1877, as Bishop of Truro, were the Bishops of Lincoln and Exeter.⁴⁰ The consecration of Benson was only possible because Lady Rolle made a lavish bequest of £40,000 towards the endowment of the see. Again Benson's gift for straddling theological difference came into play. "My father and mother paid visits to Bicton, and Lady Rolle was proud of 'my Bishop', as she used to call him. The first time that they went there my father was accompanied by Canon Mason; Lady Rolle held very strong views as to the High Church proclivities in the clergy, and conceived the gravest

suspicious of Canon Mason from his dress and appearance".⁴¹

Fortunately for posterity, it was in Benson's nature to work out all his problems on paper. Chief of these, it must be said, had nothing whatsoever to do with the problems and opportunities that he was facing in the new diocese. In February 1878, only nine months after the Benson family had arrived in Cornwall, Martin White Benson (their eldest son aged seventeen) died of meningitis, or brain-fever as it was then popularly called. Martin was a boy of exceptional academic promise who, in the short time he was able to live in the county, came to love Cornwall immensely. He had only two holidays in which to enjoy the delights of Truro and Lis Escop, and Benson (senior) recalled how he and his son would spend them in rides together two or three times a week. "We had looked forward to the rides of many beautiful years in this to us consecrated land. And these first rides were our last".⁴² In his memoir Benson described the last walk they had together. "Our last walk was on the Piran sands with John Wordsworth. We had driven there - and then walked to the buried church - He was very silent - and as we came back, while we kept near the rocks (Arthur, JW and I) there was something prophetic 'as JW has since written' in the way in which he walked along in the fading light along the margin of the waves. Yes, you were already, dearest boy, on the edge of an ocean greater than the Atlantic - You have crossed it alone - and our light fades while we strain after you".⁴³ On his sixtieth birthday, when Archbishop of Canterbury, he confided that it was the "inexplicable grief" of his life and "to see into that will be worth dying". Benson's diaries recounting the events of his time in Cornwall and his reactions to them need to be read in the context of his deep bereavement and sorrow.

Benson began his diary entries for Cornwall on 18 May 1877, just two and

a half weeks after his enthronement in Truro. The early battles, recorded in the diary, are to do with unsympathetic landowners. The need for money, not least from these landowners, was never far away. A school board in St Erme was necessary because landowners refused to help. Mr Allin, appointed in 1874 to Mount Hawke, a Peel district since 1846 and still without a church or parsonage, "has raised by great work £800 for Church and £100 for parsonage, including £30 from Ecclesiastical Commission; and help by Nonconformists willingly".⁴⁴ Lord Falmouth and Mr Basset, his two great landowners, have given £10 each and refuse further help though each received £500 to £600 a year from the district. Mrs J Michael Williams who has landed property in the parish had not replied to either of Mr Allin's letters. Colan church was in a dangerous condition but "the great landowner Sir R Vivian has from £700 to £800 a year from the parish; and he will not answer Mr. Brougham's letters (the Vicar). The whole roof of the Nave has inclined eastward thirty degrees from the perpendicular, parting from the nave. The woodwork (is) rotten".⁴⁴

The complaints come fast and furious. "At Probus, the principal resident farmer is a non-conformist of weight who says he would rather all the people come out of a public house than out of church. The Wesleyans by furious letters, having nothing else to lay hold of, are tearing to shreds a phrase of mine 'a legitimately descended ministry' as containing all the most superstitious errors and as branding themselves with being 'a bastard ministry' - a consequence I had not foreseen ... The Wesleyans thus appear to be offended at being supposed to want what they profess to think wholly needless - and they take no notice of my lamenting their imperfect knowledge of the Bible and ignorance of Christian doctrine. They have appointed several new ministers in Cornwall and declare themselves convinced that a system of propagandism is a

plot to detach the Methodists from their ministers".⁴⁴ These early entries in Benson's diary indicate his initial plan to work through the landowners and other gentry families to develop the initiatives he had in mind. Even though Lord Falmouth had not as yet contributed to the foundation of the see he "pays the schoolmaster very well, has no government grant, and with a lovely despotism provides everything within his domain parish right handsomely."⁴⁴ Many of the problems which faced Benson on his arrival were not the making of anyone other than the Anglican Church itself. On 22 May 1877 Benson records a long conversation with Lord Kimberley and his solicitor about the Rector's rate at Falmouth. 16 pence in the pound was levied on the rental of every house in a large and increasing district. The rector was largely non-resident, though he appointed good curates. "The feeling in the place is very bitter and in favour of non-conformity. The largest contributor is Lord Kimberley who wishes to make Falmouth a pleasure town."⁴⁵ Kimberley's great grandfather had sold the advowson to the long-term rector, Coope, who now expected a large sum if he had to sell it. Benson advised that churchmen would be wise to make commutation on the most advantageous terms they could now get. On 6 June 1877 Benson wrote that he had returned the previous night from his 'first tour westward' in the Rural Deaneries of Penwith, Kerrier and Carnmarth. He bemoans the paucity of confirmation candidates: "Those who bring candidates speak of the importance ... and of the efforts of the Methodists to keep them away. At Redruth for instance a sermon was preached in the immense Wesleyan Chapel, in which they were exhorted to keep away and the preacher stated (untruly of course) that I had preached against him the previous Sunday. There were only seven women and girls with one boy to be confirmed in this town of 12,000 inhabitants... The Rector is personally most popular. The town

has painted two large portraits of him at considerable cost." ⁴⁶

There was no school at Redruth because "the old Rector was persuaded to sell the land and house itself to people who wanted to build a house there and who gave him another plot. This turned out to be an insecure title and they had to pull down what they had begun. And there is money found for it which the people call Blood-money in the Bank, and will not use ... The people said they desired only that I had power to order them to build a great rough Church." Benson said of St. Euny Redruth church that "the teaching here has been of the extreme, evangelical type and the solid and substantial church is one of which Bishop Phillpotts said 'He never felt happy in it - it was like a conventicle.' Resemblance and rapprochement there have effected little enough ... There are some study (sic) churchmen, as were two shop-keepers with whom I walked up Carnmarth, and here, among the Roman mine entrances and the British hut circles, and ramparts, they told me with full hearts, while we gazed on the debris-poisoned tracts of land which have been so wealth-fraught to great men, how there was a wonderful field for the Church's work, if only the people could be let into the Churches and preached to; Mr Manley who had the Church at Treleigh (to which I walked after) has it crammed with Redruth people. He manages the board school at his will, and he holds Prayer meetings every Tuesday night." ⁴⁷

Penwith Deanery left an altogether different impression on Benson. "There is a large cluster of clergy who seem to be excellent friends. All high churchmen (they) ... have beautifully restored and richly decorated churches." Benson is a stimulating diarist and as elsewhere vouchsafes pen portraits of the clergy to his diary. Of the Rural Dean, Mr Hockin of Phillack, Benson writes "while he is most free with his tongue he is so good-natured that they (the Methodists) get on well

with him. Mr Mills of St Erth is a very extreme presser of Confession and his wife has joined the Romish church. His men plainly love him but then he is a fine manly person in the prime of life".⁴⁸ Of the famous Cornish historian and promoter of Cornish traditions, Lach-Szyrma, Benson comments "he has a fanatical look and tone which rises to a scream tho' he speaks well ... Men nevertheless do not follow him and his curates and readers were of an effeminate type". His church (St. Peter's Newlyn) was "excessively ritualistic". At St Just there were only three church families and Benson's acting chaplain advised him not to use his pastoral staff. Evangelical Marazion "lacked warmth". Moving onto Helston in Kerrier Deanery, its Vicar, Sidney Tyacke, was an excellent preacher though he had the same reservation about the church that Bishop Phillpotts had about St. Euny Redruth - it was 'conventicular'. (This was particularly important to the Cambridge-educated Benson, where the principles of the Oxford Movement were interpreted by the Camden Society Ecclesiologists.) The Camden Society promoted the reception of medieval models of art, architecture and worship - particularly the Gothic style. From the 1830s onwards, the Camden Society inveighed against "a Protestant place of worship that possessed galleries, a central pulpit, and an altar hidden 'under the organ gallery' as being of no use, except once a month".⁴⁹ It was a place for the fashionable to meet and greet. Tyacke's high church sympathies were well-disguised.(There had been a prosecution in the 1840s of a high church curate who had introduced various unpopular practices into the church.⁵⁰) Benson said of Helston church "nothing was likely to be unpopular. At Porthleven everything was likely to be unpopular, surpliced choir, green stole and much ceremony, and the clergyman walking away in a cassock, short cape and tasseled hat - an empty church with beautiful music. So we begin".⁵¹

Many of Benson's initial entries in his diary concern the churches of the new diocese and their clergy. By the end of July, less than three months after Benson started his work in Truro diocese, he was prepared to make some wider comments about Cornish society. His diary entry dated 29 July 1877 reads: "I have now finished my tour and with few exceptions ... the experiences are in reality singularly uniform ... everywhere the wealth of the county is going down; a starveling county as Lord Mt Edgcumbe called it. The miners ceasing with the mines; the agriculturalists departing in quest of higher wages; Truro is this moment plastered with the rates of wages in New Zealand; Mr Page of St Tudy tells me half his parish are in Toronto alone; the St Austell district has supplied by its china clay a temporary stay for the throngs who have had to give up mining."⁵² Benson also noted that the churches were larger than "the populations could fill were they disposed".⁵³ He visited St Neot's church and saw the magnificent stained glass provided in Henry VIII's reign "by the wives of the parish, the sisters of the parish, the juvenes of the parish". These benefactors show that even "a secluded valley had once a population able to do what now would be scarcely possible in the Cornish towns as they are".⁵⁴ Those few who go nowhere but to church, Benson found were often only three quarters of the congregation, "or at any rate do not communicate elsewhere". "The clergy themselves, whether owing to the influences under which they were brought up as Bishop Phillpotts' clergy, or from the pressures they live under the Dissenters, are of a decidedly high type of doctrine. The exceptions are most rare. The old Wesleyan who communicated in the parish church and came once or twice to church on Sunday are ceasing out of the land. And the whole body of Wesleyans is being rapidly undermined by a coarser lower type of religion called 'Bible Christianity' ... they now have a chapel in every village.

In all our villages and towns the Wesleyans have large Sunday Schools and frequently good Day Schools too and their effectiveness is great. They have an excellent Day School at Launceston ... The whole county has for the time been taken captive by him (Wesley) and so far it is not we who have been taking it from him".⁵⁵

When Benson reflected on what he saw as the conversionist strategy of the Methodist churches he concludes: "there died out of their conception everything that speaks of or owns everything mysterious, or veiled or Supernatural in the ordinary means of grace ... reintroducing the Supernatural through immediate conversions".⁵⁶ This was a caricature not a representation of the character of Methodism which also gave method, respectability and reason to its adherents and the communities it served. Though Wesley himself drank beer and wine (though not spirits), 19th century Methodism largely frowned on alcoholic beverages - Sunday school outings to the coast often coinciding with fairs and feast days when drunkenness might be much in evidence. John Rule cites the example of Rev Thomas Collins who took the children of Camborne Wesley Sunday School on a seaside trip in 1849 to avoid the fair, and composed a special hymn. One verse ran:

We rejoice, and we have reason,
Though we don't attend the fair;
Better spend the happy season
Breathing in the fresh sea air.

Happy Children!

What a number will be there.⁵⁷

The use of the word reason, not just to rhyme with season, betokened a thoughtful, measured attitude to life in which alcohol played no or little part.

Rule records that the annual tea treat for Sunday scholars had become a widespread institution in Cornwall by the 1820s. "Teas were followed by recitations of amazing length from prize scholars and there was much flag waving, banner carrying and processing."⁵⁸

Whatever the character of Methodism in Benson's initial findings, he certainly found that the areas of mining and quarrying were often distant from the parish churches. "At St Teath, the Delabole Quarries have been worked for near 30 years ... they supply employment to near 500 workmen. No church, no school, no barn claimed by the church within 2 miles. The dissenters have 3 chapels there. The landowners (are) most ungenerous. The broad churchman is nothing to Cornwall and Cornwall nothing to him. The old-fashioned high churchman's work is done. And a more fresh and living tone of Evangelical-Catholic aims expressed by music (passionately played), architecture and a bright warm air and colour in church is running thro' the veins here and there and this is the hope of Cornwall".⁵⁹ Benson's problems were not exclusively with Methodism but with 'extreme' Highchurchmen also: "Mills of St Erth and Steele of St Neot are both extreme men and they will do all they can to press their views and may make it onerous either to sanction or not to sanction things they submit".⁶⁰

The use of the word holiness in an address to the Mayor's dinner was an early sign of an idea that was clearly taking shape in Benson's mind. In his diary entries between January 8 and 12 1878, Benson writes: "I spent a good deal of time this morning with Tyacke and Mason explaining how the Society of Holy Living should be expanded. I wish it to be one Society through the whole diocese. On my confirmation time I shall recommend the newly-confirmed to avail themselves for mutual help".⁶¹ Animating the laity through the Society of

Holy Living was only half the battle. Many clergy clearly left Benson depressed. Tyacke mentions to him that at Penzance, the Vicar, Mr. Peters of Madron had refused to allow the building of a church on available ground where funds had been offered for the purpose "where now is a great Methodist meeting very large and always crowded. He has for many years been absolutely decrepit and non-resident while his daughters who have control of him refuse to allow his resignation".⁶² This leads Benson to consider other clergy and parish churches in the diocese. Tuckingmill was a "miserable Normanesque church".⁶³ Mr Bull at Treslothan was "devoted to ferns and strawberries - no service while church was restored, reseated and repaired by Mr Pendarves."⁶⁴ Benson mentions depopulation at Treslothan and Crowan also; Camborne is "the Canterbury of Wesleyanism".⁶⁵ When he institutes Lane at Redruth he writes "God help the new Rector," a comment that could be understood in more than one way.⁶⁶ There were no confirmations at Wendron where "the weak old thing had exchanged (livings) with a melancholic". A predecessor of these two incumbents who had exchanged livings was Parson Wills (Vicar of Wendron and Helston from 1784 to 1837) who "left 40 illegitimate children".⁶⁷

But there were moments of light which shone from unexpected places: "A deputation from the dissenting hamlet of Latchley waited on the rector to tell him that they had canvassed themselves and found the majority of them were for the church. They asked Mr Hullah to provide them with services. They would find a building". Benson's response was immediate. "Being not far off I sent word to Latchley I should like to have a service with them and preach to them and we had a barn full: a row of such nice young fellows of 20 to 23 embarrassed to find their way around their new gilt edged prayer books.... I preached to them on the certainty of the presence of Christ in power within the

Church - disparaging nothing but setting out our own promises and assurances. I bade them build a chapel and (to) take care that it was not an Ananias and Sapphira chapel intended to yield good interest on the outlay of those who built it".⁶⁸

More good news came from Camborne. "It is said 50 people in the district have joined the church without any advances being made to them by the church as against Wesleyanism owing simply to the quiet unostentatious religious work of Mr Chappell and Mr Adams (with only £5 from the landowner Sir R. Vyvyan)."⁶⁹ Luxulyan "is a fine instance of a Cornish parish, its church is dedicated to SS Cyrus and Julitta (the beautiful tale of whose martyrdom (in) 305 at Tarsus seemed perfectly unknown when I told it in my sermon)".⁷⁰ Gradually, Benson became acquainted with the poverty of Cornwall. A "fine farmer" at Luxulyan said to Benson "all their meeting houses over there, everywhere I (ask) why they are none of them paid for".⁷¹ Sir Coleman Rashleigh told Benson that O'Brien, the founder of the Bryanites had "perpetual money problems". The problem was widespread. Sir Richard Vyvyan, of whom Benson expected much as landowner at Camborne, was also perpetually in debt and owed £70,000 at his death.

Benson travelled to the Isles of Scilly where the inhabited islands were truly isolated from each other. "When Mrs Dorrien Smith's wedding presents (were) exhibited it was like the Judgement Day, so many people met from different islands who had parted as children or at marriage and never expected to see each other again".⁷² "At the confirmation on the island of St.Mary's on the Isles of Scilly the principal Wesleyan and two principal farmers received confirmation as they knelt before all their neighbours and labourers".⁷³ As the diary continues, so does the mixed bag of entries. What is surely important is that

Benson undertook such an ambitious tour of visiting. This amply fulfilled the desires of the last two bishops of the undivided diocese of Exeter, Henry Phillpotts and Frederick Temple, who advocated the splitting of the diocese precisely because they could not visit the diocese properly from their residence in Devon. At Launceston the Wesleyans are led by "their excellent Mark Guy Pearce the author of the admirable Daniel Quorn. At Bodmin, feuds with their Irish vicar are carrying off church people of old standing into dissent and the church pulse is languid".⁷⁴ At Polperro after the service "I was most hospitably entertained by the principal Wesleyan. Such grips of hands from the fishermen".⁷⁴

In May 1879 a period of 'distress' occurred. Benson noted that the collection for the Cathedral slackened during this period.⁷⁵ Both the Anglican and Methodist churches started funds to relieve the distress, the Wesleyans moving from a position where they helped fellow Wesleyans to a position where they helped everyone. "Subsequently their committee joined in one operation. They behaved very fairly and well ... and were more businesslike than our clergymen".⁷⁶ Benson in an aside in the diary comments: "Need not Creed was the motive of relief".⁷⁷ Benson later went to Newlyn East where typhoid fever had been raging. Benson identified the well in the middle of the village as the source of the problem. "They thought it 'twas the will o' the Lord but Miss Annie said it wor drains".⁷⁸ Here we see one example of Benson's practical sense. He sought to offer practical solutions when he could to besetting problems. Though money was short in Cornwall, Benson bemoaned the "great amassers of (mining) fortunes who are few ... They have blessed and benefited no one ... No churches, no shops, no hospitals have been founded by mining lords".⁷⁹

Three salient points which come through Benson's diaries are local

pride, the importance of hymn singing and superstition. The first two of these characteristic features can both be illustrated in relation to St Just. "The St Justers are said to believe that St Just is the chief city of the world and every man that he is the chief citizen. They are very hot dissenters ... and I was favoured with a note from a leading man among them ... stating that he was not at all disappointed at not meeting me to lunch as I was of far too narrow a type to please him, and that he intended to be at the service, but only out of curiosity".⁸⁰ Once the procession began "they sang most sweetly as we walked up hill to Church. They sang with all their power, a crowded Church full. They sang back again. While we were taking tea they sang hymns under the trees, and after but an hour's revisit to the Church to see its great curiosities, they were singing hymns still when we returned and we drove off while they sang".⁸¹

Obelkevich, writing of South Lincolnshire, and Sarah Williams, writing about Southwark, have both emphasized a wide range of folk practices and magical solutions to problems which have similarities to entries in Benson's diaries. "A man is just dead to whom one of the most respectable farmers near Penzance paid £3.3s. a year till his death, to avoid his 'ill-making' his cattle". "The coachman ... who drove me to Scorrier, had scarcely recovered from the effects of the trampling upon him of a woman, a white witch, who undertook to cure him of his rheumatism by walking up and down upon him". "At South Petherwin a woman stroked her leg with the dead hand of a neighbour to cure her of rheumatism".⁸¹

John Rule, in a ground-breaking study, seeks to correlate the folk practices of the Cornish people with Methodism. "Methodism did not so much replace folk-beliefs as translate them into a religious idiom.... In modern British history no church of comparable weight has allowed a greater degree of

comprehensiveness or frequency to devine (sic) or satanic intervention than did early Methodism". Rule relates a tradition in St Just that when Charles Wesley visited the St Just society it was suffering severe persecution from Squire Eustick. Wesley pronounced: "The man who has troubled you this day shall trouble you no more for ever. Within a few weeks the squire died insane. The impression made on the popular mind was a strong one".⁸² Rule also alludes to William Haslam, noting the frequency of his parishioners dreaming of Jesus and the devil. Though Haslam was an Anglican, albeit an Anglican keen on revival, it betokened a Cornish thought world where spiritual realities of good and evil were ever present. Even sophisticated Methodists like Samuel Drew believed that they had seen the devil and Billy Bray talked of 'old smutty face' trying to lead him astray. "A folklorist in the late 19th century found that circles of standing stones 'had come to be regarded as petrified young people who had sported on the Sabbath'. Here we have together superstition, divine retaliation and condemnation of sport".⁸³

Though Anglican clergy did to a degree confront popular amusements, "Methodists altered the tone of the condemnations. The sports themselves now seem to have acquired an inherent sinfulness. From their first footholds in the county the Wesleys had condemned wrestling".⁸⁴ At a surface level, popular amusements put up strong opposition to Christian modification. Thomas Trevaskis, the 'Temperance Father of the West', spoke against the Padstow Hobby 'Oss, which Rule calls 'the oldest of all the Cornish festivals'. Trevaskis offered to substitute a fat bullock to be roasted on May Day for a period of seven years, asking "whether you will give up your vain practice of the Hobby for the more rational amusement of eating roast beef; with a hail of stones he was driven out of town, bullock and all".⁸⁵ At a certain level there was a greater

degree of harmonization between the two traditions. Temperance did make some parish feasts 'a sorry sight' by 1864, "where the offerings of drinking, sack races and donkey derbies ceased to attract the mass of the people". On the other hand, Roughtor Revels which began as a convention of East Cornwall teetotal societies, ended up attracting vendors of alcohol and amusement stalls precisely because so many people were present.⁸⁶ "Rule argues that Methodism was favourably received in Cornish mining villages because it was perceived as consonant with traditions of the unseen world of devils and spirits as well as other elements of folk belief".⁸⁷ This, linked with local identity and a style of worship where hymn singing played a prominent part, made Benson's work particularly difficult.

Benson cites: "Mr. Thornton, the able and reflective Rector of South Hill, who has spent such labour and money on education, says deliberately that in his twenty years' work he has never found the Wesleyans at all willing to take any part with him". The problem was not just connected with education but extended to promiscuity: "Against drink they will work with him and against profanity. But this subject they leave in its present awful condition. Since he has been at Callington there have been 3 cases of incest".⁸⁸ Benson could not rely on Anglican landowners to promote Anglicanism. "Mr Thynne, who has the best opportunities of knowing, told me that even landlords who are good churchmen are so anxious to stand well with the Methodists that in engaging labourers, calling at their cottages, or exchanging a kind word with any of them, it is quite a common expression to observe 'I don't care where you go on a Sunday'".⁸⁹ Benson saw a similarly laissez-faire attitude to do with education. "Similarly the Proprietors have been few indeed - scarce any who have been willing to make any effort to keep up Voluntary Schools. Everywhere they have allowed the

Board School to come in". Nevertheless, with this difficulty Benson saw an opportunity: "Those (schools) however will ultimately come under the direction of those who will take the most pains with them - and those who will take the most pains are the clergy. In 1875, 15 such schools asked for our Religious Inspection, in 1876, 20; this year 35 are expected. These schools, which are so much dreaded by the clergy, will be finally a great strength to the Church".⁹⁰

Benson considered the obstacles which prevented these opportunities from being grasped. Firstly there was an inherited suspicion of the Church of England through its historic association with the squirearchy who had begun to abandon their manorial residences, which they had converted to mere farms "leaving the clergy in a fatal social desert". Benson as a Tory detested the policies of the 18th century Whig Prime Minister, Robert Walpole, who when in need of votes "could work the Church as the most lucrative and least onerous and risky of all businesses".⁹¹ Secondly, Benson bemoaned 'the situation of its buildings': "At Lanteglos we have a Church a mile and a half from Camelford, which having been always large and having now 1500 inhabitants, has no Church nearer. At Calstock the church is on a hilltop, a mile and a half above the village. There are seven hamlets, not one of which had till lately any kind of service or help towards service, and there are 7,000 people in the parish".⁹² Thirdly, Benson considered the mixed blessing in Cornwall of the influential and long-serving Bishop of Exeter, Henry Phillpotts. "Henry of Exeter, it may be supposed, did something to reduce that party (evangelicals) indirectly, and the land is filled with clergy who swear by his name, and are out of harmony with their people. The immediate effect of his logic and his will on those about him has been remarkable". Benson spoke of a "newer clan" that moved across the county "stirred by Henry. These came to work the Church's system as it is

called in fated slang. They were earnest men. Some have turned idle through disappointment and some sad and despondent past remedy. They restored their churches and woodwork and residences. They had daily prayers at 8 or 10 a.m. and observed Saints' Days. They got new organs and abolished the flageolet and violin. They catechised and they baptised after the Second Lesson on Sunday afternoons, and they preached in surplices. They were and are good men and they made and read good sermons, to those who came to listen. But these were few. In want and in worldly difficulty and daily perplexity of common business they resort wholly to the clergyman, yet he is the one person who can get nothing from them in religion".⁹³

In the next chapter we shall see the attempted strategic remedy to the problems Benson identified. It also had to be recognised that he believed that the power of the individual person, whether Bishop, incumbent or lay person to effect change was considerable. Becoming the first Bishop of Truro was a challenge "which drew forth the finest of Benson's qualities and made supreme demands upon the energy and industry of this phenomenally industrious man".⁹⁴ Benson realised that John Wesley, knowingly or unknowingly, had created a cult of personality, attracting to him loyal service from many who idealised him and supported him as far as it was humanly possible to do. "He (Benson) took to growing his hair longer in later years which increased the likeness to John Wesley, often noticed".⁹⁵ One of Benson's aspirations was to get alongside people and one of the best compliments paid to him, as recorded in his diaries, was at Morwenstow where "a local preacher of the Wesleyans who is a Churchwarden too congratulated (the) Bishop on being such a nice understandable gentleman ... Our bishop says quite plain ... just like us common people".⁹⁶

Benson's frustration with ritualism was, in part, its inability to relate well to 'common people' in every place. "In some places (1) we see no difference between this and Popery; (2) In other places workmen crowd out the Ritualist congregation itself, in their respectful eagerness to miss nothing".⁹⁷ In this Benson reveals himself as a pragmatist supporting what worked well, but decrying ritualism when it acted as a barrier between people and the church. Benson was himself accused of being a ritualist and his own visit to St. Juliot's Church and parish was impaired by such a suspicion. The Vicar's wife "told me they have been assured it was of no use their applying to me for leave to have a curate, as I should allow none but a very high churchman. 'They do say you are almost a Roman Catholic'".⁹⁸ A suspicion of Roman Catholicism is exemplified by a diary entry from 1882 concerning the Camborne riots: "Irishmen wandering about, discharged it is said from some emigrant shop at Falmouth penniless and not behaving well have increased the general hate of the Cornish miner to 'the stranger' who works for less money. A Major Pike in a dispute with his workmen is said to have declared he would have more Irish over. These Irishmen beat a Cornishman and are hard to identify and there are lenient sentences and the Cornishmen determine to be rid of the Irish, attack their houses, sack Major Pike's and attack the Roman Catholic chapel".⁹⁹ His force of personality certainly won admiration. His son and biographer, A.C. Benson, expresses it well. "It was this exquisitely natural courtesy coupled with such ... presence and voice which ... won the hearts of the Cornish people as he moved up and down the Diocese".¹⁰⁰ But though many Cornish people greatly admired Bishop Benson, it did not mean that they were ready to become Anglicans. This clearly frustrated Benson. In his diary entry of 17 May 1882, is recorded "Yesterday re-opened the church (after re-construction) of Perranarworthal.

Preached to them about S. Piran ... I want these Cornish people who are always boasting in vague general ways of the interest of that county to know and be proud of the local associations of their own villages and churches - they have no idea of them". Benson quotes Colonel Cocks, a retired soldier who had been touring Cornwall and further afield looking for suitable stone for the new Cathedral, as defining the dark ages as ages in which they endowed churches and built cathedrals: "This they appreciated delightedly. What right have such people as these to be non-conformists?"¹⁰¹

Yet, Methodists they steadfastly remained for the most part though there were isolated exceptions. "An 82 yr old at Callington 'Why be I to Chapel now? All the good I ever got was to Church....' The next Sunday he came to Church and has so been ever since; a sort of parable of the Cornish people. They are dissenters without meaning it: they will come in crowds to Church and sing 'We love thine altar, Lord' with endless fervour, and listen to the highest doctrine without remonstrance, and subscribe to the restoration of the Churches free. By and by, they would enquire 'Why go I to Chapel?'"¹⁰²

Force of personality was not enough, even Benson's personality. Structural change was necessary, which will be the subject of the next chapter. It is, however, clear that the force of a heroic personality was something which Benson looked for, not only in himself, but among clergy of the diocese. The benefits, but also the limitations of such an approach, are illustrated by a diary entry dated 18 May 1882, regarding Heal "curate at Nanpean in S. Stephen's in Brannel (who does) wonderful work". "Young men join the choir. A Sunday School is opened in the afternoon when there is no competing chapel or school of dissent. Instant rage. One young man dismissed his employment, another told he will follow unless he returns to dissent ... The children come and tell

Heal that the steward of the Methodist Chapel has offered them half a crown if they will leave the church and church school altogether".¹⁰³ Methodist opposition to Heal in clay country became still more agitated: "Heal is turned out of his lodgings and can get no others within three miles. The steward has an argument with him as to Church doctrines ... He shakes his fist in Heal's face and says 'we are determined to ruin you and the Church and will do it' ... I had to spend an hour or more in persuading him not to throw up his curacy. What has become of the old church love of peril and adventure when even the man that could do so well thinks all this too uncomfortable. However I trust he will come round."¹⁰⁴ Benson's diary entry appears to cast Heal in a heroic mould. Yet even Heal was sadly lacking in the "old Church love of peril and adventure" and was thinking that he would "throw up his curacy".

Opposition from Methodism was as vitriolic and vituperative as it was because there was so much at stake. So many Victorian churches and chapels, especially the newly built and restored, were overextended financially. In Browning's great poem *Bishop Blougram's Apology*, the aged bishop says: "A man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a Heaven for?" The reach of many who planned new churches and chapels far exceeded either their grasp of financial reality or even, more importantly, the amount of money they actually had in their grasp. The words which Heal's Methodist adversary is said to have used: "we are determined to ruin you and the Church and will do it" may well have a financial overtone. Financial ruin awaited a church which opened on borrowed money and then lost its members. Less than six months after Benson's diary entry, the Methodist Free Church Chapel at St Stephen's in Brannel opened in October 1882 on land leased from Captain Fortescue. The previous church became the Sunday School. At the time of its opening by

Thomas Stocker of St Austell, it had not been paid for. To lose church members to another denomination would reduce the chance of the chapel ever being paid for. To bribe a Sunday School scholar half a crown, if indeed it ever happened, appears a desperate measure. Money, and especially the shortage of it, may well lie at the bottom of the problems which exacerbated Methodist/Anglican relations in the late nineteenth century. A shortage of money was actually common to both traditions. But what could have united the two churches, had they pooled their resources, became a fight to retain or regain membership and the money that went with it, so that the other 'side' could not have it.

Footnotes to Chapter 3

1. David Newsome, *A History of Wellington College*, (London, 1959), pp.107-110, 156-160, 166-170.
2. See, for example, Jeremy Morris, George Ridding and the Diocese of Southwell: a Study in the National Church Ideal *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 61, 1, (January 2010), pp.125-143 esp.p.143. His monument in Southwell Minster reads: "Bishop – Pastor – Ruler".
3. Charles Longley (Harrow), A. C. Tait (Rugby), E.W. Benson (Wellington), Frederick Temple (Rugby), William Temple (Repton), Geoffrey Fisher (Repton).
4. Newsome, (1959), p.85.
5. A. C. Benson, *Life of Edward White Benson*, (London, 1899 2 vols.) vol. 1 pp.37-8.
6. Henry James visited Benson at Addington Palace on 10 January

1895. James's notebook entry of 12/1/1895 records: "note here, the ghost story, told me at Addington (evening of Thursday, 10th) by the Archbishop of Canterbury." *Turn of the Screw* (Penguin Books, 1994) Introduction and Notes by A. Curtis p.15.
7. A. C. Benson, *Life* vol. 1, p.98.
 8. A. C. Benson, *Life* vol. 1, p.80.
 9. Newsome, (1959), p.85.
 10. J. G. Lockhart, *Cosmo Gordon Lang*, (London, 1949), p.127.
 11. Newsome, (1959), p.54.
 12. Newsome, (1959), pp.105, 111.
 13. Newsome, (1959), p.150.
 14. Newsome, (1959), pp. 90, 99.
 15. Newsome, (1959), p.153.
 16. A. C. Benson, *Life* vol. 1 p.32.
 17. E. W. Benson, *The Cathedral: Its necessary place in the life and work of the church*. (London, 1878) pp.109-110. This was an expanded reprint of the 1871 article.
 18. E. W. Benson, 'Cathedral Life and Cathedral Work', *Quarterly Review*, 130, (January 1871), pp.225-255. See also Geoffrey Treloar, *Lightfoot the Historian: The Nature and Role of History in the Life and Thought of J. B Lightfoot (1828 – 1889) as Churchman and Scholar* (Tubingen, 1998), p.210.
 19. Chadwick, (1970), vol. 2 , p.390.
 20. Donaldson, (1902), p.49.
 21. A.C. Benson, *Life of E.W. Benson* Vol.1, p.369.
 22. Ibid, (Reminiscence of Mary Benson) Vol.1, 370.

23. Ibid, Vol.1, 371.
24. Ibid, Vol.1, 18.
25. Letter to Crowfoot, 16/2/1881.A. C. Benson *Life of E.W. Benson* Vol.1, p.503.
26. Ibid, Vol.1, p.462.
27. Ibid, Vol.1, p.463.
28. Ibid, Vol.1, p.462-3.
29. Ibid, Vol.1, p.482.
30. Ibid, Vol.1, p.481.
31. Ibid, Vol.1, p.481.
32. Ibid, Vol.1, p.277.
33. Ibid, Vol.1, p.186.
34. Ibid, Vol.1, p.178.
35. Ibid, Vol.1, p.179.
36. Ibid, Vol.1, p.299.
37. Ibid, Vol.1, p.301.
38. Ibid, Vol.1, p.308.
39. Ibid Vol.1, p.343.
40. Ibid, Vol.1, p.426.
41. David Newsome, *Godliness and Good Learning: Four Studies on a Victorian Ideal*, (London, 1961), p.149.
42. A. C. Benson *Life* Vol. 1 pp.183-184.
43. TCM 146 1 (St Erme and Mount Hawke), TCM 146 2 (Probus) An example of Methodist concern at developments in the Church of England may be seen in the Royal Cornwall Museum where there is a trowel

presented to Mrs Chirgwin on 14 May 1880, used to lay the foundation stone of the United Methodist Church in Truro - now in the same case as a memorial urn and other memorabilia of Truro Cathedral's foundation on 20 May 1880, which took place just six days later.

44. TCM 145 4 A member of the Fox Quaker family refused to pay church rates on grounds of conscience and won much sympathy at a public meeting.
45. TCM 145, 6
46. TCM 146, 6.
47. TCM 145, 8.
48. Dominic Jones, *Victorian Reformation: The fight over idolatry in the Church of England* (Oxford, 2009) p.5.
49. Owen Chadwick, *Victorian Church* (London 1971) Vol. 1 p.218.
- 51 TCM 145, 11.
- 52 TCM 145, 12.
- 53 TCM 145, 13.
- 54 TCM 145, 13-15.
- 55 TCM 145, 13-15.
- 56 TCM 145, 17-18.
- 57 John Rule, 'Methodism, Popular Beliefs and Village Culture in Cornwall, 1800-1850', in *Cornish Cases: Essays in eighteenth and nineteenth century social history* (Southampton, 2006) pp.55-56.
- 58 Rule, (2006) p.56
- 59 TCM145, 52.
- 60 TCM 145, 38.

- ⁶¹ TCM 145, 47-48.
- ⁶² TCM 145, 49.
- ⁶³ TCM 145, 50.
- ⁶⁴ TCM 145, 51.
- ⁶⁵ TCM 145, 53.
- ⁶⁶ TCM 145, 58.
- ⁶⁷ TCM 145, 77-78.
- ⁶⁸ TCM 145, 130-131.
- ⁶⁹ TCM 145, 132.
- ⁷⁰ TCM 145, 132.
- ⁷¹ TCM 145, 133.
- ⁷² TCM 145, 137.
- ⁷³ TCM 145, 136.
- ⁷⁴ TCM 145, 129.
- ⁷⁵ TCM 145, 141.
- ⁷⁶ TCM 145, 140
- ⁷⁷ TCM 145, 140.
- ⁷⁸ TCM 145, 177.
- ⁷⁹ TCM 145, 139.
- ⁸⁰ TCM 146, 8.
- ⁸¹ TCM 146, 8-9; TCM 146 22 (South Petherwin)
- ⁸² John Rule: *Methodism, Popular Belief and Village Culture in Cornwall, 1800-1850* (2006), p.6.
- ⁸³ *Ibid*, p.67.
- ⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p.54.

- ⁸⁵ Ibid, pp.59-60.
- ⁸⁶ Ibid, p.60.
- ⁸⁷ R. D. Storch, (ed.), *Popular Culture and Custom in Nineteenth Century England*, (London, 1982) p.10.
- ⁸⁸ TCM 146, 20.
- ⁸⁹ TCM 146, 26.
- ⁹⁰ TCM 146, 27.
- ⁹¹ TCM 146, 24.
- ⁹² TCM 146,26
- ⁹³ TCM 146, 30.
- ⁹⁴ D. H. Newsome, *Godliness and Good Learning: Four Studies on a Victorian Ideal*, (London, 1961) p.181.
- ⁹⁵ A. C. Benson: *Life of E.W. Benson Vol. 1* p.588.
- ⁹⁶ TCM 146, 62.
- ⁹⁷ TCM 146, 32.
- ⁹⁸ TCM 146, 153.
- ⁹⁹ TCM 147, 22.
- ¹⁰⁰. A.C. Benson: *Life of E.W. Benson Vol. 1* p.530.
- ¹⁰¹. TCM 147, 54.
- ¹⁰² TCM 146, 23-24.
- ¹⁰³. TCM 147, 56.
- ¹⁰⁴. TCM 147, 57.

CHAPTER 4

Benson's Vision for a new type of Cathedral Part 1.

We have seen in the last chapter, how Benson's fourteen years as headmaster of Wellington College, followed by four as Canon Chancellor of Lincoln Cathedral helped develop his thought on the importance of the Cathedral at the heart of a diocese. At Wellington, monetary difficulties were overcome, Benson could develop traditions from scratch and the college chapel could exist as the living heart of the school community. Benson's work at Lincoln, where he had to research into the old statutes of the Cathedral, further helped him to clarify his thoughts, so that the idea of a cathedral could be supported and underpinned by statute and regulation. Because of his expertise in the matter of Cathedral statutes, Benson then acquired a national role on the subject – since the revision of statutes was a concern for other Cathedrals as well.¹ The statutes which Benson drew up for Truro Cathedral became a model for other Cathedrals as they sought to undertake the same task.

It is less clear how the idea of the Cathedral could be seen by Benson to be the solution to the difficulties he faced when he came to Cornwall. Three of these difficulties were the identification of the church with the squirearchy, the location of Anglican churches in the wrong place geographically – many far from centres of population and the continuing effects of the High Church Bishop Henry Phillpotts which, according to Benson, could result in a priest appointed during his long episcopate no longer able properly to engage with his parishioners.²

The squirearchy had been notable in spending money to build new churches in Victorian times. The architect eventually chosen to design Truro

Cathedral had, as some of his earliest patrons, two squires with an interest in, and commitment to, church building in the East Riding of Yorkshire.³ The need for money from Cornish gentry families would further highlight the central importance of the squirearchy in the provision of money. While many Anglican churches in Cornwall were indeed located away from centres of population, seeking money from the parishes for the building of a cathedral would hardly make it easier for new churches to be built in the towns. It was difficult, for instance, for St John's Penzance to be fundraising for its own building at a time when it was competing with Cathedral fund-raising.⁴ As for those clergy who had been appointed under Bishop Phillpotts but who, in Benson's eyes at least, had become stale, it was not inevitable that a new focal point for the diocese would galvanise them into action.

Nevertheless, Benson persisted with his vision. In relation to the squirearchy, there was a twofold strategy – firstly of "noblesse oblige", encouraging wealthy people to spend their money on the Cathedral as part of their obligation to society. They thereby promoted an integrated vision of society where rich and poor worked together for the common good. Secondly, Benson hoped that the Cathedral project would inspire poorer sections of society. He was particularly impressed by those occasions, around the time when the foundation stone of the Cathedral was laid in May 1880, when poorer people assembled at the site of the Cathedral that would be built in order to worship God. Benson was in this way, and in other ways such as the direct street preaching of Canon Mason, making a direct appeal to all sections of society as well as encouraging the gentry to help and work with the poor themselves.⁵ In relation to parish church building, the great era for church building preceded Benson's time at Truro, though notable churches at Penzance, Redruth (St

Andrew) and elsewhere in Cornwall were being raised during his time in Cornwall. At Penzance and Redruth, the church building was made of stone, although some churches in Cornwall were made of corrugated iron. So-called 'tin tabernacles' survive at Pensilva,(built for the mining community with money from the will of Archdeacon Hobhouse), and at St Mary's Cadgwith for the fishing community. Tin tabernacles were clearly cheaper to build than stone edifices – in Scotland even a Cathedral was built at Oban from corrugated iron, which lasted for some fifty years.⁶ But in Cornwall parish churches were normally built of stone. Mission churches and chapels of ease, as elsewhere, were often made of cheaper material. Benson proposed no alternatives to the fundraising for Cathedral and parish church taking place alongside each other. He simply presented parish clergy who wanted to build churches in more appropriate places with the same challenge he faced himself on a larger scale – namely the difficulty of raising money, especially when the budget for the project kept going up. With both parish churches and the Cathedral itself, it meant that the temptation to compromise on the quality of stone was ever present and could lead to buildings being erected which would present future generations with considerable problems.

In relation to clergy and others who needed a new sense of purpose and vision, the Cathedral was to provide it. For that reason the choice of architect was so important. It was virtually certain that the Cathedral would be built in the Gothic style. Ever since the rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament to designs by Charles Barry, with internal decorations by Augustus Pugin, Gothic held sway as the design of choice, especially for Anglican church buildings. The committee for the new Houses of Parliament specified designs in either Tudor or Gothic, but overwhelmingly the entries were Gothic in character.⁷ Within the

Gothic category, there were many possible styles: the so-called High Gothic associated with Butterfield, with strong and varied colours of stone and brick, often in bands horizontally set across the walls; the correct middle Gothic or 'decorated' Gothic of the academic purists who saw the flowering of this style between 1300 and the Black Death of 1348/9, as the high point of mediaeval architecture between the earlier "early English" Gothic style and the later, often mass produced, perpendicular Gothic style of the late middle ages. In the late Victorian period, there was a still greater diversity of style, not all of it Gothic. A reinvigorated Queen Anne style was associated with Norman Shaw and one of Pearson's later works, built for Sydney Sussex College in Cambridge in the 1890s was in a neo-Jacobean style.⁸

The choice facing the committees looking into new Cathedral at Truro, was fundamentally, what type of Gothic structure were they hoping to commission? It was a commission which would attract some of the greatest architects of the day, though not George Gilbert Scott, who had crossed swords with Benson during the building of Wellington College Chapel.⁹ In any case he died a few weeks before the executive committee sought to obtain an architect by means of a competition limited to Bodley, Burges, Pearson, R P Pullen, St Aubyn (who had prepared a scheme of enlargement for Truro Parish Church), John Oldrid Scott (son of George Gilbert Scott) and Street. George Edmund Street, designer of Cuddesdon Theological College and the nave of Bristol Cathedral, among other mainly ecclesiastical buildings, is best remembered for designing the Royal Courts of Justice in London (the first church he designed was St Mary's Biscovey in the parish of Par near St Blazey Gate in Cornwall, for the first vicar of Par, George Rundle Prynne in 1847). After a contentious competition process, Street was appointed as sole architect for the Royal

Courts of Justice but the building was not complete at the time of his death in 1881. It was said that Street was worn out by the work.¹⁰ Like George Gilbert Scott, Butterfield and Pearson he is buried in Westminster Abbey.

The architects chosen to compete were allowed to submit drawings and photographs of completed cathedrals and parish churches instead of producing a design. Street sent a design for Christchurch Cathedral, Dublin and his nearly completed nave of Bristol Cathedral. Burges submitted designs for Lille, Edinburgh and Cork Cathedrals (only Cork Cathedral had been built); Oldrid Scott submitted his father's successful design for Edinburgh Cathedral, which he had helped to build, and designs of some parish churches. Pearson sent his drawings of recent churches that he had built at Freeland, Wentworth, St Augustine's Kilburn, St John's Red Lion Square (bombed in World War II and then demolished) and Croydon, where he had designed two churches – St John's Upper Norwood and St Michael's Poplar Walk. Pullen and St Aubyn submitted designs for Truro Cathedral even though under the terms of the competition they did not need to do so. J. M. Brydon sent in a design though he was not invited to compete, and a design by James Hicks was illustrated in a magazine, but not sent to the committee. George Frederick Bodley, who achieved eminence as one of the greatest Victorian architects, also submitted a design for Truro Cathedral. "He believed that he had made certain of winning by entering the set of drawings with numerous alternatives on fly leaves. His office thought them better omitted as likely to confuse the committee. His Cathedral was to include two towers over the transept, like Exeter and two bays of the old parish church as a Lady Chapel".¹¹ Bodley also submitted his church at Hoar Cross Staffordshire, with a tower reminiscent of Durham Cathedral and a cathedral-like crossing and chancel.

The executive committee cast seven votes for Pearson and four votes for Bodley, so the two architects were formally recommended to the general committee, which under Benson's chairmanship adopted Pearson as the successful architect. According to Quiney, for Bodley, failing to win the commission was the greatest disappointment of his life.¹¹ It is difficult, retrospectively, to assess why one architect was chosen over another. One important difference between the two architects concerns the internal decoration of their churches. Bodley paid great attention to furnishings, wall decorations and painted ceilings, something which was not Pearson's strength. "With a few exceptions, his (Pearson's) designs for altars, reredoses, organ cases and stalls were curiously uninspired. The textural and colour effects of materials did not seem to have interested him".¹² It is perhaps instructive to compare Bodley with Pearson in relation to their work at Liverpool. The prosperity of Liverpool during the 19th and early 20th century meant that a number of noted edifices were built there, including the beginnings of Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral. George Gilbert Scott built St Mary West Derby (1853 – 6); George Edmund Street designed and built St Margaret's Liverpool (1867 – 9) with its elaborate use of internal polychrome. A number of important Roman Catholic churches were built for the growing Catholic population, including Our Lady of Reconciliation, designed by E W Pugin near the waterfront and built in 1859 – 60. Two of the most notable Victorian churches in Liverpool were St Agnes Sefton Park designed in 1882 and built in 1883-4 by Pearson, and St John the Baptist Tue Brook, consecrated in 1871 and built to Bodley's designs. At St Agnes Sefton Park, Pearson mastered a complex design with two sets of transepts. "The eye is constantly drawn upwards and eastwards to the chancel, where steep-pointed arches seem to rise and fall with

increasing restlessness". At the church of St John the Baptist, Tue Brook: "every inch is decorated. Whereas much Gothic revival left decoration subordinate to architecture (as sometimes did Bodley) here decoration is all... The chancel is no less ablaze with colour. Every inch is painted. The choir stalls, like the screen, are stained oak and decorated".¹³

To reach the point where the executive committee had to choose between Bodley and Pearson and to decide which it recommended to the general committee, its members had come a long way. Less than a year before, the committee appointed at the Diocesan Conference in October 1877 had been asked only "to enquire into the present condition of St Mary's Church, and if necessary to consider what steps may be desirable for providing a suitable Cathedral for the Diocese".¹⁴ By 16 January 1878, the committee minutes state "this meeting recognises the necessity of a cathedral and approves of the principles laid down by the Bishop and of his remarks on the carrying out of these principles".¹⁵ Precisely what Benson's principles were, and his remarks on carrying out the principles, are not specified in the minutes. Perhaps we get a hint of what Benson liked in a report submitted by Pearson dated 12 May 1879, prior to the submission of his designs on 9 June 1879. "As I much prefer the especially English arrangement of a central tower and two western towers for a cathedral, I have adopted it in my design; and I have endeavoured in every respect to impart to the design the style and character of a cathedral. I have carefully avoided every feature which in any way had a character belonging to a parish church, feeling that it would be altogether out of place".¹⁶ Benson was particular about the form the Cathedral took. He looked for technical and mathematical accuracy. His views on liturgy and architecture were the same as his uncle's: "one does something because it is right". Secondly, the Cathedral

was to have three towers and there was no one better than Pearson at designing spires. Sadly, many of the spires which Pearson designed were never built because they were the last part of the building to be erected and the project had by this stage run out of money. This is also true of two churches that Pearson designed in the Croydon area while at St Agnes Sefton Park, his elaborate design for the building did not include a spire. Truro Cathedral would need a spire and Pearson's precision and engineering competence meant that the spires would be built in the best possible way. Thirdly, unlike other designs, and especially that of St Aubyn, the building designed by Pearson would not be a parish church writ large, but distinctively a cathedral. This was Benson's view as well. But there was one other factor that may have clinched it as far as the committee was concerned and it perhaps is significant that Pearson made the point in the very first sentence in his report of May 1879. "The committee will see that the design is simple in its character, the details almost everywhere being of a plain description; and when they are not so, the enrichment is confined to prominent features, such as the porches".¹⁷

The architectural purity of the Camden Society and the revival of Gothic as advocated by Benson were part and parcel of the Tractarian or Catholic Revival, known as the Oxford Movement, of which the Camden Society was a Cambridge expression. Such Catholic sympathies were well in advance of where laypeople were, anti-Catholicism being a fairly well-recognised phenomenon of Victorian society. For Pearson to make his building "simple in its character" and "of a plain description" (for the most part) would satisfy the low church leanings of many Anglicans, not to mention Methodists, for whom plainness was characteristic of church buildings. Bodley's highly ornate and painted style would have been harder to establish as a style acceptable for the

new cathedral. So Pearson's elegant and graceful soaring lines and vaults, where the stone piers were without internal decoration, won the day: the absence of coloured walls is the one striking difference between Truro Cathedral and St Augustine's Kilburn, designed by Pearson and consecrated three months before the foundation stone was laid at Truro Cathedral. Pearson said: "In working out my ground plan... the Cathedral should be made as large as the site would admit of... The choir needs to be large to contain 'clergy and officials' and its scale determines to a great extent the proportions of the rest of the church".¹⁸ A large building, distinctively a cathedral, with graceful piers within and soaring towers without, designed by an architect admired by engineers for his technical expertise and familiarity with mathematics and geometry, was the result. Pearson's strengths as an architect centred on his ability to conceive and execute a coherent structure for a building. The engineering and design of a building, not its decorations, were his first concern. Durham Cathedral, in the city where Pearson grew up, provided one of the earliest examples in history of a magnificent stone vault and the commission to restore Stow Minster in Lincolnshire enabled him to create one of the first stone-vaulted chancels after the Reformation. "The chancel walls have very shallow buttresses, like pilasters, which had clearly been sufficient to stand the thrust of the original vaults, so Pearson sought to design his new vault in such a way as to avoid the need of additional buttressing. After much experimenting, he devised a rib vault with infillings of small flat stones set so as to transmit the load as much as possible downward rather than outward. The construction of this vault was a triumph for Pearson".¹⁹ Nevertheless the ambition of Pearson's creative thinking, imagining a Norman vault at Stow from a limited amount of evidence became problematic with some of his cathedral commissions. At

Peterborough Cathedral, the spire which Pearson designed was not built because of a public row with William Morris and the newly formed Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings over the extent of restoration as opposed to the more limited repair of buildings which Morris advocated.²⁰

Only rarely, as at St Augustine Kilburn, did Pearson attempt internal decoration.²¹ If such internal decoration had been required, Bodley might well have been the preferred architect. If the Cathedral, which Benson envisaged, was to captivate, it would enthrall by its soaring Gothic spaces. Its plethora of vistas, its three spires and its magnificent, technically accomplished, vaulting and arcading – especially the arcade connecting the aisle from the old St Mary's Church to the rest of the building, which was engineering of the highest order and aesthetically pleasing – is Pearson at his best. At a formative period of his architectural development, Pearson travelled in northern France (in 1853, 1859, and possibly 1855) and also on one occasion to Germany.²² David Lloyd writes of the harmonisation of two traditions – the great mediaeval churches of the North East of England such as Beverley Minster, Durham Cathedral (and also Lincoln Cathedral) with the French influence which he sees in "the complicated apses, often with ambulatories, the emphasis on height (as characteristic of the French as of the northern British tradition), the liking for hard geometrical tracery patterns in windows wider than lancets and, most especially, in the general external massing of his (Pearson's) churches, which often have a complicated and diffuse skyline punctuated by turrets". Lloyd also sees as a weakness of Pearson "a lack of evident self-conscious feeling for local character, his buildings are inspired by mediaeval models, but not necessarily those of the region in which they are set". This is particularly evident in Pearson's insistence on the use of Bath stone externally at Truro, as it could be

more easily carved and shaped, a stone which has weathered disastrously badly in the salt air. Nevertheless, the French and Breton influences, including that of a cathedral rising up from the street which is next to it, without being set on a sea of grass on all sides, also gives to Truro Cathedral an atmosphere redolent of other Celtic cultures.²³

According to Thorold: "This is how Pearson conceived it: a great church with three spires pointing to Heaven – but standing in the French manner, tightly packed and girded about in the heart of a city of narrow streets". Thorold was a great admirer of Pearson. "Pearson was a genius among Victorian church architects: his creative spirit which had so absorbed the atmosphere of Early English or Early French churches, breathed a life and originality into his creations. St Peter's Vauxhall (1863), St Augustine's Kilburn (1870) and St Michael's Croydon (1871), rose like miraculous reincarnations of this pure early Gothic style. Truro is the same".²⁴

Two early and important supporters of Pearson's designs were Benson himself and the influential architectural magazine *The Builder*. On 3 November 1887, when the first stage of the Cathedral was complete, (and the Cathedral, comprising the crypt, chancel, east end, crossing, transepts, stump of the central tower clear of the roof line, two bays of the nave and the baptistery were consecrated), Benson deemed the new Cathedral "far finer and purer than we dared to hope". *The Builder* said of the junction of St Mary's aisle with the new work: "a more happy instance of making an architectural beauty out of a constructive difficulty has seldom been seen: it is a thing done in a true architectural spirit".²⁵ *The Builder* reserved its criticisms for the fittings and decorations. Others were not so reticent. Some were disappointed by the

comparatively small nave span of the roof vault which was twenty eight and a half feet across, whereas, at a church that Pearson designed at Red Lion Square in London he had designed a vault with a span of forty feet. The site in Truro limited the length of the Cathedral and, given Pearson's desire to regulate its proportions, the width was therefore determined by the length of the building that the available space allowed. Size for its own sake was not crucial, even to produce a greater monumentality. Proportion was everything.²⁶

The basis of the most substantial criticism of Truro Cathedral was that "it is simply a mediaeval cathedral over again". At the heart of Victorian Gothic architecture was the belief that because of 19th-century engineering methods, the Victorians could do things better than in mediaeval times. Thus, a writer in *The Builder* argued that "a nave span of twenty eight and a half feet in a structure the size and importance of Truro" was due to a slavish imitation of mediaeval precedents. "It was imperfections of technique that dictated it. To imitate this to the letter today, as happened at Truro, is an embarrassment and shows a lack of independence which would have been tolerated in no earlier age". In two respects Pearson differed from his clients' wishes while still building what the committee wanted, namely a re-creation of a mediaeval cathedral. Firstly, Pearson fought the committee over the south aisle of the original parish church of St Mary's. "It was the best preserved and architecturally most interesting; it would serve for parochial services and private prayer ... The Bishop and building committee called it 'tinkering up rotten stones' but Pearson said he would 'grieve beyond anything if it were done away with.'It cost more than he anticipated, but everyone was so pleased with the result that they only praised him. It gave the Cathedral its one stroke of genius". Secondly, Pearson took the decision to work in Bath stone, even though working with local stone

was a well-established principle of Gothic revival architecture. This will be considered more fully in a later chapter. Here it is enough to say that Pearson was criticised for this almost from the time the decision was made, both by local people and by some fellow architects. E F Prior, the architect of Roker church in County Durham, criticised Pearson's misuse of an opportunity in not giving Truro "a generous local expression from the rough dressed granite, but bringing in its place 'the cheese-cut Bath stone of commerce – the mildest vehicle of jerry-building ambition'... Having learnt his Lincoln Cathedral... he could only use a stone in which the Lincoln detail could be worked. The popular and successful architect was obliged to repeat himself and give his clients what they had been trained to expect".²⁷

Prior's phrase 'Bath stone of commerce' is interesting. Pearson could point to a number of properties erected by prominent businessmen in Truro using Bath stone. "For Cornwall's elite, Truro was their own miniature Bath. Not only were building styles imitated, but the honey-coloured Bath stone was even imported for new buildings". Peters cites the classical facade of Truro's Assembly Rooms, Thomas Daniell's Mansion House in Prince Street with a frontage of Bath stone, and the classical frontages of Bath stone buildings lining both sides of Lemon Street. Bath stone, it could be argued, was the stone of choice for Truro-based Cornish gentry in the early 19th century.²⁸

What Pearson did not anticipate was the effect of weathering high up on a building far taller than anything else in Truro. This was despite visiting Bournemouth to inspect George Edward Street's St Peter's Bournemouth, built over a 25 year period from 1854. This church used a combination of local stone with Bath and Purbeck stone columns. Pearson declared when he visited

Bournemouth that the stone had weathered well. Street was an architect that Pearson liked and had a great deal of respect for. Indeed, in August and September of 1881, Street and Pearson went on holiday together, taking the waters at St Gervais and Aix-les-Bains, when they both needed to recuperate from illnesses (Street died shortly afterwards in December 1881).²⁹ It was Street who enunciated the principles of contextual design, which he believed should apply to all churches. "He felt that the town church should be different in form and materials from a country church, for example. In his article of 1850 "On the Proper Characteristics of a Town Church" in *The Ecclesiologist*, Street developed his ideas on the differences in design that different contexts dictate – smooth stone or brick in town versus rough stone in the country, for example".³⁰ Bath stone achieved the smoothness of appearance that Pearson may have been looking for; though dressed granite could have been smooth, Bath stone (to quote Prior) had a cheese-cut appearance. Nevertheless, Pearson was wrong in his confidence in Bath stone, even though he was supported in his opinion by Bishop Benson himself and by the Clerk of Works, James Bubb. The Bath stone did not weather well in either Truro or Bournemouth, over a longer period of time than the ten years which had elapsed when Pearson viewed Street's work. Pearson deliberately went to Street's church in Bournemouth, and not elsewhere, because of its proximity to the sea, but it was the sea air which contributed to the severe weathering of Bath stone in both places.

Two other great influences in Gothic revival architecture were Augustus Pugin and the French architect, Eugene Viollet-le-Duc, restorer of the walls of Carcassonne and the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris among many other works. *The Ecclesiologist*, as the arbiter of style for the Gothic revival architect, stated that the purpose of "a thorough and Catholic restoration" was "to recover

the original scheme of the edifice". Restorations were, therefore, acts of faith in deciding what form the original form of the building took, such as Pearson had to decide in relation to the Norman vaulting in the chancel of Stow-in-Lindsey church. The chancel of Stow church is predominantly Pearson's work and as such is controversial. He apparently found a semi-ruined structure with a Gothic east window and a wooden roof. But he also discovered traces of Norman work in the walls and under the floors, including parts of the original stone vault. From these he excavated fragments and then extrapolated what he assumed to be the form of the previous Norman building.³¹ Viollet-le-Duc took this concept of restoration to a more extreme conclusion. "To restore a building is not to preserve it, to repair, or rebuild it; it is to reinstate it in a condition of completeness which never could have existed at any time". Quiney comments, "The matter is not helped by the ambiguous meaning of the word 'restoration'. In its widest sense, most of Pearson's early churches were restorations. They restored to their congregations places of worship which had become unsuitable – whether for reasons of decay, size or stylistic propriety. The last was a moral reason but the others counted as well".³²

To this architectural concept of restoration, Pugin added a further moral reason, in his influential book contrasting mediaeval and modern urban dwelling entitled "*Contrasts: or a Parallel between the Noble Edifices of the Middle Ages and Corresponding Buildings of the Present Day, showing the Present Decay of Taste*". The book contrasted the civic framework and institutional fabric of "a Catholic town in 1440" with "the same town in 1840." "The buildings and institutions of the mediaeval town present a harmonious and godly community, while the 1840 version exhibits all the faithless utility of an industrialised Victorian city".³³ Something of this spirit can be seen in Benson's

quoting with approval at Perranarworthal church the remark that “the dark ages were when society built cathedrals”. Benson also reveals his own longing for this spirit in his remark, made in his diary as he reflected on the significance of the day after presiding at the opening of Truro Cathedral in 1887, that God would bring back the holy and great Spirit to England, which had raised the great mediaeval cathedrals. "I felt that the Cathedral represented a power which had been suffered to fade away".³⁴ The vision that Pugin and Benson had of the middle ages was a romantic vision of a harmonious unity and an unlimited power which, in reality, the church had never enjoyed in any age. The vision could, however, be combined with a Viollet-le-Duc style restoration of a mediaeval ideal to create “a condition of completeness, which never could have existed at any time”. Brownlee argues that in the 1850s architecture had benefited from, and been influenced by, progressive discoveries that were being made in the world of science, especially geology. As new geological discoveries were made, progress and development were keywords that were used. On a number of occasions, such as at All Saints’ Margaret Street in London, architects like Butterfield incorporated a variety of interesting coloured stones into the fabric of the building. Developments in geology were given a stylistic parallel in the churches that were built. This gave way to a vision of a timeless ideal, based not on historical development but on a stylistic paradigm. Churches of the 1870s and 1880s, Brownlee argues, represented a timeless reality, notionally fixed in the middle ages, but in a middle ages, which Viollet-le-Duc was honest enough to admit, "never could have existed at any time".³⁵ In one way, it was a mediaeval ideal improved, the Victorians thought, by modern engineering and building materials. It was also a Victorian ideal, presenting a Victorian set of values under the guise of a mediaeval past.

Pugin was adamant that Gothic principles in architecture by themselves were not enough. "Yes it was indeed the faith, the zeal, and above all the unity, of our ancestors, that enabled them to conceive and raise those wonderful fabrics that still remain to excite our wonder and admiration". Pugin's thought was adhered to and popularised by Cobbett, whose influential book *Rural Rides* raged against a metropolitan cabal that Cobbett believed had damaged society. "In place of monasteries, convents, hospitals and almshouses, with their commitment to helping the poor and unifying society, there were now just miserable workhouses for destitute paupers". This damage could be seen in the condition of England's noble buildings. Cobbett was certain that such an architectural wonder as Salisbury Cathedral could never have made in the 1830s. "It really does appear that if our forefathers had not made those buildings we should have forgotten before now, what the Christian religion was". On his trip to Morpeth, Cobbett lamented how "from cathedrals and monasteries we are come to be proud of our gaols, which are built in the grandest style, and seemingly as if to imitate Gothic architecture". The contrast of the gaol to the Cathedral was the perfect symbol for the collapse of any corporate sense of civil society, although this view was strongly contested by followers of Ruskin, who believed that intelligently designed and beautiful architecture was the ideal for all buildings in the community, not just religious buildings.³⁶

In his book *The Cathedral: Its necessary place in the life and work of the church*, first printed as an essay in *The Quarterly Review*, and reprinted in 1878 (the year after he had come to Cornwall), Benson developed this thinking concerning the importance of the cathedral for the revival of a divine spirit that had guided the middle ages.³⁷ He did so by emphasising, not just its importance, but also the centrality of the cathedral, which he saw as the hub

around which everything moved. Whereas Pugin had emphasised monasticism as a central, beneficial part of the mediaeval world order with which he contrasted the present, Benson asserted at the start of his thesis: "that the Cathedral, as an institution universal throughout Europe, had distinct and progressive functions in relation to society and polity is probably not open to question. For many centuries the extension and augmentation of its system and resources were promoted by governments, by potentates, by landowners, and by the Christian masses. It battled long with monasticism. Puritanism assailed it in vain as the stronghold of church order". Already we see in Benson a hint of an Anglican *via media* traced back to the era of the Reformation, where the Cathedral could be assailed by both Catholic monasticism and by a more extreme form of Protestantism espoused by puritan divines, thus achieving a midway position between the two. Though cathedrals resisted both, according to Benson, they still became "sources of revenue to mercantile dignitaries, the children's children of the adherents of successive governments. Thus they forfeited all sympathy. They forgot their traditions, their origin and their design".³⁸

If the appointment of relatives of senior clerics and politicians to lucrative cathedral canonries was one problem that 19th-century cathedrals faced, the second problem was that "Universities (as distinguished from the Theological Faculty in Universities) have been made to surrender all special obligation of work for the Church of England". This gave added force to Benson's belief that the cathedral should be a centre for the education of the community around it. "It is difficult to realise the amount and diversity of interests, which centred in this now quiet retreat.

- i. There was then, first the School of Architecture... maintaining communications with the progressive architects of the continent, radiating adaptations through the diocese, and influencing far and wide the taste of the country in every department of art.
- ii. There was the School of music, which, under the headship of the Precentor... had offshoots... in every parish of the diocese...
- iii. There was the still more important School of Grammar under the Chancellor. He is responsible for all the grammar schools of the city and county, and all the appointments made to them, save only singing-schools, prebendal schools and (how modern an exception!) those schools that are maintained by local managers.
- iv. The cathedral was also, Benson thought, the seat of Divinity School and the 'headquarters' of the archdeacons.
- v. Lastly, we come to the Cathedral Service; the sole function of the great institution which was limited to its own walls".

Such were the conclusions of Benson's research into the subject based on a detailed survey of cathedral statutes, and particularly the statutes of Lincoln Cathedral. "Its scope and aims might be summed in three words 'science, law, religion,'...the history of an early English bishop of that age – himself a man of the people – is often a narrative of successful war against nobles, courts and popes. This emphasised the identity of his interests with the interests of the commons". Benson further argued that the life and identity of the Cathedral were dependent not just one man, the Bishop, but on the centrality of a Cathedral chapter: "we have arrived at the conclusion that, while other important functions are 'accidental', the 'essential' character of the institution is conciliar".³⁹ The use of language, which Benson employs at this point, of

'accidents' and an 'essential' character of an institution is very close to Thomist sacramental language of substance and accidents. Indeed, for Benson, the Cathedral appeared to have a sacramental character, revealing the divine presence, power and character in the life of the community. It did not, however, have the territory all to itself. The power of the secular institutions was growing in importance through the 19th century, and so was the power of Methodism in Cornwall. An increasing diversity of religious practice throughout Britain was also taking place.

If Pugin was the inspiration behind much religious Gothic architecture, Ruskin was particularly influential among architects, like Alfred Waterhouse, who designed Gothic buildings for non-religious purposes. Ruskin was not an advocate of Catholic architecture or Catholic society, as Pugin was. Ruskin's categories were primarily moral. "Buildings talked morally to Ruskin because he was convinced that a society's dominant beliefs about the order of things shaped it at every level... Architecture was thus the embodiment of the Polity, Life, History, and Religious faith of nations".⁴¹ Although Ruskin advocated a uniform national architecture, he suggested four possible styles: Pisan Romanesque, the early Gothic of the Western Italian republics, Venetian Gothic in its purest development and English earliest decorated (the style in use shortly after 1300) "perhaps enriched by some mingling of decorative elements from the exquisite decorated Gothic of France".⁴⁰

Alfred Waterhouse read Ruskin's seminal books *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* and *The Stones of Venice* at the time of their publication and they greatly influenced him. *The Builder*, which had generally praised Pearson's designs, had also been supportive of Waterhouse's design for Manchester

Town Hall in "the style of modernised and municipalised Gothic, which Mr Waterhouse to a great extent invented or developed, for himself". Dellheim comments: "if the Gothic revival was, in its early phases, largely the cultural preserve of upper class Anglican England, in its last phases it assumed a distinctively, if not exclusively, northern accent". Among the neo-Gothic public buildings constructed in industrial Lancashire and Yorkshire from approximately 1860 to 1890, were the Bradford Wool Exchange, Bradford Town Hall, Barrow in Furness Town Hall and Middlesbrough Town Hall. Gothic architecture became fashionable because it could adapt to contemporary functional requirements (such as the heating system of Manchester Town Hall) and was historically associated with the development of national, religious and commercial life. In a complete antithesis to Benson's vision for Truro Cathedral, Manchester Town Hall, one commentator argued, could "best be described as 13th century Gothic suffused with the feeling and spirit of the present age. It is a successful vindication of the claim of Gothic to be capable of serving all the purposes of the practical life of the 19th century".⁴²

Ruskin believed that "any essential beauty possessed by a work of art... is... based on its honoured permanence. The civic elite of the Victorian cities created an urban fabric, which would last for generations". And as they directed their wealth into transforming the face of the industrial city, the Victorian merchant princes were more determined than ever to cast it afresh in their own image. They might build in Gothic but the inspiration came from mediaeval mercantile states and renaissance city states like Pisa or Venice. Even if their clients were motivated by differing ideals, the architects could very often bridge the gap between these ideals. George Gilbert Scott, whose work was largely, but by no means exclusively ecclesiastical, argued that "the mediaeval builders

had no notion of the seats of commerce and manufacture being given up to unsightliness... We find, therefore, that their warehouses were as nobly treated of any other of their buildings."⁴³

The second challenge to Benson's vision came from Methodism in Cornwall and from other denominations, generally, within the British Isles. Even as a building, the cathedral could not fulfil the ambitions of some, that it would be a church for all Cornish people – the suspicion between church and chapel at the time was too great for that to happen. The relationship between Anglican and Methodist churches in Cornwall will be considered in a later chapter and referred to in Appendix 2. The fact that all denominations were building churches, along with the many large civic projects that were being undertaken, made Benson's vision unattainable. The cathedral could not be the centre of the only circle of influence for Victorian society. In the mediaeval era, churches, often built to a high specification, built to serve predominantly the needs of the town rather than the church, sprang up in cathedral cities like Salisbury and Wells, and in towns like Beverley dominated by Beverley Minster. St Mary's Beverley, St Thomas's Salisbury and St Cuthbert's Wells ensured that the ecclesiastical authorities were not to have things all their own way and that civic money, power and prestige also mattered. In the 19th century civic pride gained momentum as many powers of local government once vested in the church became the preserve of county, town and parish councils.⁴⁴ Added to that problem, making it impossible for one group to have power at the expense of all the others, was the plethora of churches, Catholic and Protestant, all seeking a niche within contemporary society. A writer in *The Builder* magazine suggested that patrons and architects were bound to have very different ideas and tastes – uniformity of style was possible only in autocratic societies where it could be

imposed, or insulated societies which knew no other styles. The heterogenous Victorian society could not be represented by any one architectural style. Neo-Gothic as advocated by Benson and implemented by Pearson was one among a number of styles, including different forms of Gothic advocated by Ruskin, that were also in evidence. Benson's attempt to make the cathedral and the cathedral system all-embracing, making itself responsible for so much, taking so much under its umbrella, had to give way to a more pluralistic society that was emerging in late Victorian Britain. But it did not stop Benson trying to implement this system and the degree to which he succeeded in the task of practical implementation, as Truro cathedral began to be built, will be considered in the next chapter.

Footnotes to chapter 4

¹ Philip Barrett, Barchester: *English Cathedral Life in the Nineteenth century*, (London, 1993), chapters 5, 13, especially p.302; see also Samuel Bickersteth, *Life and Letters of Edward Bickersteth, Bishop of South Tokyo* (London, 1899), p.475 See Appendix B 'Canons of the Nippon Sei Kokwai' for an attempt by a colonial bishop to provide statutes for a new diocese.

² Barrett, (1993), pp.133, 143-4, especially p.143

³ Lord Hotham and the Fourth and Fifth Baronets Sir Tatton Sykes built and restored churches prolifically in East Yorkshire, where Pearson received many of his early commissions. Pearson received commissions from Lord Hotham (South Dalton) and Hotham's land agent (Scorborough). The fifth baronet was the most prolific of the three, financing work on 17 churches between 1866 and 1913. His preferred architect was George Edmund Street, who designed or

restored fourteen East Riding churches. See tilesoc.org.uk/tile_gazetteer/Yorkshire; Wikipedia.org/wiki/Sykes_Churches_Trail

4. The ceremony of laying the cornerstone of St John's Penzance took place on June 23 1880. Bishop Benson did not attend, but sent a letter to be read out, stressing the urgent need for a Cathedral Church. In a commonplace book (DPP 179, 2/2) containing press cuttings of the event, there is a certain embarrassment that the two building projects coincided. The Vicar was quoted as saying earlier that he "did not want to throw cold water on the cathedral scheme." On the day of the ceremony, the Vicar, Prebendary Philip Hedgeland, enthusiastically supported Benson's call for a Cathedral by saying in his speech: "I will add that the Bishop of Truro, of all the bishops of the English Church, is probably the one who has the most vivid conception of the part which the cathedral body or chapter should take in promoting and in leading the whole diocesan work. He has thought about it; he has written about it; he has his theories about it (which, indeed, are not so much theories as revivals of the original idea;)...It may very well be that to him has been given to resuscitate in our land the position and work of cathedrals and chapters, and to wipe away the reproach which has for a long time, at least in popular estimation, attached to these bodies, as being stations of dignified ease and of emolument, but not of works. We are sure that in the hands of the present Bishop of Truro, a cathedral church, as well as a cathedral staff, will exist only for the good of the diocese". The Rural Dean reinforced this message by praising Benson's person. "The Bishop had his soul in his work, was an eminent scholar and theologian, with a grasp of mind and heart enabling him to sympathise with all the varying schools that existed within the church". The stages by which St John's came to be built can be seen as process gradually gaining momentum over a period of time

before, during and after Benson's time in Cornwall. *The London Gazette* of 14 June 1864 reported that an annual grant of £148 would be provided by the Church Commissioners. Within Penzance, St Paul's was assigned a district in 1864, St Mary's in 1871 and finally St John's a district of 4019 inhabitants in 1882. St John's was consecrated in October 1881 and was free from debt for work already completed by January 1883. Although the church could hold the 600 people it was built to accommodate, the walls of the nave were not pointed outside or plastered inside. Only the foundations of the tower were laid. The completion of the design of the architect J. P. St Aubyn was estimated at £1600 more and the committee handed over the balance of just over £16 to the Vicar and Church wardens. More pressing was the need to obtain an endowment for the church, which came in 1884. This enabled a Vicar of St John's to be appointed on a stipend of £200 p.a. (DDP 179 2/2/24). The successful outcome of the building project for St John's Penzance shows the struggle to raise money, the difficulty of building the tower, but nevertheless the loyalty shown to Benson himself and the determination to support the Cathedral project.

⁵ Report in the *West Briton* of the Diocesan Conference 2 November 1882 p.7 c.2. "Rev W. E. Bird asked Canon Mason if he could give further information in relation to street preaching in Truro and the outdoor mission on the North coast". Mason confirmed: "a three weeks out of door preaching tour on the north coast. Street preaching in Truro has also been carried out on every Sunday since April, which for weeks has been largely left in the hands of laymen. The people who attended these (meetings) were very attentive and came in very fair numbers both to the street corners and in the mission room". c.f. Benson's diary entry of 20 September, 1895. (Bodleian Library Oxford MS Benson adds. 15) where Benson states that he had a "serious talk with Canon Carter on Parochial

Missions and their gradual sliding into Quiet days and easier sentimental work, instead of the hard and rugged conversion of rough sinners".

⁶ For further information on 'Tin Tabernacles' see Ian Smith *Tin Tabernacles: Corrugated Iron Mission Halls, Churches and Chapels of Britain* (London, 2004) and A Mornement and F Holloway, *Corrugated Iron: Building on the Frontier* (Lincoln, 2007).

⁷ For the competition to build the Houses of Parliament in Elizabethan or Gothic design see the [bbc.co.uk/history/Trail/church and state/Westminster new](http://bbc.co.uk/history/Trail/church%20and%20state/Westminster%20new).

⁸ According to Charles Dellheim, *The Face of the Past: The Preservation of the Mediaeval Inheritance in Victorian Britain*, (Cambridge 2008), p.139: "The Queen Anne style dominated the English imagination in the last decades of the 19th century". Dellheim argues that Street's Law Courts (1874-1882) and Waterhouse's Manchester Town Hall (1868-1877) represented the culmination of secular neo-Gothic architecture. Queen Anne style was largely a style for secular architecture. For instance, when an open architectural competition took place in 1892 for a County Hall to be built in Wakefield, the instructions to competitors noted that "the style of architecture will be left to the competitors but the Queen Anne or Renaissance School of Architecture appears suited to an old town like Wakefield". This was four years after Wakefield diocese was formed and its parish church in Gothic style became a cathedral. Pearson was engaged to design a new east end to the cathedral, completed by his son, Frank in 1903-05. (wikipedia.org/wiki/Queen_Anne_Style_architecture; wakefieldcathedral.org.uk). Pearson's later work included the design in the neo-Jacobean style. See *The Blue Guide Oxford and Cambridge* (fifth ed. London, 1999) pp.117, 183, and especially p.205 (Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge).

⁹. For Benson's less than harmonious relationship with George Gilbert Scott, see David Newsome, *A History of Wellington College* (London, 1959) p.111: "(For the chapel) the governors had originally thought in terms of £2500 but Scott was an expensive architect at the height of his powers and the eventual cost to the college was in the region of £9000... Scott's original plan... was accepted by the governors. Benson was horrified when he saw the plan".

¹⁰. David B Brownlee, *The Law Courts: The Architecture of George Edmund Street*, (Cambridge, Mass 1984).

¹¹. Anthony Quiney, *John Loughborough Pearson*, (New Haven, 1979), p.134.

¹². David Lloyd Chapter on 'John Loughborough Pearson' in (ed. Jane Fawcett) *Seven Victorian Architects*, (London, 1976), pp.68, 82.

¹³. Simon Jenkins, *England's Thousand Best Churches*, (London, 2000), pp.342-343.

¹⁴. TCM 56/1/1.

¹⁵. TCM 56/1/4.

¹⁶. TCM 41/1/1.

¹⁷. TCM 41/1/1.

¹⁸. TCM 41/1/1.

¹⁹. David Lloyd (1976), p.68.

²⁰. For the disagreement with William Morris see *The Antiquary*, vol. 33, 1897, p.59 www.archiveorgl/stream/antiquary,33,slniala-djvutext.

²¹. See photograph in Appendix 3.

²². Quiney, p.291.

²³. Lloyd, (1976), p.75.

²⁴. Henry Thorold, *Cathedrals, Abbeys and Priories*, (London, 1986), pp.248, 250.

²⁵. Quiney p.145.

²⁶ For further information on the golden section, also known as the golden ratio, see Mario Livio, *The Golden Ratio: the story of Phi, the World's Most Astonishing Number* (Broadway, 2003).

²⁷. Quiney p.145, quoting *The Builder*, issue 42, p 508 (1882). Concerning the height-to-width ratio which forms the subject of the complaint, see Lloyd, (1976), 75, who sees as characteristic of "the early mediaeval Northern British tradition... (that) there is a marked emphasis on height in relation to width".

²⁸. Caradoc Peters, *The Archaeology of Cornwall: The Foundations of our Society* (Fowey, 2005) p.183.

²⁹. Quiney p.295. Street was noted for his intransigence. See David B Brownlee: "*To agree would be to commit an Act of Artistic Suicide*": *G E Street, the Office of Works, and the Revision of the Law Courts Design*. Lecture 17/3/1979 to the Society of Architectural Historians, Boston, New England chapter. www.dept.arth.upenn.edu/~dbrownle/cv.html.

³⁰. C. M. Smart Jr, *Muscular Churches: Ecclesiastical Architecture of the High Victorian Period*, (University of Arkansas, 1989), p.77.

³¹. Simon Jenkins, *England's Thousand Best Churches*,(London 2000), p.395.

³². Quiney, pp.39-40.

- ³³ Tristan Hunt, *Building Jerusalem: the Rise and Fall of the Victorian City*, (London, 2004), p.80.
- ³⁴ A. C. Benson, *Life*, vol. 2 p.148.
- ³⁵ Michael Hall, "What do Victorian Churches Mean? Symbolism and Sacramentalism in Anglican Church Architecture 1850 – 1870 ". *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 59, no 1 (March 2000) pp.78 – 95; David B. Brownlee "The first High Victorians: British Architectural Theory in the 1840s." *Architectura*,15, (1985), pp.33 – 46.
- ³⁶ Hunt, (2004), pp.78 –9.
- ³⁷ E. W. Benson, "Cathedral Life and Cathedral Work." *Quarterly Review*, vol. 130, no. 259 January 1871, pp.225 – 255.
- ³⁸ E. W. Benson, *The Cathedral: Its necessary place in the life and work of the church*, (London, 1878), pp.1,2,5.
- ³⁹ E. W .Benson, (1878), pp.29 – 30, 33, 117 –118, 106.
- ⁴⁰ Chris Brooks, *The Gothic Revival*, (London, 1999), p.299.
- ⁴¹ S. A. Smith, Chapter in (ed. Fawcett) *Seven Victorian Architects on Alfred Waterhouse* London, 1976, p.109.
- ⁴² Charles Dellheim: *The Face of the Past: the Preservation of the Mediaeval Inheritance in Victorian Britain* (Cambridge, 2004) pp.137- 8.
- ⁴³ Hunt, (2004), p.178.

⁴⁴. e.g. J. Morris, *Religion and Urban Change: Croydon 1840 – 1940*, (Suffolk, 1992) and J. Cox, *The English Churches in a Secular Society: Lambeth 1870-1930*,(Oxford, 1982).

Chapter 5

“WE HAVE A FREE FIELD FOR EXPERIMENT”: BENSON’S VISION FOR A NEW TYPE OF CATHEDRAL Part 2.

“A church is a system like the solar. The Cathedral in the centre must flame out light and heat. The parishes have their own self-repeating orbits very round and crossing their paths in all directions and waking them all up, there must be comets as well as planets. And the comets are the missionaries”.¹ So wrote Benson in his diary entry dated April 25, 1882.

At the heart of Benson’s strategy for Truro Cathedral was the desire to build a cathedral. In this project two long-held ambitions came together. Firstly, long before coming to Cornwall, Benson was interested in the work of cathedrals and how that work could be brought back to life alongside the various other revivals, evangelical, catholic, diocesan and in central organisation, which took place in the Victorian church. Benson wrote about it, lectured on it, and at Lincoln Cathedral (his appointment immediately prior to becoming Bishop of Truro), he belonged to a cathedral chapter as residentiary canon. This long-held interest in the work of a modern cathedral coincided with the practical necessity that Benson faced when he arrived. The inadequacy of the old Parish Church of St Mary’s Truro (the site on which the present cathedral is largely built) to function as a proto-Cathedral was evident. Many newly-created Victorian dioceses were able to elevate a large parish church (Wakefield), minster (Ripon and Southwell) or former abbey (St Albans) to fulfil the new purpose of a cathedral. Once the decision had been taken to make Truro, and not Bodmin or possibly St Columb

Major, the cathedral city, there was no building of adequate size to become a parish church cathedral, without significant extension of the building.

This did not necessarily mean that a new cathedral, almost from scratch (the old south aisle of St Mary's Church was retained) was the inevitable consequence. There were other options available, as we shall see. But the possibility presented itself to Benson that a brand-new cathedral built in what the Camden Society of Benson's youth would approve of as the right architectural style of neo-Gothic could be the best option. If Benson could persuade others that the option of a new cathedral was so preferable to other possibilities that it justified the colossal amount of money that would be needed to fund the building, this vision could become a reality. This vision of an architecturally pure building would therefore come together with his vision for a modern cathedral at the centre of the diocesan solar system, a centre for mission, good liturgy, preaching and music, and a centre for the educational work of the diocese. One objectionable consequence of so much church money going to fund so few canonries was that it deprived the wider church of the money that instead went to fund a comfortable lifestyle for the individual canons. This money, Benson believed, could be used in a variety of ways which could benefit the wider church more. Benson's new canons would, if necessary, earn far less than their counterparts in the older cathedrals. Equally importantly the money given to Truro Cathedral would be used to promote mission, education and good liturgical practice throughout the diocese.

Innovation may be said to be the watchword in all these three areas of Benson's work. At first sight this might seem ironic because Benson was a natural conservative. He had an exalted conception of the value of the past, believing that mediaeval examples of sanctity, the holy men and women who

had given their names to Cornwall, and mediaeval excellence in architecture provided norms for Victorian society to follow. But it was actually the blending of the old and the new that was at the heart of Benson's creative vision. It was said of another remarkable schoolmaster (who became first Bishop of Southwell, then containing not just Nottinghamshire but Derbyshire within its diocese), Dr Ridding of Winchester where Martin White Benson went to school, that the blending of the old and the new was his most remarkable achievement. Winchester College was "a place where everything was antique and nothing was antiquated".² The same could be said of Edward White Benson. The most striking innovation liturgically was the service of nine lessons and carols which Benson wrote as a festival service for Christmas Eve at the new Cathedral. Although modified by the Dean of King's College Cambridge to include the famous bidding prayer and St John unfolding the mystery of the incarnation as the final lesson, nevertheless what Benson devised for that first Christmas in the wooden cathedral bears a striking similarity to what is still normative. Most of the nine lessons (certainly the first seven) are still in use.³ The format of the service is what is often called 'the hymn sandwich' where the hymns come between readings and sometimes prayers. The fame of the service of nine lessons and carols, especially as sung by the choir of King's College, Cambridge has spread throughout the world. For many people Christmas begins with that service held during the late afternoon of Christmas Eve. Yet the hymn sandwich may be described as a quintessentially Methodist liturgical form. In the words of the distinguished Methodist scholar Stephen Dawes, "it is fashionable in some circles to dismiss the traditional Methodist Sunday service as a 'hymn sandwich', but that is actually quite a good title for what can be, when it is designed properly, an excellent menu for a certain sort of service of

worship; and traditional Methodists can usually tell whether or not the menu has been carefully prepared or merely thrown together”.⁴ *The Oxford History of Christian Worship* dates the rise of “what is often termed the hymn sandwich” to the late 19th century when this style of worship came to include four or more hymns.⁵ So at the same time as this was becoming a common form of worship within the Methodist church, Benson took the underlying structure and made of it something quintessentially Anglican.

As for the Cathedral becoming the centre of mission, Benson wasted no time in appointing A. J. Mason with a view to taking on the role as diocesan missionary. Mason set out his views at the first Diocesan Conference on 26 October 1877: “if the object of a Mission is permanently to deepen faith then a Mission differs from that which is often confounded with it, a Revival. The immediate object of the Revival is convulsively to stir feeling.... The object of the Mission is, I repeat, permanently to deepen faith. The Revival expects the conviction or conversion to take place in the meeting itself... We expect the main struggle with God... to take place, as Jacob’s did, when all the company is departed”.⁶ The mission should have a public and diocesan character, not one that was “local and private”: “We ought to handle missions rather from a diocesan than a parochial point of view. We parish priests feel too much... that we are the supreme pastors of our flocks, responsible directly and only to our Lord Christ and his Father, at liberty to feed, teach, govern them, manage the services for them, according to our own wills. We happen to have a Bishop over us... But his office (in our ordinary thought) is not pastoral in the same sense as our own. He stands to his clergy in much the same relation as the Archbishop of his province does to him; he is an officer set to look after us only, quite extra-parochial, and presiding over a loose aggregate of clergy, who constitute a

factitious unity called a Diocese. But this is the false theory of the system of the Catholic Church. The real unit is the Diocese; it is the parish which is the factitious unit, just like the district which a Rector assigns to an assistant curate. The Bishop is the actual pastor of every soul in his Diocese, and not merely the legal supervisor of a certain number of clergy".⁷ It is difficult to overstate the significance of the vision that Mason was putting forward. Such an organisation of scattered clergy needed a focal point – which was to be the Cathedral. "We have a free field for experiment such as no other Diocese can boast (with the exception perhaps of our younger sister St Albans). There are no antient (sic) Canonries in Truro, occupied by antient (sic) Canons who might resent the intrusion into their choir and chapter house of a representative of new work".⁸ A college of Diocesan Missioners at Truro Cathedral was proposed by Mason under the direction of a Canon who "might well be expected to image the breadth and mansidedness of the great Communion to which we belong".⁹ The mission may have had the whole Anglican Communion throughout the world as its image, but A J Mason made it clear that it was to be focused on Cornwall. "Our aim shall be, I think to realise in Cornwall this Diocesan unity as much as possible, and to render the Diocese in every possible way self-sufficient. There are (thank God), a great number of holy and eloquent preachers outside the Diocese whom we should gladly welcome to hold missions in Cornwall ... but from whom (I mean what ecclesiastical authority) do they derive their Mission to us? According to strict church order these men have no Mission to the Cornish church".¹⁰

A. J. Mason gives to the Cornish church an identity which makes it strongly autonomous. "I believe it would be for many reasons better that, as a rule, the Missioners should not be strangers to the Diocese. It would be the best and

most regular plan if each Diocese could have its own staff of Missioners, who should be recognised by all as the authorised Missioners of the Diocese, who should be appointed in some orderly manner and bear the Bishop's distinct commission for that very purpose".¹¹ Even though Mason specifically says that Missioners should not be "strangers" to the diocese, his sense of diocesan autonomy makes it possible for him to add " unless the Cornish church through its Bishop distinctly accepts them and commissions them as part (for the time being) of its own organisation".¹²

Mason went on to define what his understanding was of what the work of mission involved. He identified nine areas: 1) the conducting of missions where invited; 2) lecturing on subjects of importance to church and society; 3) taking services in special seasons like Holy Week, Ember Weeks and Advent; 4) preparing for confirmation and communions; 5) taking charge of parishes sometimes; 6) itinerant preaching tours including preaching out of doors or elsewhere than the parish church; 7) inspecting the places proposed to hold missions and to get the work deferred if necessary; ("often much harm is done by sudden and ill-advised missions") 8) superintending all the year's preparation for coming missions; and finally 9) editing "really good pamphlets, and tracts, catechisms and other popular papers". Mason said in summary that the work he proposed was something like that of the evangelisation society. This society would be affiliated to the cathedral through the Canon Missioner and his staff of helpers.¹³

All this was proposed within six months of Benson's arrival. Not only was the idea of a Canon Missioner a new idea that no other diocese or cathedral had tried before. The definition of the role to make it both distinct from what Mason and Benson thought of as Methodist revival, and yet open to Methodist

ideas such as preaching outdoors, was also ground-breaking for the Cathedral and indeed the Church of England. The underpinning of the vision, implicitly rather than explicitly stated, may be summarised in the one word – ‘centralisation’. Parishes did not have autonomy to undertake their own initiatives in relation to mission. The diocese, its authority centralised in the person of the Bishop who had delegated significant authority to his Canon Missioner, could inspect the plans proposed and even have them deferred. Mason claims for the diocese (which, with the exceptions of the Isles of Scilly and a small number of parishes in Devon, was virtually coterminous with the county of Cornwall) an autonomy which he denies to individual parishes. He does so in the name of the Cornish church. There was much in Mason’s proposals to the first diocesan conference that won ready acceptance. But whether Cornish people were willing to come under the centralised authority of Cathedral, Canon Missioner and Bishop was less certain.

Mason gave his speech to the first Diocesan Conference at the age of 26. It is difficult to regard his speech as anything other than having the tacit or open agreement of Benson himself. Mason had attended Trinity College, Cambridge where Benson had himself gone as an undergraduate. Like Benson, Mason had won a University prize and had become a fellow of the college. He was ordained deacon at Lincoln Cathedral in 1874, when Benson was the residentiary canon. Mason enjoyed a distinguished career in Cambridge, where he returned shortly after leaving Truro Diocese in 1884 (he became successively Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity in 1895 and Master of Pembroke College in 1903). From Cambridge, Mason moved to Canterbury where Benson had made him a residentiary Canon while he was Archbishop of Canterbury. It was Mason who wrote Benson’s entry in the Dictionary of

National Biography. Mason's whole ecclesiastical life from the first days at Cambridge and Lincoln Cathedral to the last days at Canterbury Cathedral was intertwined with Benson's. There is very little possibility that he spoke other than his master's voice.

In Benson's own speech to the Diocesan Conference the following year in October 1878, he sought to address matters of fact, dealing with the practical work of the previous year. These successes included the formation of the archdeaconry of Bodmin and the appointment of the first Archdeacon of Bodmin, the Venerable Reginald Hobhouse. Secondly, the Act forming the Chapter of Truro had been passed, "and a very important gain obtained by it for Truro over the old foundation was that it gave power to annex diocesan duties to the stalls. By this provision they have been enabled to appoint a Canon Missioner and a principal for the Divinity School, whose title by courtesy is Chancellor, and had the Bishop known that the Archdeacon of Cornwall would not have been present, he might have used the word with impunity... Already (there were) seventeen young men preparing for holy orders under his care".¹⁴

Thus Benson introduced Canon Whitaker, who was another young protégé, to work alongside Mason, in the field of education. In a note in Edward White Benson's own hand he defined their responsibilities as follows: "that such Organisation be Diocesan that under the Bishop the studies of any man employed by it be under the supervision of Canon Whittaker (sic); their work under that of Canon Mason".¹⁵ The employment referred to was that of lay preachers, trained by Canon Whitaker, working in the parishes of the diocese. Much discussion took place at the Diocesan Conference of 1878 concerning the nature of Cornish parishes with their scattered populations. Canon Thynne

presented a paper on Church Ministrations in Hamlets. Commenting on the widely-scattered populations in some of the Cornish country parishes, Thynne asked how the parish priests do the work of evangelisation by themselves: “they might kill themselves in trying... but here on the Cornish moor... Single-handed, they had no more chance than the shepherd without comrade, boy or dog to gather in his sheep from the sides of Rowtor (applause)”.¹⁶ Thynne linked this widely held view with an attitude towards Methodism which was not so well-received. He proceeded to extol the good done by the mendicant friars in the Middle Ages, and professed to be able to see nothing but bad in the preaching of Dissenting laymen in the present day. “The gospel is not preached in these chapels,” he said, “it cannot be”.¹⁷ The vicar of St Mewan, Rev. G L Woolcombe “very much disagreed with Canon Thynne on one point. He thought they owed a deep debt of gratitude to the Nonconformists for coming forward at a time when there was deadness in the church and saving this county from becoming absolutely heathen (applause). When he spoke of the Nonconformists he tried to speak of them with the greatest respect and charity... they had done their best in carrying on the work of Christ. His own parish St Mewan was one very much of the description the Canon had described. There were not ten houses within sight of the Church; but a mile or two off there were two or three rather large villages; and, feeling that if the people would not come to the Church they must take the Church to the people, he had built a mission church in one of those hamlets with money very fortunately left for the purpose. The result had been very satisfactory. He found that it was very much better to preach in such places without a form... There was a great need for lay help in such Mission chapels, and he should therefore venture to second Canon Thynne’s proposal. He hoped that they might be able to show those who had borne the burden and

heat of the day how beautiful the service of the Church of England was".¹⁸ Canon Thynne's proposal was that lay preachers should be licensed to the deanery and able to preach "anywhere within this circuit of parishes, provided he had leave of the incumbent".¹⁹ This accorded with Edward White Benson's views in his handwritten note to himself "that the subdivision be ruridecanal: that all questions of principle or general arrangement be settled by the Rural Deanery in chapter assembled".²⁰

It is interesting that a High Churchman and avowed anti-Methodist like Canon Thynne should use the word 'circuit' in his proposal to make deaneries central to the organisation of local preachers. The 'circuit' was crucial to the organisation of Methodism and, at its best, gave the minister oversight of several chapels. Thynne's use of the term indicates that an enhanced role for Deaneries within Truro Diocese may well, implicitly at least, have received inspiration from a Methodist source. In the following year's (1879) Diocesan Conference there was a presentation of a paper entitled "The constitution of the ruridecanal conferences with the Lord Bishop, and their relation to the Diocesan Conference" by Canon Cornish. Some attempt was therefore being made to make the Deanery a unit of administration analogous to a Methodist circuit. Another quasi-Methodist aspect of this work of the Rural Deanery was the attempt to make lay people important within the process. In the words of Benson's handwritten note, "all details by any body appointed by the Rural Deanery to consist of an equal number of clergy and laymen elected by the clergy of the Rural Deanery with the Rural Dean as ex officio chairman".²¹ The clergy voted for the laity, the laity did not elect from their own ranks and laywomen, even for someone who promoted women's education like Benson, seem not to have been considered. But it was a start. Benson expressed the

hope “that where practicable there should be in each Rural Deanery one or more homes, where men employed under this organisation who have no other home may live cheaply, and in common, under proper supervision and with some assistance in their studies. A house, rent-free, is offered in Callington where four at least of such helpers can be accommodated under the supervision of one of the curates of the Parish”.²² It was this programme that Canon Whitaker was to supervise from his vantage point as prospective Canon Chancellor. To be sure, some helpers and lay preachers trained for ordination. Ironically Truro Diocese faced the same dilemma that John Wesley faced when he broke with Anglican Order and ordained his own priests for the American colonies, even though he was not a Bishop. If the importance of receiving Holy Communion was emphasised, clergy were needed to celebrate and administrate it. Nevertheless, the work in origin had its roots in the need to provide lay workers for the hamlets of Cornwall. Gradually, the lay people of the Diocese gained their own representation and Deanery Chapters of clergy developed into Ruridecanal Synods. The 1879 Diocesan Conference centred on this need. The Deanery Synod was “to comprise all clergy of the Deanery, churchwardens of every parish and ecclesiastical district, and one layman for each parish, elected by incumbents and churchwardens”.²³

Whitaker was to feature strongly in these aims, because Benson thought that it was through education that lay people were to have the wherewithal to contribute to the work of the Church in the Diocese. There was a parallel in Church life with what happened in national life through the Education Acts of 1870 and 1880. These Acts sought to ensure that every child was educated and that this education would either be free or as cheap as possible. A literate laity, educated in religion at both Board Schools and National Schools to at least an

elementary standard, would, Benson believed, be able to take its part within the governance of the Church. The House of Commons had not been the House of Laity of the Church of England ever since the Great Reform Bill of 1832 had opened membership of Parliament to Christians of other denominations, or indeed none – as the eventual and celebrated arrival of the atheist Bradlaugh in the House of Commons attested. Whitaker, like Mason, had for a short while been an assistant master at Wellington College, when Benson was Headmaster. Like Mason, Whitaker had excelled at his exams at Cambridge and had become a fellow of his college, St John's. Knowledge, for Benson, needed to be based on sound scholarship. A C Benson related a story that took place when Benson was Archbishop of Canterbury. "A clergyman said injudiciously to him that preachers ought to talk more simply and intelligibly in the pulpit, just talk- that so much preparation was thrown away- that they ought to trust the Spirit more. The Archbishop very severely (replied), 'Well, it was never promised in the Bible that you should by the Holy Spirit be able to teach what you hadn't learnt.'" Benson told his curate J A Reeve that mission and education were interconnected: "Mason to spread the fire, Whitaker to broaden loving knowledge".²⁴ For the first few months of the diocese's existence, "Canon Mason was selected to begin the work of instruction". After the first Christmas (1877) "Whitaker came and Mason ceased to take part in the training of the students. Under Whitaker's rule students came rapidly; and at the beginning of the third term there were about twenty in residence. 'When Whitaker came he at once won our hearts', said J J Murley, who became Vicar of St Day".²⁵ The training college was called the "Scholae Cancellarii" or School of the Chancellor, the very same title as Benson had used when establishing a training college at Lincoln Cathedral (this became Lincoln Theological College).

It is no surprise that at Truro, as at Lincoln, the Cathedral or its predecessor church of St Mary's, was the place chosen to inaugurate the school – even before a Canon Chancellor had been appointed. J Isabell, who became rector of St Sennen, recalled: "I saw Dr Benson in the room behind the SPCK depot in the summer of 1877, and was, to all intents and purposes, admitted then and there as the first member of the projected Scholae Cancellarii. The Scholae was actually inaugurated in October of that year, by a celebration of the Holy Communion in the old St Mary's Church, followed by a solemn address by the Rev. A J Mason. The service was held at 7.30am on a very dark morning. The Church was dimly lighted, and I believe the congregation consisted only of the above named, together with Mrs Benney and Jackson the Verger. This somewhat weird scene has left an indelible impression on my memory".²⁶ Here we see something of the visionary aspect of Benson's personality, where he would put a structure in place, embryonically at least, even before he had the people to give substance to that structure. Though the hostel was the same place as where the lectures took place (10 Strangways Terrace, Truro), the vision was outward-looking from the first. "Parish work was undertaken by the students almost from the first, together with services and addresses at St Mary's Mission Chapel. Whitaker extended this work to Kenwyn, St Clement's, St John's etc. himself preaching the first sermon in the Fairmantle Street schoolroom".²⁷ Whitaker left Cornwall to return to duties at his Cambridge college in 1885, a year after Mason left Cornwall for a short-lived incumbency at All Hallows Barking, before returning to his Cambridge college. The work of the Scholae Cancellarii of Truro came to an end in 1900. "The growing sense of the importance of a stricter entrance examination, as well as the increasing desire for a previous university training have seriously diminished the number of

persons entering the smaller non-graduate colleges... from 1878 to 1900 about 145 clergyman, mostly non-graduates, but some graduates, were trained for their future work at Truro".²⁸

The first four men to complete the full two years' training sat the Preliminary Examination for Holy Orders in October 1879. Typically, with his love of ceremony, Benson devised a college hood "of black stuff trimmed with grey fur, and keenly to resent, years afterwards, a suggestion to alter it for some ambiguous type with a coloured edging".²⁹ Donaldson says of this episode in the life of Whitaker and, above all, Benson that Benson wanted to emphasise education and "specially the training of the clergy".³⁰ Despite the talk at Diocesan Conferences of Readers and Lay Workers, it does seem that the training became, at a fairly early stage in the life of the Scholae Cancellarii, training for clergy. How readers and lay workers were actually trained is harder to fathom, though the organisation of them as workers within the Deanery under the direction of the Rural Dean is clear. The 1882 report of Diocesan Conference speaks of eight readers trained, as well as fourteen ordained priest and deacon.

The greatest project of all was to build the Cathedral which would be the centre of mission, education and good liturgy for the diocese it served. Again, Benson conceptualised the Cathedral as an idea before he set to work seeing it built. He wrote a book entitled "The Cathedral - its necessary place in church life and work". He saw as a problem, the attitude of the old Vicar of St Mary's, Fox-Harvey who claimed that Benson had promised him a 'Residentiary Canonry', in compensation for relinquishing the advowson of St Mary's, "then when he perceived this at last to be simoniacal and hopeless, sank to declaring there was an understanding, beaten from that, and endeavoured to prove that it (was)

visibly the right thing so to reward him".³¹ Benson complained that Harvey had allied himself with Archdeacon Phillpotts, Chancellor of the diocese. Phillpotts had also wanted to see his great friend Vautier made a Canon. He had surrendered the vicarage at Kenwyn to Benson, in order for it to become Benson's home (to which Benson gave a Cornish name- Lis Escop). "To think of Vautier and to think of Harvey as our first pair of Residentiary Canons would be too comic if it were not first and foremost too sad. The title of my book is "The Cathedral – its necessary place in church life and work". To conceive of Vautier and Harvey in such positions in the new Cathedral, 'the working chapter', is to substitute for 'necessary' the words 'totally unnecessary'.³² The problem for Benson was not just the enormous practical problems of financing a building that would be suitable to be called Truro Cathedral. The question also had to be answered, what kind of Cathedral was Truro to be? Was it to be the continuation of an old-style Cathedral full of placemen and canons drawing enormous stipends and doing very little? Or was it to be the centre for education and mission with young clergy like Mason and Whitaker as its canons? In his private diary Benson complains of Fox Harvey that "among his other absurdities Harvey has maintained that in such cathedrals (i.e. those formed out of parish churches), the rector of the old Parish Church would retain "complete and absolute control over all services" so that excepting the Bishop, no one, no canon residentiary or other, no vicar, could preach or officiate without his consent, or except according to his directions; so that the whole cathedral site, buildings, chapter, statutes and Bishop are sure to have their end and fulfilment in the exaltation of the Rector".³³

The Archbishop (Tait) advised Benson to submit his problem before the Royal Commission on Cathedrals stating that he felt that there was "a want of

regulations in those cathedrals formed out of parish churches". Benson considered that the sitting of the Royal Commission on Cathedrals at this time was providential: "they have desired me to draft Statutes which (as they have told me) they hope to make useful for other cathedrals of similar foundation".³⁴ We see in Benson's private diary the personal clashes with other senior clerics which lay beneath his attempt to secure his vision for what the Cathedral was to represent. In Vautier's unwillingness to exchange livings (Kenwyn with a smaller living: "he will take nothing which is £10 less than Kenwyn"), Benson thought that "here we trace the sad influence of Phillpotts the Archdeacon – over a good-natured man not incapable of dealing with a smaller place. I must pray with David 'Lord turn the Counsel of Ahitophel into foolishness'.³⁵

It is important to remember that these battles were fought by Benson alongside the primary battle to choose the right architect, inspect the plans and fund the new Cathedral. Later, in the early 20th century church, the image of King David praying that the council of the wise Ahitophel be frustrated became central to the arguments between conservative and liberal Anglicans. The liberal Anglican symposium *Foundations* was parodied by Ronald Knox as "some loose stones", and Knox also parodied Dryden's poem "Absalom and Ahitophel" as "Absolute and a Bit of Hell!" But here the battles were about power. David was king of Israel at the time when its territory was at its greatest extent. Only because he had been a man of war was David not allowed to build the temple, a task undertaken by his son and successor Solomon. Benson sought to combine a very definite king-like authority, which rarely if ever brooked opposition, with the ability to actually build a Cathedral which would exemplify and embody his principles and ideas. Benson started as soon as he practically could to get the Cathedral project underway. The Diocesan Cathedral

Committee was formed by resolution of the first Diocesan Conference on 26 October 1877. A smaller executive committee, whittled down from the original fifteen, was formed out of the larger Cathedral Committee in April 1878. On 14 May 1878 Mr Chirgwin had conferred on him full power in consultation with Mr Smith to make contracts “for the purchase of land on the north of the Cathedral”.³⁶ The architect of the new building was chosen at a meeting on 20 August 1878.” The committee proceeded first to select the names of two of the architects whose names and drawings were before them with the view secondly of selecting one of the two by a second voting... On the first voting Mr Pearson and Mr Bodley were selected, Mr Pearson having obtained nine votes and Mr Bodley eight votes; – on the next (single) voting Mr Pearson obtained seven votes and Mr Bodley four votes”.³⁷ Bodley was a Victorian architect of the first rank. “In about 1870 another turning – point occurred when GF Bodley hitherto a notable practitioner in High Victorian Gothic, along with Thomas Garner (who, became his partner in 1871), led a return towards the use of English models usually of the latest period of decorated Gothic”.³⁸ Moreover, Bodley, along with J P St Aubyn and Mr Pullan had prepared drawings, St Aubyn’s being a cheap option extending St Mary’s Church by the addition of a very long nave. According to the minutes of the Cathedral committee, besides the aforementioned entries, there were also submitted drawings by Burges, J.O. Scott and Street to be examined by the executive committee. Burges and Street were also architects of the first rank, whose work included the interior of Cardiff Castle and St Mary Biscovey in Cornwall, respectively. Although both were younger than Pearson, they both died in 1881 so they certainly could not have seen the project through. What made the exclusion of Bodley more surprising was that he had prepared drawings of what he would design if given the

commission to build Truro Cathedral. This is acknowledged in the minutes of the committee: “thanks especially to St Aubyn, Bodley and Pullan for having prepared drawings, expressly with a view to the direction of the Cathedral at Truro”.³⁹ Bodley (1827 – 1907) outlived Pearson (1817 – 1897). So health issues for a project that could take decades to complete were probably not a factor in the decision not to appoint Bodley. The strengths of Pearson showed clearly from his early work in the East Riding of Yorkshire close to his native Durham. Pearson designed two churches near each other at Scarborough and South Dalton. South Dalton was designed for the third Lord Hotham, the sister church for Hotham’s agent and tenant, James Hall at a fifth of the cost that was spent at South Dalton. At South Dalton “even from afar, this famous spire is serenely proportioned... So careful is the engineering that there is no need of buttressing, nor is the geometrical shift from square tower to octagonal spire concealed by any parapet. Four enriched spirelets suffice to change the tempo”.⁴⁰ To his supporters Pearson was an architect who was supremely gifted in mathematics, whose strong, simple lines were aesthetically pleasing in a cerebral way. To his detractors, like Simon Jenkins writing about Scarborough’s “scholarly and decorative Gothic”, the criticism could be made that Pearson’s buildings lacked a lightness of touch: “even here, Pearson seemed unable to invest his churches with a lightness of touch, let alone with joy. For me, he is the Archdeacon Grantly of Victorian architects... (the building) stands to attention rather than dances”⁴¹.

Whichever architect was chosen, the money needed to finance the Cathedral placed an enormous burden on those who sought to find it. Pearson’s original estimate as presented in his report of 12 May 1879 was £35,000 for the cost of the choir with its aisles and substructure and connecting it to the south aisle of

the old St Mary's Church; £20,000 for the transepts and crossing up to the ridge of the roof; and £40,000 for nave, aisles, lower division of the Western Towers, the baptistery and the porches. For the costs to be kept down to this, still very considerable, level, Pearson went on to add: "in estimating... I have assumed that the stone to be used for the external dressings is not of a hard nature, but a full working stone, and for the inside with same stone little if anything harder than Bath stone".⁴² Pearson believed that an easily carved stone, like Bath stone, was cheaper than other possible stone, because fewer man hours would be used paying masons to work on it.

The search for stone predated Pearson's report of 1879. Pearson submitted his plans on 9 June 1879, and they were formally adopted on 4 August 1879.⁴³ A report from the West Briton dated 3 October 1879 indicates that "Mr Clark, surveyor, Truro has for some time past, been engaged in collecting specimens of building stone from several districts in the county, with a view to guide the architect of the Truro Cathedral in his selection of a suitable material. Among the elvans we noticed specimens from Newham near Truro, Wild Duck near Redruth, Creegbrowse, Seveock, Pentewan, and on the same vein to Grampound station; also from Withiel, near St Columb. Among the 'trap rocks' specimens of the potstone from Polyphant, near Launceston (the potstone is a very durable material and easily worked; it owes its name to the fact that pots can be easily hewn from it)". The report continues by mentioning greenstone from the Padstow district (Stepper Point and Cattleclew Point) and serpentine from the Lizard and concludes with a consideration of Cornish granite: "among others we noticed the free-working granite of the St Stephens district, the hard and durable stone from Mabe, Land's End, Luxulyan and last, but not least, are the specimens from the granite quarries of Tregonning Hill, near Breage".⁴⁴

To what extent were these hopes that Cornish stone would be used in the making of the Cathedral fulfilled? One of the last entries in the diary of James Bubb, clerk of works, before his untimely death in May 1882 gave a report of the progress of work on the new Cathedral up to that point. Part of it read: “the whole of the external ashlar work is from the granite quarries at Mabe, and the internal ashlar of the softer stone known as St Stephen’s granite. For the internal moulding work a variety of oolite will be used, together with the beautiful sage green from the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe’s quarry, the Tarten Down quarry near St Germans, and a beautiful pink elvan from quarries in the neighbourhood of Doublebois known as Lantewy stone”.⁴⁵ Superficially, at least, it appeared that many of the hopes expressed in the West Briton article of October 1878 had been fulfilled. What the paper called “the hard and durable stone from Mabe” was used, as was “the free-working granite of the St Stephen’s district.” Sage Greenstone was also used internally, not from Padstow, but from the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe’s estate and pink Lantewy stone from Doublebois would certainly have fitted in with the newspaper’s hopes. Despite the exceptional response within Cornwall and Devon to the launch of the Truro Cathedral fund, a lack of money was one reason which Pearson believed prevented the full realisation of the aim to create a Cornish Cathedral from Cornish stone. The two trustees of the Truro Cathedral Fund were the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe and the Bishop of Truro. Subscriptions received or promised as of June 1879 reached a total of just over £31,004. The list of large subscribers showed the support given to the project by the great and good of Cornwall and Devon, which included people connected with Cornwall but not living in it. £1000 was pledged or given by the following people: Lady Rolle (in lieu, of the promise of £500 – she had already given £40,000 to endow the diocese), Bishop Benson (in 10

instalments); the principal of the training college G W Whitaker (in 10 instalments); and R F Wise, who also donated the pulpit to the Cathedral (in 2 instalments). £500 was pledged or given by H R H The Prince of Wales (in five instalments), the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe (also in five instalments), Rev H Anstey, Viscount Falmouth, G L Bassett, Sir John St Aubyn Bart MP, Right Honourable Sir Montague Smith, Arthur P Willyams, Canon Phillpotts (Benson's friend from his schooldays, who preached at his consecration), Bishop Lightfoot of Durham, (a noted New Testament scholar); Lord Clinton and "a lady" per Rev R F Wise. Many other donations were given to the fund, including the advowson of St Mary's Church given by the Rector of the old church, Fox Harvey in lieu of £300 previously pledged. A number of other donations in the £200/£300 bracket were pledged including £200 each from the Dean of Exeter, the Bishop of Lincoln (Benson's former colleague) and T C Agar Robartes (in two instalments). John Michael Williams, Col Tremayne and Lord Robartes gave £300 each and C E T Hawkins and C H T Hawkins gave £250 each. Edward Carus Wilson and George C Hockin also provided £250 each and the Fortescue family £400. The Cathedral fund was well supported by the gentry families and by many other people besides, such as an anonymous lady who gave a gold locket with the Bible verse Exodus 35 verse 22 attached ("men and women alike came and freely brought clasps, earrings, finger-rings and pendants, gold ornaments of every kind, every one of them presenting a special gift of gold to the Lord."). Of the approximately £31,000 that had been raised by June 1879, £24,676 was new money, the remainder coming from the St Mary's restoration fund.

At the same time as this monumental sum of money was being collected, there was a fund for the Relief of the Distress in the County of Cornwall, which

raised up to 31 July 1879 the sum of £3360.12d . By far and away the largest donations were from Australia. Contributions came from the Cornwall Relief Fund Adelaide, South Australia, supervised by W C Bink, Mayor and Chairman, also GH Cargeeg Honorary Secretary. The Adelaide Fund sent a first instalment of £200 and a second instalment of £450. Also prominent was the contribution to the Cornwall Relief Fund from Kapunda, South Australia with J Rowett, Mayor and H Hine Honorary Secretary. In this case the first instalment was £105, the second instalment a further £125. Nine wealthy individuals in Cornwall each gave a hundred pounds to the appeal (Mount Edgcumbe, Sir John St Aubyn, Pendarves Vivian, G. L. Bassett, Lord Robartes, Edward Williams, T. S. Williams, Bolitho, Fortescue). These efforts were more than matched by what Cornish people called 'cousin Jacks' in Australia.⁴⁶ It is noticeable that Cornish expatriates in the new world did not contribute to the Cathedral fund anywhere near as generously as they did for the relief of distress in Cornwall. Occasional efforts were later made. For instance Edwin Allanson wrote to the editor of *The Churchman* on 6 February 1882: "Knowing that there must be a large number of Cornishman in the United States who would gladly contribute to the fund now being raised for the erection of the Truro Cathedral in the Diocese of Cornwall, England, I as a dear lover of my native county, hereby appeal to every Cornishman in the United States, and ask them to join me in raising such a sum (to be forwarded to Bishop Benson) as will do honour to Cornish-Americans. If every Cornishman would give five dollars to this fund, what a noble offering we could make to the dear old country which preserved for us the true faith in the early ages of corruption... I am a true Cornishman, Rector of Manchester parish, diocese of Virginia, USA".⁴⁷

The occasional remark by Bishop Benson in his diaries and elsewhere indicates that despite the growing influence of the worldwide Anglican Communion, relations between the Church of England and Anglican Churches of the new world were reasonably cordial without being very close. Colonial bishops spending too much time in the London clubs gave all bishops a bad name for not working hard enough. (In turn, colonial Bishops had complained to Benson that inadequate education in Cornwall had led Cornish expatriates not to join the Anglican Church abroad in large numbers).⁴⁸ “I’ve had a colonial Bishop lately, who has utterly sickened me... Walking about town and sauntering into the clubs, as half-unoccupied men, dressed like our bishops (who certainly work whether they think or not)... their status in society is unlike what it ought to be, and is generally lowering in men’s eyes to the clerical body”.⁴⁹

So money was needed for the Cathedral at a time when Cornwall was itself in distress and in need of relief. The sympathies of expatriate Cornish people, furthermore, seemed to sympathise with the latter plight rather than the former. In Anglican terms, the Australian Church and the Church of England were not particularly close, though the Church of England was seen as a good recruiting ground for the church in Australia. A J Mason was described as Bishop Benson’s “right-hand man on the spot”.⁵⁰ was considered for the post of the Bishop of Adelaide, and Brisbane Cathedral was modelled on Truro Cathedral with J L Pearson chosen as architect.⁵¹ When the fund (promised or given) had reached £35,000, the committee seeking money for the Truro Cathedral Fund concluded with an appeal to the Anglican Communion. “The committee asks your attention to this thought:-the greatest visible organic outcomes of the revived spirit and energy of the Church of England is the foundation of new

Bishoprics. Of these, the first in order of time was Truro. Therefore, while the practical necessity of this Cathedral as a centre of force and centre of unity is increasingly felt as the Diocesan work progresses; while Canons are constantly engaged in clergy training and home missions, and satisfactory steps have been taken towards permanent Canonries, it is on yet higher ground that the committee feel justified in passing beyond local aims and resources, and in appealing to the whole church.

They venture to hope that many will be glad to manifest their belief in the corporate unity of the Anglican Communion and their thankfulness for its growing life and activity, by contributing to the Cathedral of a Diocese, which may be regarded as one of the first fruits of the Church movement of the 19th century”.⁵²

At this time, when £35,000 had been pledged or given, the committee estimated the total cost of the first part of the project at about £45,000 “to include building the choir with aisles, vestries and singing-school beneath; to secure the ground and to build the transept with which it is desirable to proceed”. In these early stages, the ambition always exceeded the funds available. But the gap in the latter part of 1879 between £35,000 and £45,000 was less than it had been on 23 May 1879, when, according to the Chapter Book of the nascent Cathedral: “the Bishop... explained that we want £20,000 more for Mr Pearson’s choir; and that there was great unwillingness to begin until we secure something like that sum”.⁵³

It was therefore a considerable achievement that the foundation stones of Truro Cathedral were laid by the Prince of Wales (the Duke of Cornwall) on 20 May, 1880. More money was needed, as it almost always was during the project, and Cornish Freemasons were approached to ascertain if they would

contribute their time and money and participate in the ceremonies that were to be arranged for the laying of the foundation stones. The idea may have originated in two of the large houses of Cornwall. Letters written to Benson from St Michael's Mount on 23 November 1879 and an undated letter next to it in the archive from Port Eliot, both advocate the use of Masonic ceremony at the Cathedral's foundation. The earlier letter, from St Michael's Mount, stated: "my belief is that if it (laying the foundation stone) could be done Masonically it would be most popular – a great thing both for the cathedral funds and for church interests in the county. I think it could be so arranged as not in any way to offend the clergy". The letter from Port Eliot reminded Benson: "I think I mentioned to you the Masons took part in work at Gloucester and elsewhere and have taken up the restoration of St Albans very warmly".⁵⁴ The Earl of Mount Edgcumbe was the most senior Mason in Cornwall and deputised in Masonic ceremonies for the Prince of Wales on many occasions. He wrote to Benson on 12 February 1880: "I found the Prince quite bent upon the Masonic ceremony and read him your letter giving the feeling of the Rural Deans. Your words were 'if there were no interference with the usual prayers of the church at the laying of foundation stones of churches and if the stone were laid in the name of the Trinity (not with any formula which could be objected to as non-Christian) it was... highly desirable".⁵⁵ Edgcumbe concluded: "it was at once settled that it should be so. All the words used in the Masonic ceremony will I think be spoken either by the Prince himself or by a clergyman of the Church of England".⁵⁶

There followed a period of negotiation between primarily the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe speaking, as he felt, for the Prince of Wales and other landowners in Cornwall with Benson and also with some prominent townspeople of Truro.

Though there was still considerable deference in 1880, the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe did not have the negotiations entirely his own way. On 4 March 1880, Edgcumbe wrote to Benson suggesting that a psalm (either Psalm 84 or 87) be omitted “to avoid having any choral performance in the NE enclosure in which all cannot join – not on account of any principle for none is involved – but because a miscellaneous body could and would join heartily in a hymn to a well-known tune but could not join in a chant. It would I think be most desirable that all Masons and clergy should sing together”.⁵⁷

A month later, on 12 April 1880 Edgcumbe wrote again to Benson having been in touch with Lord Falmouth. “Lord Falmouth has sent me the music of the hymn he suggested – which I therefore enclose. One of my daughters has tried it – and thinks it a pretty tune, but rather ‘Sankeyish’ as she expresses it”. But two other letters written about the same time by Edgcumbe to Benson indicate that he was not having it all his own way. “One word about the Masonic question... I hope you will not decide hastily against it”. Then on 5 May 1880, just 15 days before the ceremony of laying the foundation stones, Edgcumbe said “I write in terrible haste... I thought we had quite settled not to have the Hallelujah Chorus and I told the Prince so. He thought the Old 100th much better as all could join in”.⁵⁸ Edgcumbe reinforces his views about the Hallelujah Chorus in two other letters to Benson: “I do not think you could perform the Hallelujah Chorus”. “I shall be very glad to manage the introduction of the Hallelujah Chorus if I can at the end – but I do not think it will be possible”.⁵⁹ There were also disagreements between Edgcumbe and some of the townspeople of Truro: “if the corporation had invited him (the Prince of Wales) – and he could have entered the town by Lemon Street from Mr Chilcott’s and driven down 2 (sic) the Town Hall it could have been managed ... it wd not have

done to have had the grand coaches only to go from the Town Hall to the enclosures. ... But the great obstacle was that the retinue had no invitation and no accommodation had been offered for them in the town. He could not drive in state from Tehidy".⁶⁰ One resident of Truro, at least, was also willing to express himself without much deference to Benson. Mr Mitchell of 46 Lemon Street, wrote to Benson on 26 April 1880, complaining that Benson had sent him a form of the 20 May service "asking him if he would like to make any suggestions but as the musical portion was already completely arranged I could only return a copy as it came to me not seeing any room for co-operation. Up to the present time I have not heard from anybody what position I am to take on the above mentioned day".⁶¹

In Benson's dealings with both the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe and Mr Mitchell it appears that Benson had definite ideas as to what form the liturgy and music should take and he was not willing readily to change. Benson's role within the proceedings was further enhanced when the Archbishop of Canterbury wrote to Benson on 13 May stating that he would be unable to attend the ceremony. Archbishop Tait's sister had just died. Tait referred to her as "a second mother". "I know you will agree that I could not be present at so festive a gathering of so public a character".⁶² This communication by Tait was followed up with the telegram from the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Bishop of Truro on 15 May 1880: "I could scarcely myself ask any bishop to represent me but you have my authority to make any arrangements which you think pertinent and expedient".⁶³ This did not stop the Bishops of Winchester and London trying to help him: "I cannot tell how much I am troubled by my inability to help you," wrote the Bishop of Winchester. The Bishop of London wrote, "I would indeed if I could but it is not possible. I have 52 (confirmation) candidates of my own".⁶⁴ Bishop

Benson had therefore none of the most senior bishops at the ceremony of laying the foundation stones, but he had the authority of the Archbishop of Canterbury delegated to him. This was probably useful to Benson when he received a furious letter from the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe, the day after the Archbishop had sent his telegram. On May 16, Edgcumbe wrote: "I have seen the service with the music only for the first time. I did not know it was in the church throughout – and I am terribly anxious as to the time it will take. I promised it shd not be more than an hour – we shall meet tomorrow and be able to talk this over."⁶⁵ Furthermore, the Hallelujah Chorus was still included, much to Edgcumbe's consternation. "I can hardly conceive the Hallelujah Chorus going well with the band and choir that have never played together and can have no rehearsal – and I cannot help thinking the Old Hundredth wd be far finer". The words to the tune were not the familiar "all people that on earth do dwell," but a hymn with the first words "O Lord of hosts, whose glory fills /all the bands of the eternal hills". In the same letter Edgcumbe was concerned that the Masonic part of the ceremony should go well: "the G M will prove the stone and give it three taps with the mallet. The GM will strew the corner and pour the wine and oil over the stone with the accustomed ceremonies".⁶⁶

Benson himself seems to have regarded the Masonic part of the ceremony positively. He did not write up his account of the events of 20 May until 11 July: "The ceremonial of the Freemasons which some regarded with suspicion and dislike was satisfactory and refreshing from its simple description of symbolism as an element in life, quite apart from ecclesiasticism.... The dignity and the simplicity and naturalness with which the Prince poured the corn and wine and oil over the stone added much to the ceremony".⁶⁷ The Prince then delivered an "impressive little sermon ending with an excellent passage of Ezra, chosen by

Lord Mt Edgcumbe”. Benson estimated that nearly 400 clergy were present and then “by ourselves we had the Veni Creator, the usual Psalms of the Office and the Lord’s Prayer... All was quiet, all was natural, but we all felt that there was something of unwonted sense of the eternal being near. How can we live up faithfully enough to that day?”⁶⁸ Perhaps predictably, the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe’s recollections were not quite so favourable. Writing to Benson on 23 May, he gave a rather downbeat assessment of how the day went, especially the music. “On looking back at an event like that of last Thursday, one always thinks of what might have been better. I’m afraid you must have been disappointed with the music. The band being so high up... was the cause of this – also of a certain (behaviour?) in myself which I could not help feeling was indecorous and must have struck you as such – but I could not help feeling terribly anxious that all should go well... (The conductor) was so far away out of earshot of what was going on that I felt he would make mistakes if I did not signal to him. Were you really satisfied on the whole with the way it was managed? And with the masonic part of it? ”The clash of two cultures is more apparent in the last part of Edgcumbe’s remarks. A culture of deference was still evident in society, but it was not all-pervasive. “I fear that some people did not quite get the places they ought to have had at the luncheon – but you cannot imagine the difficulty arranging that with no accurate list either of people or places”.⁶⁹

At the time of the laying of the foundation stone, the Cathedral fund stood at £38,948, of which £22,181 had been actually received. Some significant donations had been received on the day itself. “(The Princess of Wales) was received by our tall mayor in his stately new furred gown and me (Benson), and taken up to her throne. At the end she was led to the newly laid stone and

seated by it, while a long train of girls brought their purses and laid them before her, after the little princes had each presented £250 on behalf of Miss Goldsworthy Gurney, who wished this to memorialise her father's "invention of the steam jet".⁷⁰ Altogether just over £1,596 was presented to the Princess of Wales on the foundation stone on the day, including just over £332 from spectators and £88 from the clergy present. £168.11s 5d had been collected in the churches of the Diocese on the nearest Sunday, Whit Sunday, the Sunday before the great day.⁷¹ Laying the foundation stones on 20 May 1880 had focused minds. To do so with full Masonic honours opened the door to still more money by linking the importance of the occasion for the Church with what was equally an occasion of historic significance for the Masons. Benson wrote in his diary: "people are saying 'the first Cathedral founded since the Reformation.' Has any been founded (one or two have been translated) since the conquest?"⁷² The Freemasons who came saw an identity between themselves and the masons of the Middle Ages who had built the great cathedrals and churches of Britain (even if the foundation of those cathedrals had been earlier, as Benson alleged). Benson himself was eager to play up this link. "All proceeded according to this Form (the Form of Service which Benson had written for the occasion) until the place of the Rubric 'The stone is prepared by the masons with the accustomed ceremonies.' Here the Freemasons did their part, just instead of the common masons, and when the 'Grand Master' had concluded this portion the service proceeded".⁷³

Not everyone was happy with Masonic involvement. The Rev. Lucius Arthur of Matlock Bath in Derbyshire sent a telegram to Benson on 20 May 1880. The telegram was sent at 10.45 am and received at 11.18 am: "Do not (let) the Koran carried in procession by Freemasons in Mahametan countries however

late will you not request that their trappings be laid aside”.⁷⁴ Given that the procession, which began with the Masonic ceremony was timed to begin at 11.30 a.m. it seems unlikely that Benson would have received the telegram before the ceremony began. The real sting in the tail came from Edgcumbe himself. Writing from 23 Belgrave Square on 19 June , Edgcumbe wrote to Benson as follows: “The Queen declines to subscribe to the cathedral – and I fear that the Ld Mayor’s fund will fail. I have suppressed my objections to the costliness of the proposed building as long as it appeared that I could do anything to help to obtain funds – but it exists in my mind as strongly as ever and unless the Ld Mayor’s efforts are far more successful than I anticipate (and if they do not succeed there is little prospect of a national subscription ever being again raised) I shall have to do what I have all along intended to do to retire from taking any active part on the Cmee (committee). I shall do this as quietly as I can”.⁷⁵

Edgcumbe was far too discreet to tell Benson what had caused his proposed change of approach. Was it simply the difficulty of collecting money from London to finance the cathedral, or was it occasioned by disappointment concerning the way the day was managed? Bishop Benson clearly kept some arrangements for the day from Edgcumbe, especially those he expected Edgcumbe not to like. Rather than provoke outright confrontation with Edgcumbe over hymns versus psalms, Masons and clergy singing together, whether the band was unrehearsed or wrongly situated, and whether the Hallelujah Chorus should be sung, Benson kept Edgcumbe in the dark on these matters. Edgcumbe’s letter four days before the event, on 16 May, indicated that he still wanted to object and to change things in a way that would suit the Masons more.

By this time Benson had a telegram from the Archbishop and he could largely do what he wanted. His viewpoint was reinforced by his own diary recollection of the great day. "I had upon the first mootings of the question by the Prince, taken the opinion of the Rural Deans as representative of the clergy. And their unanimous opinion was that it was even desirable to use an old Guild in this way, provided that the Church Service and order were in no way interfered with. And the Prince, both through Lord Mount Edgcumbe, and at Marlborough House himself, said that nothing should be done except in full accord with my own arrangements as Bishop and the usual forms". Benson was determined that 20 May should see a fully Christian ceremony. That is what was meant by the code "the usual forms". Benson spelt this out later in his diary entry. "I then found on examining, that the common little books of Foundation-stone Services were nothing but the watered down version of the Pontifical, omitting some grand phrases and meaningfull (sic) terms. These I restored, I hope, to nearer the original and printed for our own use... The laying of two stones with the processions between enabled us to approach still nearer the original".⁷⁶ For someone who had been creating liturgies from a very young age, the possibility of creating such a liturgy was an unparalleled opportunity. According to his son and biographer A C Benson, Edward White Benson "had a thoroughly liturgical mind... the inconvenience of a liturgical mind is that it requires the active concert and corporeal presence of so many like-minded persons in order to receive full satisfaction".⁷⁷ As Edgcumbe's advocacy of Masonic ritual indicated, not all "like-minded persons" thought exactly like Benson on liturgical matters. Dominating his surroundings characterised Benson's instinctive approach to life and society and it certainly enabled him to get his way. In his reminiscence of Benson as headmaster of Wellington

College, Dr A W Verrall put it well: “During my four years and a half (1865 – 1869) I must have seen him in contact with the greater part of what was then most exalted in England (at successive speech days because of the way Wellington College was set up by the great and the good under the direction of Prince Albert). Yet I never saw, either then or for that matter afterwards any personage (with one single exception) over whom, if and so far as it was proper, the Headmaster could not easily take the lead. (Lord Derby, the Prime Minister, was the exception)”.⁷⁸ Although “the personages, with whom he had to act... made a group in rank and power out of all proportion to... the natural height of his own office”, Benson showed deference to them in both his manners and courtesy and got his way. Perhaps it was the prerogative of the senior cleric from humble origins, Cardinal Wolsey the son of an Ipswich butcher and Walter Lyhart a distinguished 15th century Bishop of Norwich, the son of a miller from Lanteglos by Fowey in Cornwall being two other examples. Edgcumbe’s approach is very often subtle and understated. On 2 May 1880, he wrote to Benson a series of notes: “the dean of York is G^d chaplain. The Lord Mayor is one of the wardens could come as such. The Bishop of Peterborough is the only English Bishop, who is in the Association. Some of the craft were anxious to try and secure his attendance – but I said nothing”.⁷⁹ Edgcumbe could be quietly ignored but in a private way not by a public dispute. This method of showing respect to those in senior positions in society but still dominating by a natural force of personality worked well in Truro diocese.

When Benson moved to Lambeth Palace in the early part of 1883, such an approach was much harder for him and may explain in part why Benson was, by and large, much happier in Truro than in London. At the time of his translation from Truro to Canterbury, Benson was a junior bishop, who had

never sat in the House of Lords. The changing culture was considerable and drastic. “In extemporare speaking, when he (Benson) felt at his ease and with a sympathetic audience, he was lively, graphic and humorous; but when he felt the need of being weighty, he was apt to become too concentrated. He prepared his Parliamentary speeches carefully, but in the House he was nervous: the atmosphere of chilly criticism appalled him: moreover, having all his life held positions of command, he found it difficult to debate a question from a footing of perfect equality”.⁸⁰

Footnotes to chapter 5

¹ Truro Cathedral Muniments 147 p.27.

² David Newsome, *Godliness and Good Learning*,(London, 1961) p.175.

³TCM 37/1/3

⁴Stephen Dawes, *Desert Island Hymns- Faith which Sings with Heart and Mind* (Southleigh,1996) p.2.

⁵G. Wainwright and K.B. Westerfield Tucker (eds.),*Oxford History of Christian Worship*, (Oxford, 2006), p.567.

⁶TCM 38/1/1 3

⁷ TCM 38/1/1 6

⁸TCM 38/1/1 8

⁹TCM 38/1/1 9

¹⁰TCM 38/1/1 7

¹¹TCM 38/1/1 7

¹²TCM 38/1/1 7

¹³TCM 31/1/1 9

¹⁴TCM 40/1/2 *Western Morning News* 25/10/1878 col.1

¹⁵ TCM 40/1/7

¹⁶*Western Morning News* 25/10/1878 col. 5

¹⁷*Ibid* col.1

¹⁸ *Ibid* col. 5

¹⁹ *Ibid* col. 5

²⁰ TCM 40/1/7

²¹ *Ibid*

²² *Ibid*

²³ TCM 41/1/6

²⁴ A. C. Benson *Life* vol. 1 p.427, vol. 2 p.610 A. B. Donaldson, *Bishopric* p.64

²⁵ A.B. Donaldson op. cit. p.65

²⁶ A.B. Donaldson op. cit. 65

²⁷ *Ibid* p.66

²⁸ *Ibid* pp.69, 70

²⁹ *Ibid* p.67

³⁰ *Ibid* p.67

³¹ TCM 147 1

³² TCM 147 4

³³ TCM 147 6

³⁴ TCM 147 6

³⁵ TCM 147 7

³⁶ TCM 41/1/1

³⁷ TCM 53 no page number

³⁸ . P. Howell and I. Sutton (eds.) *Faber Guide to Victorian Churches* (London, 1989) x; TCM 41/1/1

³⁹ TCM 56 p.21; TCM 108 *Building News* Feb 7 1879

⁴⁰ Simon Jenkins, *England's Thousand Best Churches*, (London, 2000) p. 767

⁴¹Ibid, p.767

⁴²TCM 41/1/1

⁴³TCM 56/1 Cathedral Committee Minutes p.21

⁴⁴ I am grateful to Martin Matthews formerly Curator of Helston Museum for this *West Briton* Report.

⁴⁵TCM 252/1

⁴⁶TCM 100

⁴⁷TCM 250/6/3

⁴⁸TCM 40/1/2 col. 2

⁴⁹AC Benson *Life* Vol. 1 388-9

⁵⁰TCM 116/41/2

⁵¹TCM 147 Benson's Private Diary 1882, p.25

⁵²TCM 104

⁵³TCM 51 7

⁵⁴ TCM 157/1, TCM 157/2

⁵⁵TCM 157/4

⁵⁶TCM 157/12

⁵⁷TCM 157/13

⁵⁸TCM 157/16, TCM 157/10, TCM 157/19

⁵⁹TCM 157/16, TCM 157/22

⁶⁰TCM 157/26 Though the retinue may not have been invited, The Prince of Wales himself stayed in Lemon St the night before the ceremony, according to an exhibit in the Royal Cornwall Museum, River Street.

⁶¹TCM 157/37

⁶²TCM 157/47

⁶³TCM 157/44

⁶⁴TCM 157/43, TCM 157/45

⁶⁵TCM 157/42

⁶⁶TCM 157/42, TCM 158/5

⁶⁷A.C. Benson, *Life* Vol. 1 pp.453/4

⁶⁸*Ibid* p.454

⁶⁹TCM 157/47

⁷⁰A. C. Benson, *Life* Vol. 1 p.455

⁷¹TCM 164

⁷²AC Benson, *Life* Vol. 1 p.455

⁷³*Ibid* p.454

⁷⁴TCM 157/46

⁷⁵TCM 157/48

⁷⁶A. C. Benson, *Life* Vol. 1 p.454

⁷⁷A. C. Benson, *Life* Vol. 1 p.24

⁷⁸*Ibid* p.217

⁷⁹TCM 158/1

⁸⁰A. C. Benson *Life* Vol. 1 p.586

Chapter 6

“An astonishing stream of Cornish patriotism”: secularism and pluralism in the Cornwall of 1880.

Despite Edgcombe’s reservations, the general consensus was that 20 May 1880 was an outstanding success. Certainly that was the verdict of the pro-Anglican *Royal Cornwall Gazette* in its report the following day: “the county may be said to have turned out en masse to welcome its own Duke and Duchess and the day was one of unalloyed pleasure and success. The sky was cloudless, and remained so throughout the day... By 11.30, the hour at which all were supposed to be seated, there could not have been fewer than 2000 ladies and gentlemen in holiday dress – the ladies in the gayest of gay attire – assembled within the enclosure”.¹ At 12 noon the National Anthem indicated that the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall had arrived and a procession through what would become the Cathedral took place from the Western Enclosure to the North East Enclosure, and then back again where the Duke of Cornwall, as Grand Master, laid the second stone with Masonic ceremony. At about three o’clock, nearly 1000 people sat down to a luncheon in the Market Hall.

Later that day there took place a military review at Treliske, the seat of W Teague, as well as a concert and fireworks. A series of triumphal arches designed by the prominent Methodist, Sylvanus Travail, adorned the streets. These included a Masonic arch and a Cornish arch (with fish, tin and copper depicted on it). “Apart from the arches, the streets are extensively decorated, Mr Netherton having a novelty in an illuminated motto in old Cornish

EHAZ HA SEWEN WHATH

DHOGEN ARLUIDH HAG ARLUDHES

which may be freely translated Health and Prosperity to the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall".² The context of the reporting by newspapers, though detailed and favourable, was in one sense problematic. The triumphal arches were depicted in the edition of the *Graphic* magazine of May 29th 1880. In the same issue of the magazine was an article on the spread of secular thinking. A leading article on 'Mr Bradlaugh and the Oath' argued that denying Bradlaugh the opportunity to affirm made Bradlaugh a victim of religious intolerance, rather than his arrival in Parliament being treated as an insignificant affair.³ Bradlaugh was repeatedly elected to Parliament by the electors of Northampton and was repeatedly refused a place on the benches of the House of Commons because, as an atheist, he refused to swear an oath with a religious content,. Since his fellow MPs voted to retain the religious content of the oath, there was nothing Bradlaugh could do, until after one election success Bradlaugh was admitted into the House of Commons first through an "affirmation," not an oath, after which all the other MPs were admitted. The refusal to swear religious oaths caused atheists and agnostics to pay a high price for their principles and the agitated debates caused consternation among unbelievers as well as believers. "The unbelievers were also tried by their refusal to swear oaths...Holyoake was prevented by his scruples from swearing a writ against the cabbie who drunkenly ran over and mortally injured his son. Not surprisingly, Bradlaugh's offer to take the Parliamentary oath in 1880 caused as much distress in the atheist camp as it did among Christians".⁴ Ironically, as F B Smith, the historian of atheism in the Victorian era goes on to suggest, the group of atheists known as 'the Apostles' faced the same type of problem as the churches did themselves: "the uncertain tone.... enters the Apostles' utterances during the 1870s... in increasing numbers they confess that their belief in the inevitable

progress and the rationality of man was shaken by the Franco-Prussian War, the spread of jingoism and Darwin's demonstration of man's continuity with the brute creation".⁵

That the churches (and atheism) were entering uncertain times in the 1870s and 1880s was further emphasised by another article which appeared in the same issue of the *Graphic*. "Cardinal Newman has this week been an honoured guest at Oxford University dining at Trinity and Oriel. He preached twice at St Giles, Roman Catholic Church, that being the first time his voice had been heard from any pulpit in Oxford since his secession from the Church of England".⁶ Pluralism, as well as secularism, was an issue that had to be faced by the Church of England. Even in the same issue of the *Graphic* magazine which had faithfully reproduced the triumphal arches used in the great ceremony of 20 May, it was shown by other articles that a restatement of a triumphalist position by the church was no longer by itself convincing, no matter how great the pomp and circumstance.

When Benson spoke at the Diocesan Conference on 28 October 1880, he referred to the inauguration of the Cathedral at Cologne on 15 October 1880. "The eyes of Europe have now watched the finial set on the head of the earth's loftiest spire above her mightiest church. But how? By a secular ceremony, a Te Deum sung by an opera troupe, the Archbishop in exile".⁷ Benson, both as Bishop and Archbishop, was acutely aware of the dangers of secularism. Long before Benson went to Truro he was aware of the potential which any cathedral offered for promoting religious education, which he hoped might successfully challenge secularist thinking by promoting a religious view of the world. Writing to George Cubitt, patron of the living of Dorking in Surrey which Cubitt had offered to Benson, the future Bishop said "I wish above all things, if I could

choose, to have a canonry, and if offered, I should accept it without reference to its value, for I think that at this time, the Church of England is in such danger of losing her hold – if it is not lost – on higher education for her clergy – her University tenure being most precarious – we are bound to supplement it, and the cathedral system offers an ancient, recognised, calm and safe mode of education if only a few more people will give themselves to its development”.⁸

Despite Benson’s success in enabling the foundation of Truro Cathedral to be laid in the intervening years, this problem was still uppermost in his mind when he left Truro for Canterbury. Of the 700 letters of congratulations was one from F. J. A. Hort, Professor at Cambridge and one of the foremost biblical scholars of his day.⁹ Hort wrote not a letter of congratulations, but a warning. “The convulsions of our English church itself, grievous as they are, seem to be as nothing beside the danger of its calm and unobtrusive alienation in thought and spirit from the great silent multitude of Englishmen, and again of alienation from fact and love of fact; mutual alienations both. But the last thing I could wish today would be to croak evil omens”.¹⁰ Benson in reply acknowledged to Hort that: “Yours was far the most historical and real letter I have had. This is why I am concerned”. But Benson also wrote: “I do not believe that the two alienations you speak of are naturally progressing on us. They may surely be arrested”.¹¹ In a poem that Benson wrote in 1891, he gives a clue as to how such secularism could be arrested using the analogy of the state of Athens and its protecting goddess Athena:

“Before thy temple, goddess pure,
Thou standest, and thy helmet plume
Is seen o’er all the Aegean spume
To storm-tost men a beacon sure.”

But there is a cloud on the horizon identified in a later verse. Benson asks where from?

No whence but from within the curse:

“That wrecks the temple and the state-

Seek self, not truth –let calm debate

In passion, choke – and is there worse?

Let rulers by the crowd be ruled:

Let law’s high dooms be falsely spoke,

Then is Athena’s compact broke-

And self by self is schooled and fooled.

‘Farewell’ – the plume in thunder waved....

And Athens, Athens was not saved.”¹²

The mood of pessimism matches Matthew Arnold’s more famous poem “On Dover Beach”. In Benson’s poem, there appears to be a suspicion of democracy and an answer to the problem lying not just in education, but in a particular kind of education – “Athena’s compact” meaning the link between its religion and state such as existed in Athens and which the National Society of the Church of England sought to promote in Victorian society. From within came the curse that was wrecking temple and state. Benson thought of the motto of this cursed behaviour as “seek self, not truth” and the consequence for education of this state of mind – “self by self is schooled and fooled.”

Benson’s own attitude to deference was extremely ambiguous. He wanted it for himself and indeed thrived when it was shown him. Bishop Benson was a modern man in this respect and one paradox in his life was that he believed in

deference, wanted deference shown to him, but did not himself show it to people above him in authority, except at the level of courtesy and politeness. Benson seemed to think, if his poem is anything to go by, that secularism was not to be arrested by democracy, although equality of everyone under God was seen as a Christian virtue by the influential Christian socialist movement of the time. “Let rulers by the crowds be ruled... then is Athena’s compact broke.” Instead, he appears to be arguing for a return to deference to religious authority: “Thy helmet plume is seen o’er all the Aegean spume to storm -tost men a beacon sure”.

The good news for Benson was that deference was by no means dead in Cornwall during his episcopate. D. C. Moore traces what he calls “the importance of a deference community” in places as diverse as East Norfolk and West Cornwall during the mid-Victorian period.¹³ In East Norfolk, Lord Wodehouse was an ardent Tory, his grandson and heir an ardent Liberal. “The local politicians become convinced that the division was no longer a Tory stronghold. Thus, when two appropriate Liberal candidates were found, the two Conservatives simply retired.” Moore also cites an episode that took place in Cornwall in 1881, when one of Lord Falmouth’s tenants resigned his office in his local Liberal Association. Because it was known that Falmouth was disturbed by the presence of Bright and Chamberlain in Gladstone’s second cabinet, the tenant’s resignation produced consternation among local Liberals. They thought that the Falmouth interest had switched. This evidence, they speculated, might prompt the Conservatives to contest the next election. No contest had ever occurred in the division since the First Reform Act created it. When it became clear that Lord Falmouth’s tenant had resigned for reasons other than his

master's disagreement with Bright and Chamberlain, it became clear to local liberals that the Falmouth interest had not switched.

Robert Storch, the editor of the volume to which John Rule contributed a chapter on *Methodism, Popular Beliefs and Village Culture*, writes in his introduction to the book: "Within the numerous movements designed to alter, channel or restructure popular culture...(were attempts to reconstitute) the lines of deference, patronage and moral authority in society... Little could be done along these lines until the later 19th century in any case, for a necessary prerequisite was getting over the fear of popular public display...Only then could the neutralisation of Guy Fawkes lead to consensual festivals".¹⁴ Storch analyses sociologically this attempt to create deference through festival: "A major factor in the disappearance, transformation or folklorisation of popular Guy Fawkes manifestations in the South was a deep rupture – both social and cultural – within southern small -town society. The withdrawal of local elites and the dissolution of a small-town plebeian culture put paid to the popular version of celebration, which had once functioned-and perhaps had been designed to function-as an annual reaffirmation of the solidarity of the whole community. Many popular manifestations were replaced by middle-class or officially sponsored demonstrations in the 1870s and 1880s. Ostensibly, these were created to express similar solidarities in a more disciplined, orderly, 'tasteful' and harmless way; but in the process the whole context, the uses and internal meanings, of the old celebrations, were subtly bypassed, or in some cases obliterated".¹⁵

The foundation of the Cathedral and the laying of the foundation stone certainly could not be an annual event but it did succeed in uniting all classes in a common purpose. Festival, however, was something which the church could

be heavily involved in reviving, as Parson Hawker was able to do with Harvest Festival at Morwenstow. In the growing demand for organised sport, leisure and pastimes, the church played a prominent part. Many professional football teams began as church teams. Holidays had begun as taking place on the holy days of the church, since that was the only time that most employees had off work.

The church-orchestrated ceremonial and good liturgy which characterised the laying of the foundation stone on 20 May 1880, were part of a larger revival of festivals and holy days. Pageantry and display were something which Benson did well. "As was often said, 'he looked the part to perfection'".¹⁶ That is not to say that pageantry was all. Rather, ceremony symbolised the deeper meaning that was at the heart of what Benson attempted to do: "It is a great mistake to abolish old traditions because they seem to be practically useless: they meant something once: we ought to try to revive them that they may mean something now".¹⁷ P. S. Morrish makes the point: "In its section listing cathedral and other capitular establishments, *Crockford's Clerical Directory* still prints under the arms of the diocese of Truro the legend, 'see restored to Cornwall 1877'".¹⁸ The fact that *Crockford's Clerical Directory* still carried this legend in 1983 shows how extraordinarily pervasive and successful Benson was in getting across his ideas. The antidote to secularism for Benson was the restoration of what was good in the past, encapsulated in its religious traditions, festivals and ceremonies.

The immediate aftermath of 20 May was one of elation. Benson detected "over the whole day's events" that "strange, sweet, brooding, which none have ever failed to own." He even saw divine presence in the sky: "one deepest lustrous blue over the whole heaven above the great Enclosure, and right above us and in view the tiniest, most delicate white clouds flecked it all over in the

most symmetrical arrangement. I must not write what it suggests".¹⁹ An ebullient mood continued through the following weekend. "On the Sunday after the stone laying I preached in the High Cross. The staging was still standing and it was occupied by four thousand people at least. They were, with few exceptions, poor people. The men's black coats, the sober colouring of wives and families made a strange contrast to the brilliance of Thursday's scene. Many walked miles to come". On the Sunday, the type of hymn singing which the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe had advocated took place. "A large choir in which two cornets blown by surpliced rifleman led the singing in a way these Cornishmen truly delighted in... When the hymn after the sermon was ended, they were not ready to go. I gave out another – and the people poured down into the area, surrounded the pillar and sang most vehemently. We produced hymn books – then another hymn and another, the trumpets leading. They would have gone on all night. Again such a feeling filled the crowd that I could quite realise what a religious impulse seeing a multitude might affect... As we came away I heard someone say, 'Well, the 20th of May was grand, but the 23rd will be my Commemorative Day for Truro".¹⁹

Perhaps the highest dignity and formality of 20 May and the spontaneity and effusiveness of 23 May were both necessary ways of commemorating the laying of the foundation stones. Benson seemed to connote the two during his address to the Diocesan Conference on 28 October 1880: "As we think of the vast Enclosure emptying itself of this world's greatness, only to resound louder yet with the blessings and hymns of miners and peasants, and foot-weary yet happy women and children".²⁰ Another immediate consequence of the ceremonies of 20 May and 23 May was that there was an outpouring of delight in being Cornish. We have seen the use of the Cornish language in the greeting

of Mr Netherton, the Truro printer, to the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall. Another example of this was the speech of the outgoing Bishop of Exeter, Frederick Temple, whose diocese would no longer include Cornwall. Frederick Temple on his mother's side was of Cornish descent, and he made reference to this in his speech on 20 May. "I can assure you it is with the very warmest interest that I regard everything that affects the diocese of Truro and my own countrymen the people of Cornwall (applause). I cannot forget that I am a Cornishman by birth".²¹ According to Frederick Temple's biographer: "the Western end of the diocese had been such a centre of opposition in his early years, partly because it was feared that he would resist any move towards an independent Cornish see. 'We hoped', they said 'for independence and were given Temple!' But, in fact, the new Bishop was not against division. He bided his time; but once he had satisfied himself that the diocese was too unwieldy, he brought formidable drive and energy to the business of dividing it".²² It was Temple, according to his biographer, who secured the key donations for the endowment of the new diocese.²³ Donations were received from the Earl of Devon (with whom Temple had sat on the Clarendon Commission on Public Schools) and Lady Rolle, a Cornishwoman, who like Temple was living in Devon, herself a Trefusis and daughter of a Cornish clergyman.²⁴ Clearly, the fact that there was to be a Cornish diocese mattered to Lady Rolle who, in particular, was willing to back her opinion with substantial money. Frederick Temple's first biographer acknowledges his role in the whole process of establishing the diocese with an adequate endowment – completed, with £800 annual income from Bishop Temple's own money made available to a Cornish Bishop, in 1876. Being Cornish, and delighting in being Cornish, needed to be understood in ambiguous relationship to being English. The words Britain and

British were used surprisingly infrequently, even in the *West Briton*, in the reports of the events of May 1880. The Earl of Mount Edgcumbe provided a good example of this. He said at one point as Lord-Lieutenant “They never forget (that) they are Cornishman”. Yet when addressing the near thousand people sat down to luncheon in the Market Hall on 20 May Edgcumbe states: “We are here to give his Royal Highness a welcome (loud cheers). We welcome him as Englishmen would welcome him in any part of Her Majesty’s dominions, but we welcome him especially as the Duke of this ancient Duchy of Cornwall with which we are associated as quasi-subjects of that Duke”.²⁵ If 20 May and 23 May united, as Benson in his remarks to the Diocesan Conference seemed to imply, all classes of men and women in a common purpose, could a powerful sense of being Cornish bring these various people together? Certainly it was not just among the people who attended the ceremony of 23 May that powerful Cornish sentiments were expressed. In the papers of A Pendarves Vivian MP, himself an active participant at the ceremony of 20 May, is the correspondence on electoral matters with, among others, Arthur Tremayne. Writing to Pendarves Vivian from Carclew on 26 June 1868, Tremayne expressed the view: “If we must have two Gladstonians, we should have two Cornishman”.²⁶ This statement could be interpreted as an attempt to prevent non-residency of the successful member of Parliament. The statement could also be interpreted as an attempt to secure Cornish candidates for a Cornish constituency.

A renewed emphasis on Cornishness also carried with it the question as to what made people Cornish – was it to do with your lineage, something genetic you carried with you, wherever you lived, as Frederick Temple’s idea of Cornishness seems to mean? Or were you Cornish if your heart was in Cornwall? It is possible to argue that Cornishness meant the former, rather than

the latter, though Benson does say on one occasion “we Cornish”. He was normally content to say how much he loved Cornwall. Benson in his farewell address to the people of Cornwall said: “to my successor... I scarce think you can have one who will love Cornwall better than I.” When Benson’s successor turned out to be Canon Wilkinson, Vicar of St Peter’s, Eaton Square in London, Benson reminded him “Did you ever think how you have all the Cornish families”.²⁷ Wilkinson’s parish in London was one where many well-to-do Cornish families had a residence. They were still Cornish families though they were living in London. To be Cornish, having an identity that was Cornish, meant having a Cornish ancestry, even if one lived in South Australia or Mexico. Despite the generosity of Lady Rolle, other Cornish expatriates in 1876 and later, the outpouring of money from the Cornish diaspora for the new Cathedral did not happen on a large scale, though those who had done well abroad were certainly willing to help with relief and distress, as examples from South Australia show. In Helston churchyard, for instance, there is a grave where many of one family are buried. William Beaglehole died of cholera and within days three sons also died of the disease. Left to mourn were his wife and two children. Six months later another son was born, two of the sons emigrated to Australia with their mother when they were aged 18 and 15, Forty one years later they sent money back to Cornwall for a headstone in Helston Churchyard to mark the grave of their father William. Being Cornish was not something to be exploited by people who wanted to make money out of it, but if Cornish people themselves whether at home or abroad, wanted to respond to an appeal for funds they would give generously. Otherwise, and this applied to appeals in the Cornish diaspora, the appeal would largely fall on deaf ears.

When Benson told the Church in Cornwall that he was leaving and that his successor could scarce be one who would love Cornwall more than him, he defined the Cornwall he loved as follows: “her primeval church and warm-hearted children and her vestiges of old story, her shores and shrines and a fair House of God, which is rising in the midst”.²⁸ Benson was never one who tried to bring things up to date. In this he exhibited a very Victorian trait. ‘Latest’ as in ‘latest fashion’ was not used as a compliment or advertising slogan to any great extent in Victorian Britain. Church dedications to Augustine of Canterbury or to Cornish saints were a recall to origins. This looking far back to a mediaeval past was not specifically a Cornish phenomenon, though it had a Cornish aspect to it. It pervaded all Victorian society: “Throughout the Queen’s reign, however, the looking-back to mediaeval times, either out of nostalgia or for a definite social, cultural or political purpose, never seems to slacken... Indeed, in the closing decades of the century, with the relentless acceleration of all the processes that were to transform Victorian society into the Edwardian age, the element of nostalgia began to assume an almost spiritual dimension. As Owen Chadwick has observed, there seemed in those closing years a wistful longing for a return to simplicity. “Why”, he asks, “did the reputation of St Francis of Assisi rise so rapidly during the last 40 years of the 19th century, among Protestants and unbelievers as well as Catholics?”²⁹

The focus on saints’ days, creating statutes for Truro Cathedral following a thorough study of mediaeval equivalents, and preaching on simplicity could easily be identified as three dominant themes of Benson’s last three years as Bishop of Truro. Benson’s very last sermon preached at the end of February 1883 in Kenwyn Church, immediately before he left the Diocese for Canterbury, was on the subject of simplicity. To that considerable extent, he was a child of

his time. Benson's fascination with Cornish saints developed right through his time in Cornwall. We have seen that very often his sermon in a parish church would be to tell something of the saint whose name the parish or the parish church carried. He also loved exploring the church buildings and uncovering old, especially neglected artefacts. He frequently said that he knew more about the saint or the artefacts than the parish did.

Saints, for Benson, were not inhabitants of a mythical past but men and women of history, who featured not just in the society they served but also in the calendars and worship of the early church. For instance, Benson enjoyed finding out that the village feast of St Erme, near Truro, was celebrated on the same day as the Festival of St Hermes in the Roman Catholic calendar.³⁰ With both artefacts and saints, there was much detective work to be done, uncovering the real building or person after removing the dust of centuries, during which the importance of these buildings and saints had been forgotten. This had been true from Benson's earliest days in Cornwall in 1877: "my father's diaries for that period contained little else than most careful notes of the parishes he visited, descriptions of the clergy and church people, elaborate notes on the archaeology of places absolutely unknown to the antiquary". As early as 17 August 1877 Benson wrote to Henry Bradshaw, whom he had known at Lincoln Cathedral: "I have a brilliant idea, of not naming my Honorary Canons First, Second, Third, etc. prosaically – but of placing on the backs of their stalls "S Piran" "S Germanus" "S Petroc" and the like. I want you to be so kind as to direct me to some knowledge of these great souls – and likewise in the first instance to give me a list of eight of them on whom I might for eminence take first, and also to direct me into the spelling thereof. You know the Cornish saints, and I hope you will help me to glorify them. Bye and bye I must get them

into the windows – and then I must consult you about dressing them. What I want now is eight names – and sources of sound knowledge... would these do? S. Petroc, S. Germanus, S. Piran, S. Ivo? S. Neot, S.S. Probus et Gratia, S. Austell (? Augustine) S. Sampson, S. Cuthbert”.³¹ St Cuthbert is the ninth name on the list and a saint more commonly associated with the North of England. Benson needed to settle on nine, not eight Saints to name the stalls after because alongside the first eight honorary canons that Benson proposed to install on 17 January 1878, one canon of Exeter Cathedral opted to transfer his canonry to Truro Cathedral. This was Arthur Thynne of Kilkhampton, who had made his views on the subject known to Bishop Benson as early as 19 December 1876. Only four days earlier, on 15 December, the *London Gazette* had published the Act which brought the diocese into being. “The bishopric of Truro is hereby founded. The diocese...consists of the Archdeaconry of Cornwall”.³² Thynne wrote to Benson: “I have power under the Act of giving up my Prebendal stall at Exeter and becoming an Honorary Canon of Truro. Much as I love the old cathedral... I will most gladly throw in my lot with the new diocese for which I have prayed so long but if it will leave your hands more free to choose your own men, then... I will remain as I am, but I must speak my heart and say I do hope you will let me ‘come to you?’”³³ None of the other Canons of Exeter Cathedral chose to give up their Exeter Canonries. The Archdeacon of Cornwall (also at the same time Vicar of St Gluvius in Penryn), Thomas Phillpotts, wrote to Benson on 25 August 1877. “Under the circumstances (being a senior Canon of Exeter) you will not be surprised that I reluctantly decline your kind offer of being first among the new Canons of Truro”.³⁴ Other Cornish-based Canons of Exeter Cathedral, R. W. Barnes, R. B. Kinsman and the incumbent of Penzance, Philip Hedgeland, remained Canons

of Exeter. The High Church Anglican F. C. Hingeston- Randolph wrote in the *Western Daily Mercury* (the article was repeated in the Royal Cornwall Gazette on 25 January 1878): “no doubt it is better to be a Canon non-residentiary of the grand old church of Leofric than one of the brand-new creations of the West without predecessors and without traditions – at least from one point of view: from every other point, we cannot but think that Mr Thynne has chosen the better part, and set a good example, which we could have wished to see more widely followed... He was appointed to his stall in 1865, by the late Bishop, and is said to be a very advanced High Churchmen. He is Rector of the remote but well-endowed and pleasant parish of Kilkhampton to which he was presented by Lord John Thynne in 1859; and his church and the services thereof are reputed to be the most beautiful and elaborate in the Diocese of Truro”.³⁵ The fact that Thynne chose to be the only Canon of Exeter to move to Truro indicated firstly that he had no need of money. “No emolument whatever shall be taken or held by any Honorary Canon by virtue of his appointment as such Canon” was the law officer’s opinion given on 6 June 1878.³⁶ As Hingeston-Randolph’s article in the *Royal Cornwall Gazette* also said: “Mr Thynne is a Balliol man, the son of a Lord, and of high standing both in the church and the world”.³⁷ Thynne’s willingness to move also showed that he was less wedded to the *status quo ante* than the other canons. Phillpotts declined to move as Canon from Exeter to Truro by referring to himself as a “senior Canon of Exeter”.

The Tractarian revival was no threat to Thynne: if Hingeston-Randolph is right to say that Thynne was the “highest” clergyman in the diocese, the Catholic revival would have been something he positively welcomed. The revival of saints days and named canonical stalls was not simply the revival of

festival and holy day or holiday. It was something that was patient of a Catholic interpretation. Those who held to that interpretation in the Church of England were called, in the language of the day, 'advanced'. The connection between the changes Benson wanted and introduced, and Catholic revival, was not so close as to be identical. But there was a significant degree of overlap and this would have an immense consequence in making, or not making, Truro Diocese and Cathedral a place for all Christians. Thynne's position, as he himself reminded Benson, was one of considerable authority. "I came to the Cathedral, as you know, not by your appointment but by my own act".³⁸ He also had considerable influence. The patron of the living who presented him for institution to the living in 1859 was F. J. Thynne, Lord of the Manor of Kilkhampton. Another relative, the Rev Lord John Thynne, was sub-Dean of Westminster Abbey. All were related to the Marquess of Bath. The first thing Thynne had done in Kilkhampton was to restore the building the following year to enable the liturgy he wanted. The combination of authority, influence and money was powerful. It could lead to new ways of thinking.

Thynne was given the stall of St Neot by Bishop Benson. There were eight other Canons installed at the same service. In his diary entry of 25 January 1878, Benson explained his reasoning: "On the 17th I installed eight Canons at the beginning of a chapter... Above the first is Canon Thynne, transferred by his own desire from Exeter. I have named the Rector of St Mary's and the Vicar of Kenwyn, because one has given a church, the other a house to the see, then three busy chaplains; and then three out of honour-to-age principle, and the remoter regions of the county".³⁹ Beside St Neot, the Saints chosen for the stalls which the first canons occupied were Corentin, Aldhelm, Germans, Piran, Buriana, Carantoc, Cybi, Conan, and Ia. St Ivo in the first list drawn up by

Benson had a question mark and Benson's son explained that "the proper form afterwards adopted was Ia"(patron of St Ives). Even combining Ivo and Ia, there are remarkably few suggested names from Benson's first list to make it to the final list, only Neot, Piran and Germanus. Most remarkably, Petroc, first name on the first list is missing altogether. The Northumbrian St Cuthbert is replaced by "two Saxon missionaries who preached in Cornwall, St Aldhelm and St Neot".⁴⁰

In reporting the installation, the *West Briton* particularly heaped praise on Thomas Phillpotts' brother William Phillpotts who did accept a canonry at the new Cathedral. "Mr Phillpotts has been a parish clergyman for over forty years, and... to a very great extent, the pioneer of church building and church restoration in this county, having been mainly instrumental in forming two parishes – Lannarth out of Gwennap, and Devoran out of the parish of Feock ... The handsome little church at Devoran, admired by everyone who sees it, was built from Mr Phillpotts' own (money)... the first subscriber, as well as one of the largest... He has taken the liveliest interest in it (the Cathedral)...(he was) Chairman of the bench of magistrates of the West Powder Petty Sessional Division, remarkable for the soundness of his judgement, his impartiality, and his keenness in discovering a legal difficulty or an informality".⁴⁰

Phillpotts' power came from the variety of roles he performed. Not only was he a clerical magistrate but his brother was Archdeacon and Chancellor of the diocese. He was also the nephew of Henry Phillpotts, Bishop of Exeter for 39 years and last-but-one bishop of the undivided diocese. Hingeston-Randolph describes him as "squarson" or Squire-Parson, living as he did at Porthgidden in Feock. His was one of the homes which newspaper reports in the *Royal Cornwall Gazette* and elsewhere said offered county hospitality at the time of

the laying of the foundation stone. Other such houses included Trelissick and Tehidy where G L Bassett hosted a party which included the Lord Mayor of London. Benson found an excellent saint to be connected with Phillpotts. Aldhelm was not only a Saxon missionary connected with the area of Cornwall close to the Camel estuary. There is a St Aldhelm's Chapel in St Kew Parish near Chapel Amble. Aldhelm was also associated with Doulting in Somerset, and later in 1882 Benson spotted another connection, which was appropriate for someone who had donated so generously to the Cathedral: "I perceive that Aldhelm, the first Bishop of the Western division made of the old Winton diocese (705) and who wrote Gerontius, the better to wean us Cornish of (sic) our errors (I wish he would write another) died at Doulting whence we are getting much stone for our Cathedral".⁴¹ The Phillpotts family, like Aldhelm, came from Somerset. Henry Phillpotts, the future Bishop of Exeter, was born at Bridgwater, the son of John Phillpotts. Educated at Gloucester Cathedral School, John Phillpotts became a factory owner, innkeeper, auctioneer and land agent to the Dean and Chapter of Gloucester Cathedral. Aldhelm had an enormous impact on Cornwall, as the Phillpotts family was also to have. William Phillpotts was possibly one of Benson's 'busy chaplains'- one of his roles, according to Hingston-Randolph during his time as vicar of Feock between 1844 and 1874, was as Bishop's chaplain (to his uncle). One of the other 'busy chaplains' may have been Mason, and John Rundle Cornish, also described by Hingston-Randolph as a (more recent) Bishop's chaplain, was probably the third. Edward Shuttleworth of Egloshayle along with R Martin of Menheniot and Saltren Rogers, who had been vicar of Gwennap for 22 years, may have been the three who became canons out of honour-to-age principle, though it is not entirely easy to follow Benson's categories in this matter. Hingston-Randolph

described Saltren Rogers as an evangelical and the parish as populous, arduous and more and more troublesome. Rogers was admitted to the stall of St Piran, Cornish to St Buriana, Mason to St Cybi, Shuttleworth to St Conan, and Martin to Coentín.

The *West Briton* reported that two of the canons appointed were to become stipendiary: “And there is reason to believe that funds for that purpose will be forthcoming”.⁴² But this could only come about after considerable thought and preparation on Benson’s part. He committed his thoughts to paper, as was his wont, which he entitled: “Observations by the Bishop of Truro on Truro Canonries”.⁴³ Benson finds a useful, if unique, precedent for what he wanted to do in a previous Order in Council of 24 March 1876 which founded the Canonry of Cantlers or Cantlowes (otherwise known as Kentish Town) at St Paul’s Cathedral and linked the work with that of Inspector of Religious Knowledge in the primary schools in the Diocese of London. This was a very helpful precedent because Benson wanted to appoint a Canon Missioner. Another helpful precedent was the consecration service on 25 April 1877 when Benson was made Bishop, also at St Paul’s Cathedral in London. R W Church was Dean of the Cathedral and his biographer describes this as “one of the first occasions in St Paul’s when a great religious ceremony was carried out with all the order and beauty of a perfected musical service”.⁴⁴ Bishop Henry Phillpotts had secured a fifth Canonry for Exeter Cathedral out of the Cathedral reforms of 1840, worth £1000 per annum, with the intention of passing this Canonry to Truro if Truro Diocese and Cathedral ever came about: “that out of the £1000 per annum... two Canonries should be founded at Truro of the yearly value of £333 each so long as the present Archdeacon of Cornwall enjoys £333 a year out of the same, and that when he ceases to do so, the Archdeaconry of

Cornwall be reduced to the (usual) value of £200 a year, and the two canonries... increased to the value of £400 a year each".⁴⁵

Was the appointment of a Dean strictly necessary for this process to continue? Benson thought not. "The appointment of the Dean seems not essential to there being canons or even 'a chapter.' Historically chapters have existed without Deans (e.g. at Exeter where there was no Dean for two centuries after the foundation of the Chapter); and this is recognised in the phrase 'Dean and Chapter.' It is of course possible that a chapter could not exercise the functions of election etc. which are assigned to a Dean and Chapter. But if it should appear to be advisable that a Dean should be constituted, the Bishopric of Truro Act, Clause Eight appoints an Order in Council as the instrument for the foundation of a Dean and Chapter. "Could such an Order in Council nominate the Bishop to be Dean, as in Llandaff Cathedral, until funds are provided for the separate foundation of a Decanal stall? This would obviate difficulties in the way of the Dean and Chapter having control of the building (such as the patron might not like) as in that case the Patron would be Dean also".⁴⁶ The possibility that an Order in Council could nominate the Bishop to be the Dean would mean that Bishop Benson had no rival in translating his own vision for the Cathedral into action. Frederick Temple was as happy as his predecessor Henry Phillpotts for the Canonry to be transferred from Exeter to Truro. But there was strategy needed at his end as well. He wrote to Lord Devon on 11 October 1877: "I am very desirous that a Canonry should be transferred from Exeter to Truro. But I doubt whether a resolution to that effect passed by the (Exeter) Diocesan Conference might not hinder instead of helping. The thing that would help me most would be to obtain the willing concurrence of the Dean and Chapter of Exeter. And a private

application to them backed by a few names of weight (yours, for instance, Lord Mount Edgcumbe's and five or six more) might induce them to be favourable. But I think a resolution of Conference would in all probability, put their backs up. The strong opposition from them would seriously influence the Government. I doubt the expediency of resolution on the point passed by the Cornish Diocesan Conference. But even if expedient for them to pass it, I do not think it would be expedient for us to do so".⁴⁷ Lord Devon sent this letter from Powderham Castle to Edmund Carlyon at Polkyth the following day 12 October with the additional but ignored instruction "please to burn the Bishop's letter". Carlyon wrote to Benson on 13 October enclosing the letters and stating in his covering letter: "the Bishop of Exeter knows the situation so well that it would not be wise I think to take any steps not in unison with his views. How can the notice on our agenda papers... be stopped from going out? If you agree with the Bishop of Exeter, can you communicate with the printer accordingly? I will write to Heard by this post to prepare him for such a communication".⁴⁸

Not only did there have to be elaborate politicking to get the item off the Diocesan Conference agenda at short notice, the Archbishop of Canterbury also had to be brought on board. "Your grace will ask what use I propose to make of the Canonries... One I want to train men for Orders (after the manner of a Chancellor), for here the difficulty of getting not only university men, but any curates at all, is insuperable at present. And men have been, and are, ordained without any training at all. And I want the other to have particular interest in the many Mission chapels which are springing up. Our whole county is simply inhabited in hamlets, and the distance of the churches from the people is in all directions as remarkable as it is puzzling. In these chapels I want someone to go about with me and for me... the requirements of this county (so far as my

experience of other parts goes) appear to be really unique. And we're not doing our duty at all by this religious people, who live in such small isolated hamlets unless we can get at them. There is alas! much vice as well as religious feeling in such places. My Canons ought to reside nine months like other incumbents and hold no other benefices".⁴⁹ It was not at the level of theory, but at the level of the practical outworking of the theory, that Benson had most problems. Section 8 of the Truro Bishopric Act required the Truro Bishopric Endowment Fund to be held in trust by the Ecclesiastical Commission to provide a net annual income, not exceeding £4200, and a residence for the Bishop. Benson, in an aside, states that the Fund does not provide anything like £4200 per annum and that it would be a long time before it did produce that sum, if ever.⁵⁰

There seemed to be a reluctance in the circles of power in London to countenance the formation of a chapter until other matters, including the Bishop's house and income, had been settled. A copy of a minute from Stephen Lushington, the senior lawyer who was Dean of Arches to the Home Secretary, Richard Cross, which was sent to Benson, was not encouraging. "The Dean and Chapter would in any case be in an exceptional position at Truro. There is no cathedral properly so called, but the parish church assigned as the Cathedral Church, and the assignments subject to the rights of the patron and incumbent. Hence the Dean and Chapter would not have the ordinary rights of such a body over and in the building. This application, however, is not the foundation of the Dean and Chapter but for the foundation of what are called two Canons; but they would be Canons only in name. There would be no Dean over them; they would not form a Chapter; they would not have any of the ordinary functions of Canons; nor would the ordinary law relating to canons apply to them. The only precedent of which I am aware, is that from the Cathedrals Acts Amendment

Act 1873, which in Cathedrals and collegiate churches already having a chapter, enables the foundation of re-established, additionally established or “converted” canonries on conditions different from those applying to ordinary canons. The advantage of the existence of a chapter is that these new canons might be made subject to such part of the law relating to canons as would be applicable in their case. To accede to Bishop’s request requires legislation, if only for Truro by Amendment of Truro Bishopric Act more generally by amending Cathedral Acts Amendment Act”.⁵¹ In a marginal note, Lushington adds that the only time a canonry on conditions different from those applying to ordinary canons had actually happened was at St Paul’s in London, the very precedent that Benson was trying to apply to Truro. Lushington was saying that it could not be done because there was no Cathedral and therefore the incumbent of St Mary’s, not the chapter, would have rights over the building. Moreover, Frederick Temple, Benson’s great ally at Exeter, was himself far from convinced of the desirability of a chapter. Benson wrote to the Bishop of Exeter on 30 September 1877.⁵² He received the following reply: “What a difference there is in the way in which men go to work! The very last thing that I should have created if I had become Bishop of Truro would have been a chapter. But I have no doubt that you are right nevertheless, and that you will work the Diocese better if you have such a body at your side. It is clear that the Canonry cannot be handed over to you without an Act of Parliament. I am ready to help forward such an Act in any way you like. I do not think it would be well that I should take the initiative but short of that you may count on my hearty aid”.⁵³

Benson’s idea was that the bishopric of Truro should be endowed at less than was envisaged and that the two stipendiary canons, Mason and Whitaker, be paid less than normal to enable a Cathedral chapter to go ahead. The

weakness of Benson's approach was that it might be possible for the three clergy so affected-Benson himself, Mason and Whitaker-to forego part of the income that might properly be theirs, but this was hardly a proper basis on which to secure funding for the diocese, since their successors might not be willing to consent to this arrangement. Securing the right principles for the new Diocese seemed to have been more important to civil service and legal departments than the disposition of the particular personalities involved. Lushington received the following advice from a civil servant: "You may remember that the committee who advised unofficially about the foundation of the see of Truro recommended that this canonical income should go to the endowment of the Bishopric... The Truro Bishopric Act envisages Dean and Chapter Truro once (the) Truro Bishopric Fund had reached £4200 per annum".⁵⁴

Despite the misgivings of Lushington and Cross, Benson had the most valuable supporter of all when he received the reply from the Archbishop of Canterbury from his residence on the Isle of Thanet: "With the Bishop of Exeter's consent I fully approve of the fifth stall at Exeter being transferred to Truro and divided. I trust all blessings may attend your exertions for your Diocese".⁵⁵ Beresford Hope has been a leading lay figure in the reform of cathedral canonries, guiding through parliament legislation enabling greater flexibility. Even so, Benson's Archdeacon and Chancellor, Thomas Phillpotts had advised Benson: "As you have no chapter in Truro you cannot bring Beresford Hope's Act into operation unless you can get it extended to the new cathedral".⁵⁶ Nevertheless, Beresford Hope wrote a letter of encouragement to Benson suggesting that something could be done with the St Endellion prebends to help with creating a canonry at Truro Cathedral. "I do not know

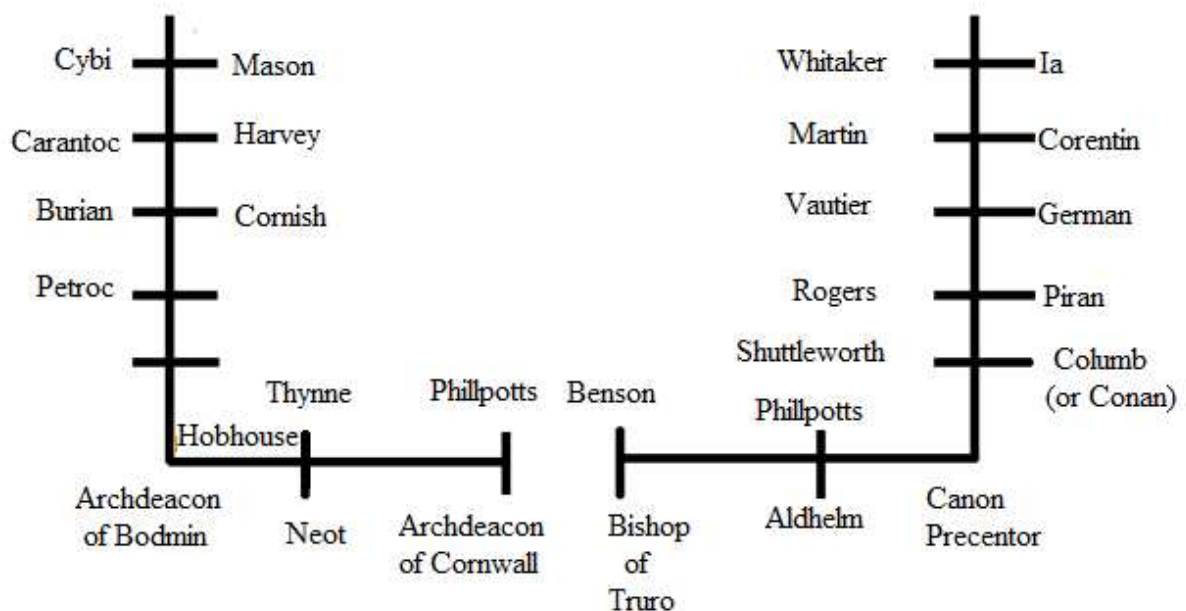
what the more potential difficulties may have been. In that NE of Cornwall is... St Endellion with three prebendaries attached to it in the gift of Colonel Bell and Lord Roberts – of an aggregate income of between £300 and £400 a year. If powers could be taken for the Bishop to obtain... the patronage of these stalls... by transferring one of the actual occupants to Truro to create there one consolidated residentiaryship of St Endellion-one of your four stalls would be then found with something over for the Dean. I believe that at St Endellion they do nothing. Lord Robartes... is, I hear, a good churchman".⁵⁷ Despite the imaginative idea, nothing came of it. In fact, nothing could come out of the creation of stipendiary canons for some years. The canonries at Truro depended on the creation of legislation that could not begin until after the death of the holder of the fifth canonry. This vacancy occurred when Chancellor Harrington died on 14 July 1881. Since the arrangement was that the legislation could be enacted 12 months after the Quarter Day that followed the vacancy of the canonry this meant 29 September (Michaelmas) 1882, which was only a matter of months before the call came to take Benson from Truro to Canterbury.

In the meantime, the number of Honorary Canons began to proliferate. The original eight were joined by Vautier, the vicar of Kenwyn on 19 February 1878, Whitaker on 7 March 1878, and G H Wilkinson, who was to succeed Benson in post as Bishop of Truro, was made Canon on 16 June 1878. R F Wise, who became a major benefactor of the new Cathedral was made Canon on 23 May 1879. Benson hoped that the new Archdeacon of Bodmin would accept his offer of a Canonry at the new Cathedral: "I should feel it... a great hindrance and discouragement to my making the Cathedral practically useful, if you feel compelled to stand aloof from it. If clergy whom one trusts and looks up to will not help one in this way, I think I should reconsider whether it is worthwhile to

aim at a Cathedral body at all".⁵⁸ Hobhouse was not to be persuaded. "I find myself unable to take advantage of the offer, which your Lordship has in such flattering terms made to me". Hobhouse argued that he did not have enough time to devote to the Cathedral because of the parish work at St Ive in the far east of Cornwall.

This did not prevent Benson from drawing up his putative arrangement of stalls in the new Cathedral.

Benson's proposed arrangement of stalls for the canons in Truro cathedral⁵⁹



Here we see Benson's visionary nature because the vision he foresaw was far in advance of what was taking place, or even possible during his time as Bishop. The power of the vision had to take account of the pettiness of some of the people who were to be made canons, who wanted their money and status preserved intact: as we have seen, Benson in his diary complained about Vautier's unwillingness to exchange livings. "He will take nothing which is £10 less than Kenwyn. Here we trace the sad influence of Phillpotts the Archdeacon over a good natured man not incapable of dealing with a smaller place".⁶⁰

William John Phillpotts, Chancellor of the Diocese and Archdeacon of Cornwall, also objected to the presence of a Precentor in the Cathedral. "I hereby enter my protest against your Lordship appointing any Preses or Precentor in the Cathedral of S Mary's Truro". He reminded Benson that the Order in Council only allowed the Bishop to appoint honorary canons until a Dean is appointed. "I stand next to your Lordship in rank in the Cathedral – a rank which I do not intend to give up".⁶¹ In the light of this, the mention of a Canon Precentor on Benson's chart seems to have been optimistic. Benson's problems with Harvey thinking he was *de facto* Dean because he was vicar of St Mary's continued. "Canon Harvey again deprecated our acquiring power. Ep. (Benson) said he wanted a Council to do work not to gain power". Even Canon Rogers created problems. "Canon Rogers still favours power of two to carry the matter to the whole Chapter. Ep. (Benson) pointed out the Bishop could still decide for himself: they were never going to bind the Bishop".⁶²

Benson's vision depended on three things: his own autocracy, (he was going to do things his own way); on minute analysis of facts based on copious historical research; and finally the capacity to ignore all the facts he wanted in favour of a romantic vision of Cornishness. He ends his letter to Bradshaw asking for Bradshaw's advice on which Cornish saints to include in the stalls of the Cathedral, asking that they be based on "sources of sound knowledge" with the words: "this Cornubia is a land of wonderment, historical, physical, spiritual. I'm not sure that it is part of the created universe".⁶³ Inconvenient facts, the opposition of the Archdeacon of Cornwall, Vautier, Rogers, Harvey, Hobhouse, in fact almost anyone who was his leading co-worker, could be almost brushed aside if occasion demanded. For the implementation of the vision, Benson could rely on the talented young men, Mason and Whitaker whom he had brought to

Truro from Cambridge University. When Mason was being considered as Bishop of Adelaide (where he would have had in his diocese many Cornish abroad who had emigrated, because of mining, to the Yorke Peninsula) Benson again committed his thoughts to his diary: “Archdeacon Hobhouse so quiet and so cold says it is impossible to contemplate the prospect of his leaving ‘without a shudder’. If he went our Mission work would collapse – not diminish in force but collapse. He was the first missionary whom any Bishop employed as he has been employed”.⁶⁴

The attention to minute detail, combined with a lack of precision with facts when it suited Benson, was something that was noticed by the Dean of Lincoln and by Benson’s brother-in-law, the distinguished Cambridge philosopher Henry Sidgwick. What the Dean of Lincoln says in his reminiscences of Benson as headmaster of Wellington, apply equally to Truro: “no one could see Benson at Wellington without feeling that he loved his position. He loved, as he loved all through his life, the work of organising even to minute detail. He loved and idealised the place, the country freedom, the lustrous air, the scent of heather and firwoods, the scraps of historic association”.⁶⁵ Sidgwick supplemented this reminiscence in *A. C. Benson’s Life* by acknowledging Benson’s ability “to work effectively on the minutiae of other people’s needs”, which “combined with his ready and versatile sympathy, made him so helpful and delightful as a counsellor”. But Sidgwick also noticed that Benson possessed a “curious imprecision regarding facts.” “As a scholar, I came to think that he was not quite so accurate and sound as he was subtle and ingenious: and his knowledge of historic facts was liable to curious lapses at times. (This appeared in ordinary conversation sometimes, especially when quantitative accuracy was in question)”.⁶⁶ Benson’s was a bravura performance. In order to sustain his own

ideas after the laying of the foundation stone he had to brook no opposition. He was in charge and it was his vision that generally won the day. He hoped that there would be a gradual extension of honorary Canonries to a maximum of 24 – and that every year from 1880 onwards, two new Canons would be appointed until the maximum was reached.

Quite why Benson chose certain saints such as St Cybi (for Mason) but not others like St Petroc or St Sampson remains a mystery. Not only were Petroc and Sampson on the original list of possibilities sent to Bradshaw but in both cases, particularly in the case of Sampson, more is known about them than in the case with the majority of Cornish saints. Finding a factual basis for the saints was a hallmark of Benson's research. In fact so far as the choice of saints follows a pattern, the union of the Celtic and the English churches can be discerned as a theme. Benson does vouchsafe to posterity why he chose St Conan is the name of the stall: "St Conan, the most modern of those named, was the Bishop who finally effected the union of the Cornish church with the Church of England, and several signatures of his, attached to documents, are still extant".⁶⁷ Despite the apparent anachronism of the Church of England existing at the time of St Conan, this was, for Benson, neither anachronistic nor a factual inaccuracy. It was what he believed. Despite the Reformation, continuity of bishops between between the time of Conan and other Celtic saints and the present-day was of great importance to Benson: hence his researches into the British Bishops in Cornwall. "In 909 Eadulf of Crediton exercises episcopacy in Cornwall, followed by five bishops at Bodmin (Conan, Ethellgar, Athelstan, Wulfsie, Comoere) until Bodmin burnt in 981. Thereafter bishops of St Germans Eldred, Ethelred, Burkwold 990 – 1042 until see transferred to Crediton".⁶⁸

What appeared to be of only antiquarian interest had important consequences in Benson's dealing with the Roman Catholic Church and the Methodist Church in Cornwall. We have noted P. S. Morrish's point that Benson saw Truro Diocese as the restoration of the see to Cornwall. The more the Anglican Church protested against the Roman Catholic belief that the apostolic succession of bishops had been broken at the Reformation and that the succession went back to the days of Conan, the more the Methodists accused Anglicans, including Benson, of regarding them as having an inferior ministry, because their ministry did not depend on apostolic succession. The minister, whether Bishop, Diocesan Missioner or parish priest was central to Benson's vision. In each case their authority derived from their ordination. Such was the emphasis on ordained ministry validated by apostolic succession that it was bound to conflict with an attitude towards authority which derived from the Methodist Conference and a greater authority given to laity within the circuits. It might be said that Benson depended on heroic individuals to make his system work. These individuals needed to be not just authoritarian but authoritative as well. Indeed it was precisely because Benson was authoritative that he carried conviction among the Cornish people. What about Methodist ministers? Their equal authority to Anglican clergy was asserted in relation to burial in Churchyards. Was the only person authorised to do so the parson of the parish or were other ministers equally authorised? Despite the remarkable achievements of May 1880 in laying the foundation stone, the year 1880 itself was, in many respects, a difficult year. 1880 saw the passing of the Burial Laws Amendment Act, which created enormous controversy among Anglicans. The attempt to extend fund-raising for the Cathedral beyond Cornwall proved problematic in years 1880-1882. There were unexpected concerns with stone for

the building of the Cathedral itself. It is to these concerns that we will turn in the next chapter.

Footnotes to chapter 6

¹ TCM p.161

² *ibid*

³ TCM p.166

⁴ FB Smith, 'The Atheist Mission 1840-1900', in *Ideas and Institutions of Victorian Britain: Essays in honour of G.K. Clark*, (ed. Robert Robson, London, 1967), p.233

⁵ *Ibid* p 234

⁶ TCM p.166

⁷ A. C. Benson, *Life* vol. 1, p.457

⁸ *Ibid*, p.317

⁹ *Ibid*, p.556

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p.560

¹¹ *Ibid*, p.561

¹² A. C. Benson, *Life* vol. 1 p.645

¹³ D. C. Moore, 'Social Structure, Political Structure and Public Opinion in Mid Victorian England', in *Ideas and Institutions* (ed. Robson 1967), p.39

¹⁴ ed. Robert D. Storch, *Popular Culture and Custom in 19th Century England*, (London and Canberra, 1982), p.4

¹⁵ *Ibid* pp.7/8

¹⁶ A. C. Benson, *Life* Vol. 1 p.587

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p.272

¹⁸ P. S. Morrish, *History Celticism and Propaganda in the Formation of the Diocese of Truro* in *Southern History* 5 (1) (Gloucester 1983), p.238

¹⁹A. C. Benson *Life* vol.1 pp.454,453

²⁰Ibid p.457

²¹TCM 165. Frederick Temple was actually born on the Ionian island of Levkas where his father was a civil servant. His mother, Dorcas, was a daughter of Richard Carveth of Probus. Peter Hinchliff, *Frederick Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury: a Life*, (Oxford, 1998), pp.5, 8.

²²Peter Hinchliff, *Frederick Temple* (1998) p.156

²³Ibid, p.157

²⁴A. C. Benson, *Life* vol. 1 p.411

²⁵TCM 165 *Royal Cornwall Gazette* 21/5/1880

²⁶Edwin Jaggard (ed.), *Liberalism in West Cornwall: The 1868 election papers of A Pendarves Vivian MP* (Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 2001), p.27

²⁷A. C. Benson, *Life* vol. 1, pp. 555, 563

²⁸ Ibid, 555 For the Beaglehole family, who made money in South Australia, see also Payton *Cornwall* (Fowey,1996), p.240 which depicts an engine-house constructed by John Beaglehole from Helston.

²⁹Newsome, *Victorian World* p.189

³⁰A. C. Benson, *Life* vol.1 p.430

³¹Ibid, p.428

³²*London Gazette* no.24394 p 6933

³³TCM 116/1

³⁴TCM 116/10

³⁵TCM 116/41/4

³⁶TCM 116/47

³⁷TCM 116/41/4

³⁸TCM 116/60 letter dated 28 October 1877

³⁹Quoted by Donaldson, (1902), p.104

⁴⁰TCM 116/41/10; TCM 116/41/3

⁴¹ TCM 147 66 Diary entry of 23 May 1882

⁴² TCM 116/41/3

⁴³TCM 117/2

⁴⁴A.C. Benson, *Life* vol. 1 p.426

⁴⁵TCM 117/2 1

⁴⁶TCM 117/2, 4

⁴⁷TCM 117/9

⁴⁸TCM 117/11

⁴⁹TCM 117/19

⁵⁰TCM 117/3

⁵¹Ibid

⁵²TCM 117/6

⁵³TCM 117/7

⁵⁴TCM 117/13

⁵⁵TCM 117/20

⁵⁶TCM 116/13

⁵⁷TCM 117/31

⁵⁸TCM 116/35

⁵⁹TCM 116/65

⁶⁰TCM 147/7

⁶¹TCM 116/17

⁶²TCM 51

⁶³A. C. Benson, *Life* vol. 1 p.428

⁶⁴TCM 147

⁶⁵A. C. Benson, *Life* vol. 1 p.248

⁶⁶A. C. Benson, *Life* vol 1 p.148

⁶⁷TCM 116/41/10

⁶⁸TCM 106

Chapter 7

Rivalry and cooperation: Anglican- Methodist relations in Cornwall 1851 – 1910.

The census of 1851 had shown that Cornwall was strongly Methodist and that the Anglican Church was weaker than anywhere else in the southern part of the country. In the words of the *Cornish Telegraph* editorial a few months before Benson's arrival: "hitherto the successes of the brothers John and Charles Wesley... have had matters very much their own way in the county".¹ Though the Anglican Church had reorganised its deaneries in 1875 and continued to spend a prodigious amount of money on building new churches, repairing old churches, furnishing them and providing for them in other ways, such as by installing new heating systems and introducing organs, the balance between the churches had not greatly changed in the quarter of a century between the census and the events of 1876 and 1877, which led to Benson's arrival as Bishop of Truro in May 1877.

At the opening of Landrake church, one of the first churches in Cornwall to be re-opened by Bishop Benson, he preached on a text from Isaiah 61.4: "They shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations".² In his private correspondence and diaries there is a strong sense that Benson was trying to recover ground that had been lost to Methodism.³ This led to a great deal of suspicion among Methodists, some of whom saw the revival of the church as a threat to them. One prominent Methodist said to friends that he would rather see people coming out of a public house than out of a church building.⁴ Such attitudes were fuelled by historic suspicions concerning

perceived Anglican laziness, needless disputation, avarice and aloofness. On the issue of indolence, one writer in the *West Briton* commented tartly that “the new bishop will find many sleeping clergy who will not be able to show any fruit for their labours”.⁵ This is a line of thought that was strongly held and can be traced back to John Wesley himself. Joseph Hammond, Vicar of St Austell in his account of the history of the town published in 1897, recounts the story that on Sunday, 25 September 1757, Wesley “who always went to the Parish Church, and took his followers with him, heard Mr. Hugo officiate ... a few months before Hugo’s death. Wesley wrote in his journal ‘He had been Vicar of St. Austell for between sixty and seventy years. O what might a man full of faith and zeal have done for God in such a course of time’”.⁶ An example of what the *West Briton* regarded as a needless disputation was an ‘excited debate’ on baptismal regeneration at Hayle. The Anglican cause was led by the Reverend F Hockin of Phillack, the ‘Dissenters party’ led by the Reverend Mr. Sunmer of the United Methodist Free Church in Redruth. The *West Briton* comments: “Both sides of the meeting became excited, and neither party convinced the other, which was just what was sure to happen. An excited meeting is not a fit assembly for the discussion of such a subject. What benefit could possibly be derived from such a disputation?”⁷

The alleged problem of avarice was highlighted by a burial dispute at Landulph in East Cornwall, which the *Royal Cornwall Gazette* glossed over in a footnote to its somewhat eulogistic appreciation of Truro Diocese in 1877. It is interesting to compare the reporting in the *West Briton*. In the issue of the *West Briton* dated 18 January 1877, and under the headline “Rector of Landulph”, the story of the Reverend Samuel Smith is told. The Reverend Samuel Smith (by this time living some distance from Landulph, in Cheltenham) spent two days at

the Stonehouse County Court. On the first day he sued two parishioners for small sums of money which he said they owed him. The Rector's warden also pursued claims on the Rector's behalf against other people. On the second day Smith sued for trespass, having given his tenants notice to quit. In this notice to quit, Smith had addressed the allotment holders he wished to get rid of as 'ye land beggarers'. According to the *West Briton* "the judge told him that it was no wonder that he had raised a hornet's nest around him in the parish".⁸ In a separate case, also heard on the second day of proceedings (and this may have been the episode alluded to by the *Royal Cornwall Gazette*) the Rector sued a woman for a fee of two guineas, on the grounds that she had erected a tombstone to her husband in the churchyard without his consent. Smith admitted that he had raised the fee to two guineas because she first refused to pay a half-guinea fee. The judge ruled that he could not possibly recover this sum of money.

When evidence was heard in court concerning the background to the case, a statement was made by the churchwarden that the Rector had told him he would try to "get all he could out of the parish". The reason for so doing was startling. Smith believed that Dizzy (Disraeli) would take another leap in the dark and disestablish the Church at twenty years' purchase. Therefore for every pound that Smith received, he would receive twenty times as much on disestablishment. The more Smith maximised his income in the present, the more would accrue when Disraeli, as he thought, would disestablish the Church in years to come. The judge in the case observed that if rectors behaved generally as the plaintiff had, the English church would not last much longer as an establishment. This observation by the judge was possibly correct at a time when Irish disestablishment had just happened, and agitation for

disestablishment in Wales was politically significant. If the judge was right and Smith's bad behaviour contributed to disestablishment, even this bad behaviour, Smith hoped, would make him richer.

Anglican aloofness was seen above all in its attitude towards burial of non-Anglicans in churchyards. This running sore inflamed attitudes in Oxfordshire, Cumberland and Lincolnshire as well as in Cornwall.⁹ With Benson coming from Lincoln diocese, it was the problems in Owston Ferry, Lincolnshire, just four miles from Epworth, birthplace of John and Charles Wesley, that seem most to have inflamed passions. Owston Ferry was also the benefice where the Archdeacon of Stow was vicar. The situation was further affected by the confusion in many people's minds between Benson, who was Chancellor of the Lincoln Cathedral and Phillimore, who was Chancellor of the diocese and therefore had legal authority over the churchyard at Owston Ferry. According to the *Cornish Telegraph*, there was in the churchyard an "unseemly exhibition in which the whole Wesleyan connexion at the graveside of one of the Minister's children was pained and insulted. The event is one, unfortunately, not likely soon to be forgotten ... the names of Wordsworth and Phillimore are now notorious in every Methodist Church in the country; and now that another name (the Chancellor of Lincoln) ... is coming to the front as Bishop in a Methodist County, tongues are busy."¹⁰ Even here the *Cornish Telegraph* attempted an emollient approach. Although acknowledging "it is too much to expect that Dr Benson will take the trouble to vindicate himself in this matter. His first concern will not be popularity with the Wesleyans", the paper continues to assert "his action in the Owston Ferry scandal was probably inevitable without the resignation of his office. Certainly he can in no degree be held responsible for the actions of his chief."¹¹ Two weeks later, the *Cornish Telegraph* published a

partial retraction, “we can only regret ... any ambiguity of language”, appearing to confuse the role of the Chancellor of the Cathedral (Benson’s position) with the role of Chancellor of the Diocese (a legal position often held by a layman who would determine law in relation to churchyards and tombstones).¹² The paper denied that it had confused the two positions, though the original article did make it look as if the paper supposed that Benson had legal authority over the churchyard at Owston Ferry. Such was the suspicion between Anglicans and Methodists of the period that such misunderstandings would occur.

The outgoing Bishop of Exeter, Frederick Temple, was well-loved by Methodists in complete contrast to the Bishop of Lincoln.¹³ It is interesting, therefore, that a letter in the *Cornish Telegraph*, written by an anonymous Lincolnshire Methodist, says of Benson, “He is a great friend of Dr Temple. They were masters together at Rugby. His views are, I should think, the High Church views of the Bishop of Lincoln and the Broad Church views of the Bishop of Exeter combined, with all the latter’s accessibility of manner”.¹⁴ Perhaps a key phrase in the *Cornish Telegraph* is that the successors to John and Charles Wesley “had matters very much their own way in the county” until the coming of Truro Diocese. It was easy therefore for the *Cornish Telegraph*, founded in 1851, to respond to this situation by being Methodist-leaning, though being reasonably sympathetic to broad-church Anglicans.

Behind these problems of intransigence in churchyards lay a very great suspicion of Anglo-Catholicism, which had moved into a new era in 1874 with the passing of the Public Worship Regulations Act. Archbishop Tait had introduced the Bill into the House of Lords as an attempt to limit Anglo-Catholic practice. The idea that some Anglo-Catholics would risk imprisonment rather than recognise the law had not been anticipated by those who drafted the

legislation. The coverage of the trial of Arthur Tooth, Vicar of St James Hatcham in the diocese of Rochester, in the local press of Cornwall was considerable. The newspapers reserved their greatest criticism for Anglo-Catholic clergy and parishes. In the twentieth-century shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham in Norfolk, Father Tooth has an honoured place as a persecuted priest with a chest monument tomb by the main door. Nothing could be further from the intentions of the *West Briton* as it charted the grim story which led to the Vicar's imprisonment for breaking the terms of the Public Worship Regulation Act. One article in the *West Briton* reports how Tooth and his co-workers refused entry to the church to Canon Gee, who had been sent by the Bishop of Rochester to take the Christmas services at St. James Hatcham in 1876. The Christmas services still went on with what Father Tooth would have deemed appropriate banners, honouring the Virgin Mary at Christmastime, and with much ritual. The comment of the *West Briton* in this regard is short and direct: "of course this defiance of the law cannot be allowed to continue".¹⁵ In reality, the implementation of the Public Worship Regulation Act was far more complex than the *West Briton* allowed. The newspaper itself in a later issue quoted the Bishop of Manchester, Bishop Fraser, as saying that if the regulations of the Act were impartially enforced it would burst the Church of England asunder. The *West Briton* quotes Bishop Fraser without comment: "He would not put it into force, nor would he be a partisan bishop."¹⁶

Sturdy local independence and 'doing your own thing' even when it conflicted with the wishes of the bishop was not simply an Anglo-Catholic characteristic. It had profound similarities with the attitude of many local Methodist churches in relation to Anglican authority. Doing what was right in one's judgement, even when bishops did not agree, was a characteristic of

John Wesley himself. Other barbs and printed asides in relation to Anglo-Catholicism are not hard to find in the pages of the *West Briton*. For instance, in reporting the death of a man who became a Cornish hero, R. S. Hawker, reviver of Harvest Festivals and writer of the words to the Cornish anthem “Trelawney”, the paper reports on his deathbed conversion to Roman Catholicism. This was, the *West Briton* suggests “enough to justify the suspicions which have been so often laughed down about concealed Romanists”.¹⁷

Throughout 1877, there was a local problem at Lanner. The *Redruth Times* published a letter signed by “A Protestant” complaining about services at the district church of Lanner during Holy Week. “These so-called services savour so much of Romanism that one cannot but feel astonished there with the ministers of Gwennap, St. Day, Treleigh and Pool; for they must be aware how thoroughly distasteful these mummeries are to the good people of Lanner who are too sensible to be priest ridden or even to tolerate the church pantomimes which are attempted in the once simple little place of worship”.¹⁸ Lanner was not a place “notorious for strange dresses, (or) sacrificial garments”.¹⁹ The paper’s attitude towards high church practice was no more favourable than that of the *Cornish Telegraph* at Penzance.²⁰ Nevertheless the paper printed a letter in its columns from Rev J. B. D. Hopgood at Lannarth Vicarage who wrote to complain of two attempts to murder him. “Hitherto I had heard that the Methodists, though capable of any crime, at least refrained from murder”.²¹ The cause of Hopgood’s accusation was his discovery of some loosened screws on the lychgate at the entrance to the churchyard making it possible for the beam to fall on him as walked underneath. Hopgood thought this action was deliberate.

When the *Redruth Independent* started publication in 1879 it is clear that the paper was more radical than its rival Redruth paper. Far from expressing any Anglican position it was in most respects the Conybeare house journal. Charles Conybeare was a radical Liberal who successfully stood for parliament against the orthodox Liberal, Pendarves Vivian in the 1885 election. The slogan “three acres and a cow” was used to convey Conybeare’s election promise to his supporters, of enough land for everyone to graze a cow, supporters who had seen their dwellings revert back to the Bassetts and other landowners on the “three lives system”. Conybeare was widely credited with enabling the Stannaries Act of 1887 to pass. But by 1895, the year the *Redruth Independent* ceased publication, many of his supporters had emigrated to South Africa, and in the election of that year Conybeare lost his seat to a Unionist politician named Strauss. Thus any antagonism between denominations was more than matched by disputes between political parties, especially at election times.

Besides this problem of mutual suspicion between Methodists and Anglo-Catholicism, were further problems concerning the validity of the sacraments, particularly the sacrament of baptism. Concern over baptismal regeneration had been raised by William O’Byran, founder of the Bible Christians, who spoke of the “lying baptismal services of the Church of England and Rome” for pretending that after baptism a child was regenerate.²² This tension between the two approaches was exacerbated by Archdeacon Phillpotts. In his charge to the clergy delivered at Bodmin, Phillpotts acknowledged that “Wesleyanism had done much for the county of Cornwall”. He further observed that “in every way that in which Christ was preached therein did he rejoice”. Comparing John Wesley to an Old Testament prophet, Phillpotts concluded, “With Romanism on the one hand and infidelity on the other, they had enough to do keeping back

the assaults of the enemy without indulging in acrimonious disputes among themselves".²³

Phillpotts's general visitation charge at Bodmin led to a response in the pages of the same newspaper, which did not wait a week for the next issue in order to make a reply. Instead, the paper printed a supplement by the Rev. W. H. Sunman's "Lecture on the Prayer Book as Tested by the Word of God". Avowedly taking as its starting point the visitation charge, Sunman particularly took exception to the Anglican doctrine, encapsulated in the Thirty-Nine Articles, of baptismal regeneration. "If baptism is not the means of regeneration what is baptism? Baptism was ... the sign of the conversion that had already taken place".²⁴

It is important to put this riposte from Sunman in context. Archdeacon Phillpotts was a close relative of Bishop Phillpotts, a former Bishop of Exeter who had refused to institute the Anglican evangelical Charles Gorham, Vicar of St Just in Penwith, to another living in the diocese. Phillpotts had judged Gorham to be unsound (i.e. too close to the Methodists) on baptismal regeneration, following a long examination of his views by Phillpotts. The eirenic statements of Bishop Phillpotts's nephew had clearly awakened old antipathies. There were many Methodists who sympathised with Gorham. Issues concerning baptism were exacerbated by issues concerning ordination. Anglo-Catholicism had emphasised apostolic succession and this had created a still wider division between the two churches, already divided over the issue of episcopal viz-a-viz non-episcopal ordination, an issue which went back to the actions of John Wesley himself. On the Methodist side, it led to accusations that Anglicans thought that Methodists had a bastard ministry and Methodists were anxious to affirm that their ministers were as validly ordained as their Anglican

counterparts. Benson, for his part, wondered why Methodists were so concerned about episcopal ordination, which he said they professed to believe was unimportant.

Practical, as well as theological, issues also played their part in creating a gulf between the two churches. Many Anglican churches were built in places which were nowhere near the centres of population. Methodists had found opportunities to build in the centres of towns and built their chapels to the latest standard of comfort. Although Victorian Gothic was an architectural style that was in vogue especially among Anglicans, it did not provide churches which were easy to heat. Many Methodist churches were conveniently situated in both town and countryside, the sheer numbers of Methodist chapels in the countryside making it likely that most people in Cornwall were near to a chapel and many of the chapels in the towns were set in the centre of their communities.

To these several issues, the creation of Truro Diocese, followed shortly after by the plans to build Truro Cathedral added to the difficulty. Not only was the Anglican choice of site close to a prominent Methodist church in Truro, but also the scale of the proposed building threatened to dwarf all other buildings in its neighbourhood. The building of Truro School, a Methodist foundation, provided a counterpoint to the cathedral. Though no one building of the school was built to the scale of the cathedral, the location of the school on a hill overlooking the cathedral was a Methodist rejoinder to any Anglican hopes of asserting a dominant position through architecture. It was also a reminder that middle-class education in Cornwall was in Methodist hands.²⁵ In terms of educating the future generations, Methodists showed their capacity for sound scholarship and learning as strongly as their Anglican counterparts.

Alongside these areas of difference between Methodists and Anglicans were also areas of cooperation. There were opportunities to serve a common purpose during times of food shortage or natural disaster and also through the temperance movement which had many adherents in both churches. Both churches had a chronic shortage of money and both were spending on church building well beyond their means. Many churches, Methodist and Anglican, were in debt for a long period of time. There is some evidence that Benson and others close to him sort to replicate within the Anglican Church some of the ideas which had been successful in the Methodist church. Many small groups were established, often as a network of parish groups under a diocesan umbrella. Liturgically, many Methodist churches used a version of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, though important changes to this provision occurred in the Methodist Church during the 1880s. Both churches wrestled with the problems of being an established or quasi-established church, identifying with the culture in Cornwall as far as was possible and, at the same time, reacting against the prevailing culture by suggesting an alternative. Anglo-Catholicism was a wing of the Church of England which was moving away from the prevailing Protestant culture, even at the risk of imprisonment, while many Methodist tea treats and other activities were often designed to coincide with fairs and other occasions where alcohol was consumed. Graham James argues that the Church of England moved through the Victorian period to a more strongly-held position of antagonism towards the prevailing culture, while Methodism was making the opposite journey – becoming the *de facto* established church in Cornwall and remaining so for the first half of the 20th century. Building on the church/sect dichotomy proposed by Troeltsch and developed by the sociologist Brian Wilson, James acknowledges that

Methodism maintained some sect-like characteristics of opposition to the prevailing culture, as opposed to the church's attempt to accommodate to the prevailing culture. He cites Thomas Shaw's example of Quenchwell Chapel, that "there was something of Noah's Ark about it and its flock; as though the world might be once more flooded out or blown to extinction, but somehow this small, isolated vehicle of godliness would float and survive ... There is no doubt that such attitudes to religion and life can be found in parts of Cornish Methodism by those who know where to look for them".²⁶ Although the example which James takes from Shaw is mid twentieth century, it would be possible to find illustrations of the same from a Victorian period. According to John Rule, by 1864 an outsider could describe Cornish parish feasts as a sorry sight where the offerings of drinking, sack races and donkey derbies ceased to attract the mass of the people. He attributed this to the success of temperance. But the success of religion versus revelry, Rule continues, was patchy. In 1845 Thomas Trevaskis spoke against Padstow's 'Obby 'Oss Mayday celebrations. He offered the people of Padstow a fat bullock to be roasted on May Day for the following seven years "if you will give up your vain practice of the hobby for the more rational amusement of eating roast beef." Rule comments: "with a hail of stones he was driven out of town, bullock and all".²⁷ The Roughtor revels started as a convention of East Cornwall temperance societies. Because so many people gathered, others came along offering more secular forms of amusement and even alcohol, thus altering the character of the assembly. In some ways Methodism defined the culture. As James points out, the Victorian nonconformist conscience in some ways was the moral conscience of the late Victorian period. In other ways it reacted against the culture. In sociological terms, Methodists and Anglicans exhibited sect-like and church-like tendencies

at the same time.²⁸This was one further point of contact between the Methodist Church and the Church of England, which on some issues protested strongly against the society it was part of and on other issues fitted in very accommodatingly. Notable among the protesters were the Methodist *bêtes-noir*-Anglo-Catholics. Not only were some in prison for defying the law, but an "us against the world" mentality is recognisable from Newman's first tract onwards. In this tract Newman urged the clergy to choose their side – were they to fit snugly into an Erastian Church, gaining the material privileges thereby which such accommodation afforded; or were they to recognise that they were successors and heirs to the apostles and the patriarchs of the early church, so many of whom were martyred for opposing the norms and conventions of society? The concept of the 'Ark of Faith' mentioned by Thomas Shaw in relation to Quenchwell Chapel was not a uniquely Methodist concept. The great Anglo-Catholic church of St Bartholomew's in Brighton was built to the specifications of the Ark.

Had both churches only exhibited sect like qualities, it is unlikely that they would have been such a threat to each other. It was particularly when they sought to represent the culture that they chiefly clashed. The Anglican Church, it appeared, sought to go back in history before industrialisation came to Cornwall, before Methodism. The building of a Cathedral in partial imitation of a mediaeval cathedral seemed to give visible expression to such a purpose. For Methodists, the 1851 Census data showed that Cornwall was a strongly Methodist county and many Methodists wanted to hold on to what they had. Some Methodists subscribed to the new Cathedral. Some did not, regarding it as a rival to their chapels. Whether or not they subscribed, the Anglican Church could be criticised as a church with Catholic tendencies and therefore not a

church for all Christians. Methodists who contributed saw that Methodist money, such as it was, did change a policy, which was regarded as excessively ritualistic in character.

Easton sees this perceived threat from what he calls 'resurgent' Anglicanism as a prime factor propelling Methodists forward in the search for visible Methodist unity. "This chapter has not argued that anti Anglo-Catholicism was the only reason prompting a desire that Methodists reunion. Nevertheless it remained a strong thread running through the whole reunion debate. Methodists had a strong sense that their territory was being encroached upon, especially in the villagesthis anxiety found a sharp focus in the establishment of the Diocese of Truro. In Cornwall, and elsewhere, Methodists were drawn together in defence of what they believed to be theirs by divine providence". He cites, for instance, the statement from the *Free Methodist* that "the great competing force of the day with village Methodism is the Church of England because the old type of country parson is extinct, replaced by a more zealous and often ritualistic successor".²⁹ Nevertheless, as Easton acknowledges, there were other problems for the Methodist (and indeed Anglican) Church which resulted from rivalry within Methodism or Anglicanism rather than rivalry between them. In 1885, a Wesleyan Methodist Conference report on Methodism in villages described the problem of two, three or even four, competing Methodist chapels in the same neighbourhood "involving not infrequently serious friction and financial enfeeblement... There are (several) places where the Methodist chapels themselves contain accommodation for more than the entire population".³⁰

In the Church of England, the issue of the moment was the imprisonment of the first priest, Arthur Tooth, for contempt of court when prosecuted under the

Public Worship Regulation Act, clearly an example of Anglican opposing Anglican. All the prosecuted ritualist priests were prosecuted by the Bishop of the diocese in which they served and the Public Worship Regulations Act itself was piloted through the House of Lords by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Though many Methodists would have agreed with the Bishops on their stance, it was essentially an inter-Anglican argument concerning the position of the church in relation to the state.

It is also possible to see disputes concerning temperance and education, sometimes bitter, within Methodism throughout the Victorian period. The British and Foreign Temperance Society was launched in 1831 and by 1834 it had 7,550 members in Cornwall, the highest ratio of members per thousand of population of any county. Temperance, which advocated moderation in alcoholic consumption, was challenged by teetotalism, or total abstinence; at St Ives tensions existed between Wesleyans who were teetotalers and their non-teetotal ministers. The superintendent minister of the circuit was sent hemlock with a message attached which read: "as he persisted in taking alcoholic poisoning, they advised him to take the HEMLOCK, as that would do the business more effectively".³¹ The 1870s saw the formation of adult temperance societies and Bands of Hope linked to Sunday Schools, where total abstinence was a central tenet. In the adult societies there were two possible pledges that could be made – either to give up all intoxicating liquor, or to exert influence in seeking to suppress intemperance. Among Bible Christians, temperance was strong from its earliest days. The first branch was formed in 1837, and in 1882 Bible Christians formed a denominational society. So we see, in the two possible pledges, an accommodation eventually being made between temperance and teetotalism, and the successful attempt by Bible Christians to

bring temperance under the umbrella of the denominational organisation. By contrast the Anglican Church in a rather limited way cooperated with Methodists and on occasion shared platforms with Methodists on the issue. The Church of England Temperance Society in Truro diocese was formed in 1877. The basis of the Society according to the *Truro Diocesan Kalendar* of 1883 was "union and cooperation on equal terms between those who use and those who abstain from intoxicating drinks". The Society was never very strong in Truro Diocese. Bishop Wilkinson expressed his fear that sometimes "the mere existence of a Diocesan organisation is regarded as a substitute for real earnest effort". He named the Church of England Temperance Society as one example of this. This view was reiterated at the Diocesan Conference of 1889: "the support accorded was not commensurate with the importance and needs of the cause".³² According to Hayden, the teetotal cause was strongest among Bible Christians, increasing in strength among Wesleyans as the 19th century progressed but only gaining tepid support from Anglicans.³³ The most violent disputes were between Methodists, just as the most violent disputes about ritual were between Anglicans. M.F. Edwards suggests teetotalism, as against temperance, may have been a smokescreen for the real reason behind the passionate dispute. "The separation of 1841 (the St Ives succession) was no more caused by teetotalism than the separation of 1834 (the formation of the Wesleyan Methodist Association – the so-called Warrenite split) by a theological institution. Behind both was the question of the pastoral office, with its ominous power of converting differences into divisions."³⁴

Education might be considered a more obvious area where the primary dispute was between, rather than within, the Anglican and Methodist churches. Certainly there was much friction between the two churches over the funding of

church schools and over denominational teaching within schools. This friction lay behind the long drawn out struggle to control the Trevilson charity at Newlyn East, where there was no Methodist school within the parish. The charity had become wealthy through mineral royalties and was administered by Vicar and Churchwardens to finance a church school. An acceptable compromise was only reached after many years and subsequent elections of trustees of the charity were fiercely fought.³⁵ The *Royal Cornwall Gazette* reported some other hotly contested battles in school board elections. This is perhaps unsurprising since by the turn of the century there were 135 Anglican and Parochial schools, 2 Catholic schools, 2 British, 17 Wesleyan and 181 Board schools throughout Cornwall. Denominational schools almost matched the number of Board schools creating a close rivalry between them. Forster's Education Act of 1870 was widely welcomed but it did create two enduring problems for Methodists. The first was the non-functioning of the conscience clause. "In Cornwall only a handful of children were ever withdrawn from religious instruction. It was argued by some that this low number was due to parental fears of clerical reprisals or of forcing their children to stand out in school. The more cynical took it as evidence that the agitation over the religious clauses was confined to a few fanatics".³⁶ Clause 25 of the Act was also regarded with displeasure. This permitted school boards to pay the fees of poor children out of school rates – raising the possibility of rates paid by nonconformists being used to pay for children to attend church schools. The Cornwall District Wesleyan Synod was especially fearful that the extension of the denominational system would threaten the interests of Methodism in the country areas. The Wesleyan position was complicated by its decision to build elementary schools and its support for denominational education, implicit in the acceptance of state aid for these

schools. However, as the numbers of Wesleyan schools in Cornwall and elsewhere were small, antipathy to Anglican-dominated education grew and Wesleyan attitudes became similar to other Methodists and nonconformists. Thus in 1903 the Wesleyan Conference was held at Camborne and this was the setting for a confrontation between the two schools of thought in Wesleyanism, whether to preserve Wesleyan Day Schools or to transfer them *en bloc* to the control of Local Authorities. But far greater was the opposition of Methodists to the Education Act of 1902 which was felt to favour church schools. Though the message of "no church schools on the rates" was a clear one, and the Methodist vote on this issue may have contributed to the Liberal landslide at the next General Election, it is also possible to see ulterior motives. W.A. MacArthur, the Wesleyan MP for St Austell, wrote that "this education struggle had brought back into the ranks of the Liberal Party many who, owing to the troubles of 1886, had left it". MacArthur was referring to the split over Home Rule for Ireland, opposed by many in Cornwall. Gladstone's advocacy of Home Rule led to the creation of Liberal Unionism which eventually allied itself with the Conservative party. The 1902 Education Act of a Conservative government was a major challenge to some Liberal Unionists to return to the Liberal fold. The Liberal-leaning *West Briton* rejoiced that Unionist Nonconformists "have not sunk all their nonconformity in their Unionism".³⁷

Two of the great Methodist-inspired advances in education in the Victorian period were in the provision of secondary and technical schools. Perhaps because Cornwall was not well endowed with secondary schools, four schools were established in the county by Wesleyans for what they called "middle-class education" – two boys' schools at Dunheved, Launceston (1879) and Truro (1880) and two for girls at Redbooke, Camborne (1879) and in West Cornwall

(Penzance), (1883). R G Rows, a prominent Helston Free Methodist, and the Camborne Wesleyan mine captain Josiah Thomas both had a keen interest in technical education and a historian of Cornish technical education concludes that Methodism was one of the most important factors in stimulating the development of technical education in Cornwall in the mid-Victorian period.³⁸ It is also true that Rows was prominent in making moves towards Methodist Union. At a provincial meeting attended by representatives of almost all Methodist denominations, Rows, a layman of the United Methodist Free Church, presented a paper on Methodist Union. "In closing, let me say we need Union, we need it especially in this county... where our position is assailed, when our fitness to minister to the people of this county is challenged, it is for the interests of Methodism, and for the interests of the Cornish people, that we present a united front. Cornwall was given by God to Methodism in the last century... Succeeding generations of Methodists... received this people as a trust, and today, in all its sacredness, this trust is to be discharged by us. We decline to make room for any hierarchy".³⁹ Yet almost 25 years later Rows, by now chairman of the Cornwall Education Committee, played a leading role in the setting up in Helston of the first County Secondary School in 1905, approximately 20 years after the closure of Helston Grammar School. The remit and intake of the Secondary School was wider than that of the Grammar School which preceded it, thus fulfilling the policy of the Liberal Party of which Rows was a member. Yet the first headmaster who was appointed, Robert Haydon, was in some respects, a representative of an elitist Anglican background which Rows sought to oppose. Haydon was educated at St Paul's in London and Cambridge where he took a double first in Classics. He was an Anglican lay reader whose left-wing Liberal sympathies had led him from Dewsbury

Grammar School where he was second master to become headmaster of Helston Secondary School where he held office for twenty years. Either Rows' views had mellowed over the twenty five years since 1881 or Haydon's abilities and curriculum vitae as well as his liberal political views, outweighed the fact that he was an Anglican.⁴⁰

It is easy to characterise Methodists as supporters of the Liberal party and Anglicans of the Conservative party but the reality is somewhat more complex than that, as Haydon's own career bears testimony. Such a dichotomy could sometimes be used to raise local grievances. For instance John Tremayne, standing as a Conservative in East Cornwall in 1874, was taken to task over his alleged refusal to allow Wesleyans to acquire land for a chapel at Marystow. One Methodist New Connexion minister even confessed to doing a little canvassing for the Liberal party during the 1880 election, which the Conservative-leaning *Royal Cornwall Gazette* considered "a remarkable statement for a Methodist minister to make".⁴¹ However the career of Sir Francis Lycett, a wealthy Wesleyan philanthropist who lost a bye-election at Liskeard in 1869 against another Liberal, Edward Horsman, (who was the only other candidate) suggests otherwise. The *West Briton* reported that Sir Francis Lycett had substantial support from Wesleyans "though not to the extent anticipated". The paper reckoned that "the ministers of the Free Wesleyan Methodists, of the Primitive and Bible Christian bodies, voted for Mr Horsman, while their flocks generally voted in opposition".⁴² Conservative-minded voters, in the absence of a candidate, appear to have favoured Horsman and this may have been decisive in ensuring his victory. Lycett tried again at St Ives in the 1874 election against the staunch Anglican C. T. Praed. The *Royal Cornwall Gazette* reported that: "Every dissenting preacher on the register was brought to the poll from

whatever distance he might have itinerated and put to preach to and canvass his former beloved friends". Lycett had also been given the task of distributing the class tickets, symbols of Methodist membership, and this caused one writer to state that he was sick of "chapel electioneering".⁴³ Praed won the electoral contest, which Lycett succeeded in declaring void – but Lycett lost again in the re-run, much to his surprise. Being a prominent and wealthy Methodist did not secure a parliamentary seat even in Methodist-dominated Cornwall. The fact that Cornwall was so strongly Methodist came to the attention of Methodists from elsewhere who were seeking a parliamentary seat. There are occasional references to leading Wesleyan laymen coming into the county as potential Liberal candidates. In 1874 Alexander McArthur sounded out the possibility of standing at Liskeard. His son, W. A. McArthur became MP for St Austell between 1887 and 1908. One Methodist to be elected before 1885, possibly the only one, was the Liberal D J Jenkins who in 1874 was successful at Penryn and Falmouth. This had as much to do with his own shipping interests as with his religious affiliation. "Methodism on its own was not a sufficiently large or unified base from which to launch a candidature".⁴⁴ Another Wesleyan, Henry Atkinson, stood as a Conservative candidate for the West Cornwall constituency in February 1884. At Newlyn, Atkinson's speech was interrupted by the cry "we are Wesleyans". Atkinson replied that he too was a Wesleyan, but "he separated his politics from his religion". Redruth had been at the centre of anti-Atkinson Liberal Wesleyan feeling. A tumultuous meeting, which ended in chaos, with Atkinson and the platform of Conservatives out of the building, effectively ended his campaign.⁴⁵ Thus Methodism could have an influential negative effect on a candidate's chances, as Atkinson's career illustrates, even though it could not give success to Lycett.

One particular election that might be thought to have occasioned particular hostility between Anglicans and Methodists was the election of 1885, which one historian has claimed was "the nearest point ever attained to the accomplishment of disestablishment."⁴⁶ Early in the campaign, the Conservative Lord Salisbury claimed that "the Church was in danger" and the issue gathered momentum. After the election, Home Rule for Ireland quickly became the dominant political issue, but during the election the issue of disestablishment was a lively subject. This led to Bishop Wilkinson of Truro, at the Diocesan Conference of 1885, opposing disestablishment, which implied voting Conservative. But even here the effect of unanimity was destroyed by the incumbent of Stoke Climsland who said: "under no circumstances should I record my vote for a Conservative".⁴⁷ Behind the strong links between Methodism and Liberalism, and between the Church of England and the Conservative party, were a number of exceptions. Lycett did not succeed in being elected to Parliament as a Liberal despite his influence as a Wesleyan; R G Rows' committee oversaw the appointment of a headmaster who was chosen despite his elite Anglican background. The headmaster's radical Liberalism was evidently more important than his Anglicanism. As the Vicar of Stoke Climsland's voting intentions show, independence of thought by the electors was an important part of the electoral process, made still more important by the widening of the franchise and by the introduction of the secret ballot. Just because someone in authority implicitly (like Wilkinson) or explicitly encouraged a voter to vote in a particular way did not mean that the voter did so. Power lay with the voters, not so much with the person in authority telling the voters which way to vote. Some candidates clearly still carried conviction and were elected to office. They were authoritative. But being authoritarian did not work; society was

too fragmented for any person or group of persons to have unquestioned influence over all of society. This problem is well brought out in a letter to the *Royal Cornwall Gazette* written by "an anxious enquirer": "if I leave my little Bethel what guarantee have I that I shall find rest and peace in that communion for which he (Bishop Benson) claims so much?... How can that be the exclusive message of the way of salvation in which you have only to pay your money and take your choice of doctrine. Mr Ryle who believes in no sacraments is just as much a successor to the apostles as Mr Tooth. I fear the Babel of the Sects outside the Established Church is only an echo of the Babel which appears to be within".⁴⁸

There had been in Cornwall a comparative lack of commitment to centralised authority that gave Cornwall, (at least in the West), its reputation at Methodist Conference, of being ungovernable. The autocratic tendencies of Jabez Bunting, long-term Conference Secretary, were treated with suspicion in Cornwall. Bunting is reported to have referred to Cornish people as "the mob of Methodism" and though he may not have said those words, the fact that many Cornish Methodists believed it was Jabez Bunting reflects the suspicion of Conference.⁴⁹ The "fly sheets controversy" of 1849 affected Cornwall greatly as one of the three authors of the anti-Conference pamphlets called "the fly sheets" was Samuel Dunn of Camborne. These critics inweighed against the centralising tendencies of Methodist headquarters in London, which was described as "a vortex engulfing (sic) every interest of Methodism, as the Maelstrom sucks in every vessel afloat in its vicinity".⁵⁰ It is clear that on occasions Methodists had difficulty with their own central organisation. It was hardly likely that they would warm to any centralising tendencies of the Church of England.

It is not difficult to find derogatory comments throughout the period of Methodist hegemony from the 1830s, through the time of the 1851 census, to around 1950 when Methodism was still the Established Church of Cornwall with nearly a thousand chapels. To take one example from each church at either end of the period of beginning of Methodism in Cornwall, the *Advertisement of 1834 to the first 46 Tracts for the Times* avers that "Methodism and Popery are in different ways the refuge of those whom the church stints of grace. They are foster mothers of abandoned children".⁵¹ At the end of the period, Richard G. Jones reflecting on growing up in a Cornish Methodist home before World War II writes "we looked upon the Anglicans as snobs, and made no secret of our contempt for their clergy. Ken't even say a prayer 'w'out readin un frum a book', we would say". The subject of burials was fraught with discord, for most of them had to be in the graveyard around the parish church. It was an opportunity for asserting the power of the established church very few vicars could resist".⁵² To what extent such sentiments were merely hot air and how much they should be taken literally is open to discussion. A letter from the Vicar of Par, D.R. Vaughan, complaining at the language of the Bible Christian Conference at Holsworthy in 1889, provides a case in point: Vaughan alleged that a conference speaker had lambasted "priestly arrogance, the assumption of Divine prerogatives and the command of wealth exercised by such persistence and energy by the agents of the law-established sect, who spare no pains or scruple at (any) conduct by which to succeed in getting the people young and old, to attend their sacerdotal performance". The Bible Christian speaker allegedly recommended "an uncompromising stand against such unchristian tactics, and declaring war against them" in order "to carefully guard the villages against the ravages of these unscrupulous men and diligently to protect the

children and youth from their subtle meshes". However, the following week another letter appeared in the *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, from Walter J. Nicholls of St Austell in reply saying that the paragraph in question, by vote of the conference, was omitted altogether from the address.⁵³

Church building could certainly be a bone of contention between the two churches and one which grew in importance as the 19th century progressed. In Redruth, for example, in 1826 the Rev J Molesworth, Rector of Redruth, gave a contribution to the Primitive Methodist Chapel. As late as 1870, the Rev J. W. Hawksley gave the pulpit bible to Carn Brea Chapel. But in 1880 when St Andrew's Church in Clinton Road was being built there was considerable opposition from Methodists and Low-Church Anglicans. "Letters appeared in the papers, including one from pew holders at Redruth Wesley and also from Treleigh church. Scurrilous letters were circulated by some Methodists who complained that the Anglicans had called their ministers 'bastard ministry.' Methodism reacted against the Oxford Movement and moved theologically leftwards".⁵⁴ The period of revivals within Cornwall had coincided with an increase in chapel building – after many revivals there were more new buildings than alterations. Therefore church-building or chapel-building was seen as a symbol of being a lively energetic growing church. The same process could certainly be seen at work in the Anglican Church. A preacher at the Benediction of the Nave of the Cathedral said that it was not opinions that had built the Cathedral but convictions.⁵⁵

The corollary of this attitude by both Methodists and Anglicans was that church or chapel building could be seen as encroachment. Shortly before the foundation of Truro Cathedral was laid, Mrs Chirgwin laid the foundation stone of the United Methodist Free Church in Truro.⁵⁶ But the rivalry was not only

between Anglican and Methodist churches. Herbert Luke points out that with six separate but similar Methodist denominations in Cornwall, a prodigious spate of chapel buildings and enlargements was inevitable.⁵⁷ It was only the Wesleyans who had chapels throughout the county, as the other branches of Methodism were more or less regionally distributed. In 1901, St Just in Penwith had Wesleyans in Chapel Street, in a chapel which seated over a thousand, Bible Christians in Queen Street, and a Wesleyan Reform Free Church in Bosorne Terrace. 1907 was the zenith of the number of chapels in Cornwall – the Wesleyans had 380, the Bible Christians 210, Free Methodists 105, Primitive Methodists 40, Wesleyan Reformers 10 and Methodist New Connection 7. Of the 380 Wesleyan chapels in Cornwall, 39 seated more than 500. 5 seated over 1100. The predominant number of chapels was in West Cornwall. Only 5 of the 39 large churches were east of Liskeard. "En masse, the chapels represented to the world the strength that Methodism had achieved in an area. There can be no that doubt that fund-raising and the building process, often prolonged, became a collective commitment that drew all the members of a society together and made that society secure in the way that meetings held in scattered locations could never do. The elaboration of chapel architecture through the nineteenth century was a sign that Methodism could not just produce its own home, but a home fit for comparison with any other buildings-including contending chapels and the parish church".⁵⁸ Bishop Benson was willing to rise up to this challenge. At his first Diocesan Conference in October 1877, Bishop Benson said that each Tre, Pol or Wheal needed its "holy means of grace". He proposed to license mission chapels and readers and added "I think this is a very good way and a church way and am prepared to walk in it".⁵⁹ Under Bishop Phillpotts more than 30 churches were built, some as chapels of

ease and some as parish churches of new districts. But under Benson the momentum increased; work started on 11 new churches and by the end of the century between 50 and 60 had been opened.⁶⁰ The increase in the number of churches had been, in part, caused by the remoteness of the historic Anglican churches from the centres of population and the difficulty of accessing these churches in the winter months, especially in Sunday best clothes. The distance of Lanteglos by Fowey from Polruan was a case in point. When J T Mugford became incumbent in 1887 there were only five Easter day communicants at Lanteglos. This situation did not change overnight – at Lanteglos by Camelford, the church did not secure its own building until 1938.⁶¹ Secondly, there were new centres of population emerging, which needed to be served. A new church, for instance, was built at All Saints Trythall. There were many mission churches in Calstock. In 1841 a former Baptist Church was bought by Anglicans at Gunnislake and by 1877 it was crowded to excess on Sunday evenings. The energetic vicar Thomas Hullah opened a new building in 1880. The dual-purpose church/school at Harrowbarrow was also built, as was St Michael's Latchley in 1883. Cotehele chapel was reopened in 1864 and intermittent services were held at the Church of the Good Shepherd, St Anne's Chapel. Well into the 20th century, the church still owned nine properties in Calstock parish.⁶² Mining areas were, in some other cases, areas of church expansion. Gwennap parish spawned Lanner and St Day, both parish churches and Carharrack mission church. An iron mission church was built at Pensilva in St Ive parish, and thanks to the munificence of the first archdeacon of Bodmin, a church was also built in St Teath for slate workers. Tourism was another factor behind churches being built as at Newquay and Carbis Bay.⁶³ What Anglicans might

see as a belated response to Methodism, some Methodists could see as a threat to their position.

The cycle of building and more building of churches by both Anglicans and Methodists led to an acute shortage of money. A Wesleyan member of the school board in Penzance reported in 1881 that "Wesleyan ministers have lost the true spirit of Methodism. 'Money, money and more money' is the unfailing cry from platform, pulpit and quarterly meeting".⁶⁴ Lake, Cox and Berry provide a good example of the relief when the debt was paid off. "In 1899 a printed sheet of statistics of events in Methodism affecting Lawannick (includes) the following selected entries:

1811 Chapel opened for worship on Good Friday debt £250.

1834 Debt reduced to £150

1849 Chapel enlarged and opened on 28 September – debt not increased

1870 Arrangements made for the cleaning off old debt

1880 School room enlarged, and new vestries built, reopened – free.

1887 New chapel erected at Polyphant, with a burial ground and freed in two years.⁶⁵

There was legitimate pride in the size of the edifices that Methodism had been able to build. A letter written to Jabez Bunting states: "I hear great things of your amphitheatre in Liverpool. A man will need strong lungs to blow his words from one end of it to another".⁶⁶ What had been in the early days a necessity following revival in order to accommodate all the worshippers, became a symbol of strength, in relation either to different groupings within your own church or in relation to another church.

One other possible area of difference between the Anglican and Methodist churches concerned weddings and funerals, particularly the latter since funerals

for most of the 19th century generally involved the use of the churchyard. We have seen how the problems at Owston Ferry in Lincolnshire preceded Benson when his appointment to Cornwall was announced. In many, but not in all cases, Methodists were prepared to use the parish church on these occasions. Although it was possible for a Methodist Church to be licensed for marriages, only a minority became so. On the matter of graveyards, from 1800 onwards there were Methodist graveyards in Cornwall. The first was at Camelford which through the 19th and early 20th century had as independent a Methodist spirit as anywhere in Cornwall. In east and north-east Cornwall there were thirty Methodist graveyards in ten circuits. There were nine in the circuits between Truro and Penzance, and in the far west at St Just six out of fifteen chapels had graveyards. Although a minority of Methodist churches had graveyards, there are also examples in Cornwall of cooperation between the churches as at Grampound. In 1876 R G Rows, from the United Methodist Free Church, "read" the service at the Nancegollan Wesleyan church burial ground. This may suggest that he was following the funeral service of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer. In 1880, in order to take account of nonconformist grievances and complaints, the Burial Laws Amendment Act was passed which enabled nonconformists to take services in the Anglican Church with or without the permission of the vicar. Though this clearly gave all denominations much greater protection in law to do what their members wanted done in relation to funerals, in practice change continued to happen slowly rather than immediately after the change of law. At Helston, for instance, the Wesleyan plan of 1890, 10 years after the change in law, referred to the new burial act which entitled nonconformists to officiate at the cemetery or, with 48 hours notice, in churchyards. The fact that Methodists needed reminding suggests that the

practice may not have been widespread. Certainly at Ludgvan it was not until 1894 that the first Methodist funeral took place at the parish church. Blackwater chapel had its first funeral in 1911. Until then Methodist funerals continued to take place in church. Many chapels were not built to take funerals and the front pew had to be taken out in order to get the coffin in.⁶⁷

A number of different possible arrangements could take place for Methodist funerals, including using the parish church or the Methodist church for the service, the Methodist burial ground or the churchyard of the parish church. Some services were conducted entirely in the graveyard, while some had a service in church first. These arrangements worked, before and after the change in the law in 1880, so long as a degree of goodwill existed between Methodist and Anglican. There are a number of examples of where this goodwill did not exist on the Anglican side and this was often a factor in persuading Methodists to separate from the parish church on matters concerning funerals. For instance, at St Germans until 1893 the tradition was for Methodist funerals to take place at the parish church and be shared between the ministers of the two churches. A new vicar of St Germans came in that year who wanted to take the service in its entirety. So the funeral took place in the Wesleyan chapel, necessitating a one mile walk with the coffin to the burial ground. At Gwinear, where we have already seen there were problems concerning the Burial Laws Amendment Act, in 1883 a Methodist funeral was arranged and the Burial Act invoked because the Vicar refused to allow the body of an unbaptised child to enter the churchyard. At the Ludgvan funeral of 1894 referred to above, the cortege was forbidden to use the main gates of the churchyard and the back gate had to be used. Thus it can be seen that friction did occur between the two churches over funerals and when it did, greater separation between the two

churches took place. The 1880 Act did not prevent such friction since examples of lack of goodwill can be given both before and after that date. The fact that for most of the 19th century Methodists continued to use the parish church and churchyards for weddings and funerals indicates that there was cooperation as well as competition between the churches, though it was usually the grievances arising from competition which made the newspapers.⁶⁸

The constant need for money to finance ambitious building schedules meant that the Methodist and Anglican churches could learn from each other about how to raise it. Taking collections as a regular part of a church service was not the normal way of raising money in either church until late in the Victorian period. For instance, it was not until 1889 that collections were first taken at Fort Street Methodist Church at the evening service and this way of raising money elicited a poor response from the congregation. Indeed pews were often rented, while seats in the side aisles might remain free. This was a declining practice in the Church of England as the century progressed, on the grounds that it might prevent poor people from coming. Another way of raising money was from the donations made at the opening ceremonies either at the foundation or the completion of the project. "Local Methodist dignitaries were in demand for laying stones and were expected to place a substantial donation on top of the stone. Some chapels have a dozen or more stones".⁶⁹ A wide range of bazaars and raffles were held. In 1869 Treruffe Hill Bible Christian Chapel at Redruth held a grand draw. 15,000 sixpenny tickets were sold and £100 was given in prizes. The church netted £250 and prizewinners lived as far away as St Buryan, Roche and the Isles of Scilly. Grand draws were also to be found at Stithians Penmennor Chapel in 1879 and at Carharrack Bible Christian Chapel in 1884. There were raffles at Redruth Fore Street and Truro Primitive

Methodist Church, both in 1881. There is also much evidence of saving schemes run by churches and chapels so that individual members could save. Most chapel Sunday schools ran funeral clubs in the 19th century. Penryn Wesley for instance, also ran a blanket club to help those vulnerable to guard against the cold in wintertime.⁷⁰

That there could be rivalry between the two churches is evidenced by the leader in the *Royal Cornwall Gazette*: "We have heard and read that if Truro Cathedral and its potential influence were in the hands of the Wesleyans it would have been finished by this time...A place has not yet been found in Wesleyan methods for the Cathedral system and a great many people besides Wesleyans were sceptical with regard to the utility of building and endowing a great central Church at Truro". The *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, as a paper which traditionally looked favourably on the Church of England, continued "the wisdom of those who laid the lines of this Cathedral establishment is, however, being gradually justified before the public gaze. As one looked upon the great gathering of railwaymen which took place at Truro Cathedral last Sunday it was being demonstrated to be the mother church not of church people alone, but of many other baptised people".⁷¹

The sentiment expressed by the *Royal Cornwall Gazette* remained the Anglican hope. Benson indeed envisaged a mother church in Truro for all Christians. While railway workers and others might attend special services in the building, the evidence suggests that the revival of Anglicans did not encourage Methodists to leave their churches in order to join it. Indeed according to Thomas Shaw, one of the five peak periods of increase for the Bible Christians during the 19th century took place between 1879 and 1883, crucial years in the development of the Cathedral project.⁷² As the Anglican

Church became more organised and more of a national organisation, the same could be said of the various branches of the Methodist church. "Of the outward and visible signs that the movement was developing into an institutional church... the change was perhaps the most obvious in the development of chapel architecture... most astonishing considering the short-lived and limited resources of the denomination was the succession of churches in the Gothic revival styles".⁷³ So, in Shaw's eyes, the Bible Christians were moving in the direction of becoming an institutionalised church, even building in the Gothic revival style. Thus while the introduction of the cathedral system and a beautiful cathedral in Gothic revival style had many consequences, encroaching on the territory of Methodism was not one of them. In fact it may have encouraged Methodists to build even more and get still further into debt. As Probert laments in relation to Primitive Methodism, "their history is a dreadful warning to those who would regard business acumen as beneath the Christian. The unbusinesslike way the Primitives built chapels and overreached themselves lost them ultimate success. Often they were setting out to make converts Primitive Methodists rather than Christian. Other denominations... were also busy selling their own brand of Christianity. For this, all have suffered the consequences".⁷⁴

If the rivalry between the two churches, because both wished to represent the culture of Cornwall, expressed itself chiefly in the race to build churches (and thereby accumulate more debt), it was a race which the Methodist Church undoubtedly won. The Methodist Church built far more churches and continued to express the culture for fifty or more years after Benson left Cornwall. It was a race which Benson could never win – even the Cathedral project and what the *Royal Cornwall Gazette* called 'the Cathedral system' could not realign Cornish

culture in which Methodism was far too entrenched. The idea that the Cathedral would be a Cathedral for all Christians at one level held true as a place where all manner of Cornish people could hold services. But to take people away from their allegiance to Methodism was not possible or even desirable. As George Bazeley, secretary of the Wesleyan Home Missions committee said in 1886: "the clergy used to give Wesleyans hard days, now and then, a few years ago, but dropped that. It did no good. It did Wesleyans no harm in the least and the clergy and their church no good".⁷⁵

Rivalry between the churches could be used to promote other ideas as Easton shows at local level, with Rows and others promoting the unification of Methodist churches because of the perceived danger of Anglo-Catholicism. It was also true at national level during the 1885 general election with Lord Salisbury proclaiming that the Church (of England) was in danger because of the perceived threat of disestablishment. Rivalry between the churches could also exacerbate personal animosities and rivalries which already existed. By the same token, personal friendships across the denominations could smooth over rivalries between the churches – evidenced by Philip Hedgeland, Vicar of Penzance, proposing a toast to Henry Michell on becoming Mayor of Penzance in 1890 when he "expressed his pleasure at the way in which a nonconformist could speak in favourable terms of a bishop".⁷⁶

The career of James Hicks, architect of regeneration in Victorian Redruth, exemplifies both the cooperation and, at times, the animosity that existed between the churches. Although Hicks was a Tory and an Anglican he had many commissions, especially in Clinton Road Redruth where he built prominent public buildings. He even built the lavish Methodist Church at Plan an Gwarry in 1884, just a year after the Anglican church of St Andrew Clinton Road

was opened to some Methodist criticism. The *Redruth Independent* commented on the beauty of the Plan an Gwarry building and wrote: "we hope the poor people anxious to catch a crumb of gospel bread will not be deterred by the display of coloured glass and ambitious turrets". At a personal level, Hicks's help was blighted by long – running disputes with prominent Methodists in the town. Hicks died in 1896 just before he turned 50 and in his obituary his friends asserted that he was a much misunderstood man.⁷⁷ The vital importance of relationships cannot be underestimated, both at an individual level and between churches. The Anglican Church learned that there was a place for it in Cornwall coexisting alongside the Methodist Church but not replacing it.

Footnotes

1. *Cornish Telegraph* 9 January 1877 p 2 c. 3
2. *Cornish and Devon Post* 28 July 1877 p 4 c. 3 Benson's sermon itself may also have been somewhat provocative. According to the newspaper report, Benson preached the "there was a spirit about bidding men to look at the works of their fathers, and it was this that gave them new energy to go on building... He then called attention to the significance of parsons being able in these days to raise such large sums of money for the church and asked if their enemies could raise such large sums for similar purposes. Churchmen had recovered their sense of power... In concluding, he intended that the best answer that could be given to the opponents of the Church was to point to their new churches, and to such work as had been done amongst them and also to the ever increasing sums that could be obtained for church work".

3. E.g. TCM 146 p.30 "in want and worldly difficulty and daily perplexity of common business they resort wholly to the clergyman, yet he is the one person who can get nothing from them in common religion".
4. TCM 146 p.2 "At Probus the principal resident farmer is a nonconformist of weight who says that he would rather see the people come out of a public house than out of a church".
5. *West Briton*, 18/1/1877 p. 2 c. 1
6. Joseph Hammond, *A Cornish Parish: being an account of St Austell Town, Church, District and People*, (London, 1897) p.233. The book notable for its almost complete lack of mention of Methodism in its 367 pages.
7. *West Briton*, 22/2/1877 p. 2 c. 3
8. *West Briton*, 18/1/1877 p.8 c.3
9. *The Cornish and Devon Post* 22/6/1878 p.3 c.5 Rev. Baillie Wallace, Rector of Parton, Whitehaven had refused to bury the child of a parishioner on Sunday, offering to do so any other day, resulting in the Congregational minister presiding. The notice was posted that the effigy of the clergyman would be paraded through the village and burnt on the green: "a collier bore the effigy through the streets preceded by a brass band, and it was eventually affixed to a pole and satellite amid the enthusiastic shouts of a large crowd." See also *East Cornwall Times and Western Counties Advertiser* 6/2/1875 p.4 c.2 under the headline: "Funeral scandal at Cowley concerning Frederick Merrett, 11 days after his death." "Nearly 1000 people assembled in the churchyard. The vicar of Littlemore was engaged to officiate, the vicar of Cowley being afraid to appear having refused to allow the corpse to be taken into the church.

The church doors were forced open, and the officiating Minister was requested to take the body into the church. He was unwilling to do so but he was stopped and... hurled into the porch... finally the corpse was taken into the church, and the burial service was read. At the grave, after the service was over, a vote of thanks was given to the officiating clergyman."

10. The high church Bishop of Lincoln from 1869 till his death, Christopher Wordsworth, (1807-1885), nephew of the famous poet, was considered by many Methodists to be a chief opponent. *The Cornish Telegraph*, 9/1/1877 p. 2 c. 3: "Dr Wordsworth has Wesleyanism on the brain and his joy in life seems to be to lay holy hands upon a few stray and rather weakly lambs who have strayed from the Methodist fold."

11. *Cornish Telegraph*, 9/1/1877 p. 2 c.3

12. *Cornish Telegraph*, 23/1/1877 p. 2 c.3

13. Frederick Temple 1821-1902; Bishop of Exeter 1869 -85, London 1885 - 97, Archbishop of Canterbury 1897-1902.

14. *Cornish Telegraph* 9/1/1877 p.3 c.5.

15. *West Briton* 4/1/1877 p. 2 c.3.

16. *West Briton* 22/3/1877 p.3 c.3.

17. *West Briton* 18/1/1877 p. 4 c.3.

18. *Redruth Times and Camborne Advertiser* 27/4/1877 p.4 c.4.

19. Ibid.

20. On the 50th anniversary of the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, which opened public life to all Christians and not just members of the Church of England, the *Cornish Telegraph* strongly supported the changes 14/5/1878 p.4 c.2.

21. *Redruth Times and Camborne Advertiser* 2/11/1877 p. 2 c.4.
22. S. L. Thorne, *William O'Brian*, (Plymouth, 1888) p.42.
23. *Redruth Times and Camborne Advertiser* 8/6/1877 p.4 c.5.
24. *Redruth Times and Camborne Advertiser* 8/6/1877 supplement.
25. TCM 147 Benson Diary p.110.
26. Graham James: *A sociological examination of the growth from sect to church within Cornish Methodism: the church – sect dichotomy critically applied to the Methodist Church in Cornwall in the 19th and 20th centuries, with some reflections on the Anglican reaction*. Oxford certificate theology. Special subject 47; Thomas Shaw; *History of Cornish Methodism* p.135.
27. John Rule, 'Methodism, Popular Beliefs and Village Culture in Cornwall 1800 to 1850'. In R. D. Storch, *Popular Culture and Custom in 19th century England*, (London and Canberra, 1982), chapter 3 especially pp.159-160.
28. James op.cit.pp.48-51, esp.p.50: "The success of the Catholic Movement in the Church of England did bring a new confidence to Cornish Anglicanism, but one that was essentially sectarian...They (Cornish Anglicans) could see only too plainly that Methodism had appropriated many of the functions of the church-type (though obviously they would not have expressed it in this way)."
29. David Easton, *Gathered Into One: The Reunion of British Methodism 1860-1960. With Particular Reference to Cornwall*. (University of Wales Lampeter, unpublished Ph.D thesis 2007), p.274.
30. Easton, op. cit. p.273.

31. Peter Hayden, *Culture, Creed and Conflict: Methodism and Politics in Cornwall 1832-1979* (University of Liverpool unpublished Ph.D. thesis 1982), p.137.
32. Hayden, op. cit. p.146-7 Truro Diocesan Kalendar, 1883 p.193, Truro Diocesan Conference, 1889.
33. Hayden, op. cit. p.146-7
34. M. F. Edwards, *The Teetotal Wesleyan Methodists* (Proceedings of the Wesleyan Historical Society, 33, (numbers 3-4) 1961), p.70.
35. .CRO DDP V 8. See Hayden, op cit. p.109.
36. Hayden, op. cit. p.110; see Truro Diocesan Conference Reports 1888 p.137.
37. Hayden p.200, see also pp.107 – 111 see also D. A. Hayman, *The Politics of Electoral Pressure: a Study in the History of Victorian Reform Agitation* (Hassocks, Sussex 1977), p.123.
38. The address "at the opening of the Wesley and Methodist middle-class School in Truro, January 19, 1880" was entitled "Methodism and middle-class education". (I am grateful to Rev Steve Wild, Chair of Cornwall Methodist District, for this information). See also L. P. S. Piper, *The Development of Technical Education in Cornwall from the Early 19th century until 1962*. (Unpublished M.Ed. thesis University of Leicester 1977), p.23.
39. *West Briton*, 29/9/1881 p. 6.
40. Deirdre Dare, *The Unknown Founder: The Story of Helston Grammar School from 1550 – 1972*, (Truro, 1996), p.85.
41. .*Royal Cornwall Gazette* 2/4/1880; *Western Daily Mercury* 6/2/1874.
42. *West Briton* 13/5/1869.

43. *Royal Cornwall Gazette* 2/1/1875. Passmore Edwards, a wealthy Baptist, was similarly unsuccessful standing as an MP despite his munificence in Cornwall, donating money for numerous libraries and other public buildings.
44. Hayden, op. cit. p.116.
45. Hayden, op. cit. p.117. Allen Simon, "Church Disestablishment as a Factor in the General Election of 1885." *Historical Journal* xviii 4(1975) pp.791-820.
46. Hayden, op. cit. p.200.
47. *Western Daily Mercury* 8/12/1885.
48. *Royal Cornwall Gazette* 9/2/1877 p. 6.
49. Jeremy Lake, Joe Cox and Eric Berry, *Diversity and Vitality: the Methodist and Nonconformist Chapels of Cornwall* (English Heritage 2001).
50. Lake Cox and Berry, op. cit. p.19.
51. Quoted by Thomas Shaw, *Bible Christians 1815-1907* p.37.
52. (ed.Sarah Foot), *Methodist Celebration: A Cornish Contribution* ,(Redruth 1988), p.9.
53. *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 15/8/89 p. 4 c.1/2; 22/8/89 p.5 c.3.
54. J. C. C. Probert, *Sociology of Cornish Methodism to the Present Day* (Cornish Methodist Historical Association,1971) p.66.
55. Randall Davidson, Archbishop of Canterbury in *Sermons Preached at the Benediction of the Nave of Truro Cathedral* (London, Truro and Exeter 1903) p.7 (Sermon preached 15 July 1903): "opinions cannot build like that; convictions can."

56. The Royal Cornwall Museum, River Street, Truro, has on display a ceremonial trowel presented to Mrs Chirgwin of Truro, on laying a memorial stone for the United Methodist Free Church in Truro on 14th May 1880.
57. (ed. Foot), *Methodist Celebration*, p.37.
58. Ibid.
59. Alan Dunstan, *The Church near the People* JRIC 2000 p.125.
60. Ibid.
61. Dunstan, op. cit. pp.125-126. The Rector of St Clement, Truro recorded in 1841 that there were 3000 people in the parish but only 300 lived within two miles of the parish church.
62. Dunstan, op. cit. p.128.
63. Dunstan, op. cit. p.128.
64. John Horner, *Even in this Place: 19th century Nonconformists and Life in the Borough of Penzance*, (Penzance 2010), p.78.
65. Lake Cox and Berry, op. cit. p.54.
66. Lake Cox and Berry, op. cit. p.55.
67. Camelford, though staunchly Methodist, enjoyed good working relations with the Anglican Vicar. West Briton 4/1/1877 p.2 c.1 "the late rector was a kind warm hearted man with a true Christian spirit and liberal bearing towards all nonconformists – a matter in which many others might follow out". The late rector, Mr Wilkinson, is also commended for his historical researches, his preservation of old crosses, incised stones and an old font and for drawing attention to the Celtic remains at Rough Tor and Brown Willy. See also Probert, (1971) p.99f.
68. Probert, (1971) p.99f.

69. (ed. Foot), *Methodist Celebration*, p.47.
70. Probert, (1971), p.84.
71. *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 15/8/89 p.4 c.2.
72. Thomas Shaw, *Bible Christians* p.79.
73. Thomas Shaw, op cit. p 83.
74. J. C. C. Probert, *Primitive Methodism in Cornwall: A History and Sociology*, (Cornish Methodist Historical Association 1966), p.125.
75. Horner, op. cit. p.79.
76. Horner, op. cit. p.74.
77. Ronald Perry and Sharon Schwartz, *James Hicks: Architect of Regeneration in Victorian Redruth*, (JRIC, 1998) p. 69.

Chapter 8

CONCLUSION.

The argument has been proposed in this thesis that for Benson, the Cathedral in Truro and the introduction of a cathedral system was of utmost importance. A Cathedral in a revived medieval style was intended to rekindle the spirit that Benson believed had once existed, which enabled the great cathedrals to be built in the first place. When Benson returned to the Cathedral in 1887 on the completion of the first part of the Cathedral project he believed that the building exceeded his expectations. Therefore, whatever Pearson built was largely in conformity with Benson's vision. This continued to be the case after Benson left Cornwall for Canterbury. The researches of Michael Swift at Truro Cathedral are showing that Benson continued to micro-manage the project through the second Bishop of Truro, George Howard Wilkinson, and especially through A. J. Mason. This remained the case even though Mason left Cornwall for an incumbency in London in 1884.

The cathedral system, as advocated by Benson and Mason, meant establishing an ordered community, regulated by statute, with the cathedral at the centre of diocesan activity and life, an exemplar of well-constructed worship, of which the Service of Nine Lessons and Carols was the most celebrated example. The Cathedral was also envisaged by Benson to be a centre of energy for the Diocese, providing training for clergy and lay readers, as well as being a resource for education and mission extending to every parish. To this end, Benson recruited outstanding academics in Mason and Whitaker from

Cambridge, to lead mission and training in the new Diocese from a base at the Cathedral. Though neither Mason nor Whitaker stayed long in Cornwall, other young Canons followed and the principle of working outwards from the Cathedral had been established. Benson's attempt to found a college for the training of clergy and other ministers with the Canon Chancellor of the Cathedral did not survive into the twentieth century, unlike his previous and similar foundation at Lincoln where Lincoln Theological College continued for over a century. Nevertheless, Benson established principles which his successor as Bishop chose loyally to follow. The third and fourth Bishops, Bishop Gott and Bishop Stubbs, showed greater independence of mind, Gott even moving his home away from the cathedral city of Truro to the St Austell Bay area. Stubbs returned the Bishop's palace, Lis Escop, to its original site at the former Kenwyn Vicarage, at the same time enlarging it by adding a chapel and additional rooms with more elaborate fittings. The responsibility for the completion of the project rested with Bishop Stubbs, who despite continuing arguments with contractors because of unanticipated delays to the construction of the western towers, saw the Cathedral finished in 1910, two years before his death.

During Benson's time as Archbishop of Canterbury, no new cathedrals were built in the Church of England, whether in Gothic or any other style. In most cases large medieval parish churches were elevated to cathedral status when occasion arose. At Liverpool, twenty three years after J. C. Ryle was appointed as first bishop of the diocese in 1880, Giles Gilbert Scott, the grandson of the eminent architect George Gilbert Scott, was commissioned to design a cathedral in the Gothic style. The custom of designing cathedrals continued in the colonies. In Australia, for instance, almost all state capitals have Anglican

and Roman Catholic cathedrals in Gothic style, providing work for Pearson in Brisbane, Bodley in Hobart, Butterfield in Melbourne, and Edward Blacket, who trained under George Gilbert Scott in England and designed many Gothic Cathedrals as the first great Australian exponent of the style. The cathedral system was harder to implement. The sheer variety of religious backgrounds of emigrants to the new world prevented any one religion dominating the scene. In Australia, for instance, Adelaide was known as the city of churches. No one church spire held precedence, though different denominations sometimes competed to build on the best-located and most prominent site. Both Anglican and Catholic Cathedrals in Sydney were designed by Edward Blacket, the latter much larger than the former and on a site next to Hyde Park.

The early Victorian Gothic of Pugin and others had been associated with the re-creation of a medieval past, as was also seen in novels by Sir Walter Scott such as *Ivanhoe*, and in the Young England movement associated with Disraeli and Manners, a movement with influence within the Tory party of which Benson was a lifelong supporter. It has been said that there was a change in Victorian society as 'romantic nationalism' moved towards the State-centred nationalism which came to characterise late Victorian Britain.¹ Methodism, in Cornwall, and the increasing influence of the State nationally, were both too powerful to be outflanked by a revived Anglican church or a restored Diocese of Truro. Industrialisation had come between the imagined medieval past and the present day, and Methodism had made a much better response to its challenges, building far more chapels in mining areas than the Church of England. Benson's appeal to antiquity had some effect, but so had the appeal to modernity. Modernity was seen in the ever-increasing reach of the State and the response of the business community to new ideas. A good example of this

in architecture was the coming into general use of reinforced concrete at about the time Truro Cathedral started to be built, an invention which made skyscrapers possible. The Liver Building in Liverpool made extensive use of reinforced concrete in its design though the outside of the building was clad in granite. Two iconic buildings in Liverpool, the Anglican Cathedral and the Liver Building, were started in Edwardian times. The Anglican Cathedral took decades to complete, the Liver Building less than three years. Indeed, it was said that one floor of the Liver Building could be erected in nineteen working days. Even before the widespread use of reinforced concrete, a revived Queen Anne style was coming into vogue. Gothic was beginning to look old-fashioned and was mainly used by churches which wanted to make an appeal to antiquity. There were relatively few commissions of Gothic Buildings by public bodies after the Royal Courts of Justice, which was commissioned in the 1870s.

The opening of Truro High School for Girls on 3 May 1880 with eleven pupils including Benson's two daughters with Mary Benson as chairman of the Council indicates that other events took place in 1880, besides the laying of the foundation stones of Truro Cathedral. Two of these events were of great significance for Benson's future as Archbishop of Canterbury and will be discussed in appendices. Firstly, Benson increasingly moved in London circles, exemplified by an unsuccessful attempt in 1880 to gain money from the City of London for the cathedral project (discussed in Appendix 1). Secondly, Benson's considerable skill as a conciliator was put to good use with the passing of the Burial Laws Amendment Act (discussed in Appendix 2). From the early 1880s onwards, Archbishop Tait seemed to regard Benson as his likeliest successor, providing a suite of rooms in the Lollards Tower at Lambeth Palace for Benson's use when he was in London. In his inability to persuade the financiers

of the City of London in 1880 to contribute to the building of Truro Cathedral we see a problem which was to continue throughout Benson's time as Archbishop of Canterbury, an inability to persuade people of influence whether in the City of London or in the House of Lords. Benson liked to be deferred to, though he was conspicuously bad at deferring to other people. He was not as good at working as well with social equals as he was with subordinates.

On the other hand, 1880 also showed Benson at his best as he dealt with the fallout from the Burial Laws Amendment Act, which many thousands of Anglican clergy urged the Archbishops to resist in the House of Lords, because it altered the freehold property rights of the parson over the churchyard of the parish church. Resentment of an Anglican monopoly of taking services in the churchyard meant that the law was passed. Benson was at his best as he combined maintaining his own principles with ensuring compliance with the Act in the face of those most opposed to it such as the squire/parson of Phillack, Frederick Hocken. A number of other bishops quoted Benson in their own pastoral letters to their clergy, and Benson came to be seen as a leader that other bishops were prepared to follow. This, too, would have a major impact on the future.

As Archbishop of Canterbury, Benson was particularly good at reconciling members of the Church of England around a common position. This was best shown by his masterly handling of the Lincoln Judgement of 1890, following attempts by the Church Association to prosecute the most prominent High Churchman of his day, Edward King, Bishop of Lincoln, with seven offences concerning the way in which King celebrated the Eucharist. There was some doubt concerning the legitimacy of Benson's church court. The Bishop of Oxford famously said that it was not a court, but the Archbishop sitting in his library at

Lambeth. Benson persevered and found in favour of the Bishop of Lincoln on five counts and in favour of the Church Association on two. Benson relied on the rubric of the Book of Common Prayer and his own deep knowledge of church law in making his judgement, not precedents set by secular courts. Benson's ruling brought a degree of peace to the church and legitimated moderate High Churchmen within the Church of England by confirming that much of what they were doing complied with the law.

The one Lambeth Conference that Benson presided over in 1888 made a significant contribution to an understanding of Anglican identity by endorsing the four points of the Chicago/ Lambeth quadrilateral. Though Benson achieved agreement among the bishops in what was an important step on the road to Anglican self-definition, the reality on the ground was somewhat different. In Japan, Edward Bickersteth, first Bishop of South Tokyo from 1886, attempted to work closely with American Episcopalians who had been in Japan for some decades previously, but he found it difficult to do so, to the extent that there was no shared cathedral until the time of the Second World War. Bickersteth was someone who looked to Benson for advice and sought to give the Church proper statutes.²The intractability of some relationships between individuals from different nations was as difficult for Benson to resolve as it was to resolve Methodist suspicion in Cornwall, and for a similar reason. It seemed to Methodists in Cornwall and Episcopalians in Japan that the Church of England was not so much co-operating with them as muscling in on their territory.

In the matter of making senior appointments within the Church of England there is evidence that Gladstone did listen to Benson and respect his advice. Gladstone wanted to appoint Liddon to a bishopric but did not do so on Benson's advice. Benson did not believe that Liddon had the breadth of

sympathy to be a bishop because he would not associate with Benson's predecessor, Archbishop Tait who, Liddon believed, drove John Henry Newman out of Oxford by his opposition to Tract 90, which had argued that the 39 Articles of Religion, though a product of an uncatholic age, was patient of a catholic interpretation. Even this intervention by Benson was looking back to events that happened in Oxford in the 1840s. While Gladstone, the Grand Old Man of British politics, was Prime Minister such an approach was just about sustainable, but it was not calculated to influence a younger generation of politicians who were not born then. Another sign that the old order was changing concerned City status for towns that were elevated to Cathedral status. Beckett and Windsor quote the Cornish newspaper the *Royal Cornwall Gazette* as stating that the Order in Council establishing the diocese "virtually created Truro a City". This automatic correlation between the two, which Beckett shows was always more problematic among civil servants, did not continue through Benson's archiepiscopate: "Southwell (1884) did not apply, and Wakefield was granted city status in 1888, but thereafter the door was closed".³

Benson's time as Archbishop can be seen as a partial success, with the Lambeth Conference of 1888 and the Lincoln Judgement of 1890 standing out as particularly notable achievements. This success was not so much the realisation on a national stage of ideas that Benson had introduced in Truro, but the bringing of peace and concord to Anglicans, qualities that others had noticed in 1880 in his response to changes in the burial law and his ability to win the confidence of all sides. The issue for Benson was that he could win the confidence of members of his own church more easily than he could with members of other churches.

Of the church reforms of the Victorian period, those associated with the Oxford Movement and with the revival of diocesan consciousness were perhaps the most influential. Even among its opponents, the Oxford Movement was influential. As Easton shows, it was a powerful factor in the move towards Methodist unification. Newman argued that the most important unit within the church structure was the parish. By contrast, those who helped revive diocesan consciousness saw the primary unit as the diocese, a view with which Benson concurred, at least until the time he became Archbishop of Canterbury. Both concepts, whether the parish or diocese was considered the most important unit, were challenged by the centralisation that was taking place at national level. Newman wrote against centralisation as early as 1834.⁴ Nevertheless, the State, not the Church, became the centralised authority that everyone was answerable to at local and national level. The Anglican Church, with a cathedral at its heart, could never be the umbrella organisation that everyone sheltered under. There were far too many non-Anglican ducks in Cornwall and elsewhere to make such an ambition a reality.

Though others also tried and succeeded, Benson tried to re-acquaint Cornwall with its Celtic past. In Chapter One of this thesis it was shown that developments in the diocese of Sodor and Man, in the Isle of Man and the dioceses of St Asaph and Bangor in North Wales were congenial to the revival of diocesan consciousness. This argument must be presented tentatively because there were many new English dioceses formed in the late Victorian and Edwardian Britain as well. The revival of diocesan consciousness was a widespread phenomenon. It was not confined to the Celtic fringes and sometimes created diocesan boundaries elsewhere which were approximately coterminous with county boundaries, as in Cornwall. One of the most

conspicuous exceptions to this, the attempt to unite Nottinghamshire with Derbyshire, was ultimately a failure and the dioceses of Derby and Southwell came to reflect the county boundaries of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. It could therefore be argued that diocesan consciousness overlapped with a consciousness of county identity, which was further exemplified in the beginnings of the Victoria County History, a local history which began in 1899. The most powerful statement of the importance of the county in late Victorian society came not from the church but from the state. The creation of County Councils in the Local Government Act of 1888 aligned administrative organisation with the historic counties of England and Wales.

Chapter Two of this thesis identified other features of Victorian society which were problematic for the Church of England, not least in Cornwall: the need for Cathedrals to develop their role within the church (partially accomplished early in the reign), the growing non-conformist church attendance compared with the Church of England, revealed by the 1851 Religious Census, and the growing influence of the Oxford Movement, a controversial influence because it appeared to challenge the protestant basis of British society. Benson's response to these problems was to revive diocesan life from its centre, through a cathedral which was relevant to the modern age through its educational and missionary work, and connected with its past through its architecture and worship. This could simultaneously demonstrate the importance of the cathedral, by giving it a purpose far removed from that portrayed in Trollope, and provide a template for parish churches in the diocese to follow and incorporate some but not all of the features of Anglo-Catholicism. Chapter Three of the thesis attempts to explore the character of Benson, particularly with reference to his behaviour during the period before he came to Cornwall. We

see that Benson did not substantially revise his opinions when he came to Cornwall; rather he attempted in Cornwall to work on a larger scale than hitherto. For instance at Wellington, Benson envisaged the chapel at the heart of the school community, and at Lincoln he involved himself with Cathedral Statutes, the foundation of a theological college, working-class education and through the influence of Elizabeth Wordsworth, the education of women. All these projects were attempted in Cornwall, with greater or lesser success. Self-assurance may be seen as one of Benson's most notable characteristics which has led some to see Benson as insufferable and others to see Benson as a natural leader.⁵ This characteristic was combined with a remorseless energy (punctuated by periods of black depression) and intellectual subtlety. After leaving Truro, Benson continued to work on his most considerable piece of academic scholarship, which was on the life, times and work of the third century bishop of Carthage, St Cyprian. Benson finished the work just before his death in 1896. The modern church historian, Mark Chapman, argues that the message that Benson learned from Cyprian, the need for collegiality among bishops who were all equally entitled to administer their dioceses in their own way as they saw fit, provided the intellectual underpinning for the Lambeth Conference of 1888. This in its turn helped to produce the Chicago/Lambeth Quadrilateral under Benson's leadership.⁶

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the decision to build a Cathedral was Benson's ability to raise considerable sums of money in Cornwall and Devon, though he was much less successful raising money in London or Australia. For instance in a letter written by Lord Edgcumbe in 1880, quoted in Appendix 1, £110,000 is (optimistically) given as the figure raised over the previous few years, including the benefaction of Lady Rolle. Chapter Four identifies some of

the great and the good of Cornwall who were generous in their support, after initial hesitation, not least Edgcumbe himself. Such projects needed a fundraiser as Nathaniel Woodard showed in the foundation of the Woodard schools and Edward Trollope in the foundation of Southwell Diocese.⁷ Though Benson, like Woodard, had little money of his own, he was able to inspire others to give. What motivated him may have been a combination of his unchanging ideals allied to self-confidence that he, or possibly he alone, could accomplish the task of building a Cathedral. One of the first letters Benson wrote after the decision had been taken to build a new Truro Cathedral rather than enlarge an existing building was to C B Hutchinson, a future Canon of Canterbury Cathedral, who had said of Benson (when both were at Rugby in the 1850s): “He’s the only man in England that can build a Cathedral”, to tell him that his prediction had come true.⁸

The story of building the first stage of the Cathedral from 1880 to 1887, told in Chapters Four and Five was also a story of frustration. Although much money was raised, more was always needed. Two of Benson’s most loyal colleagues, Colonel Cocks and the first clerk of works, James Bubb, both died prematurely, in part worn out by controversies over the stone to be used, where they had defended the use of Bath stone advocated by Pearson, supported by Benson. Chapter Six of the thesis endeavours to show that the building of the cathedral, great achievement though it was, did not prevent the steady growth of secularism and pluralism within society, and what a friend of Benson, F. J. A. Hort called ‘the alienation of the people from their church’. The amount of money spent on church building, of which Truro Cathedral was only the most conspicuous and expensive example, encouraged the Methodist church to compete in a race to build churches and chapels, which helped to further

impoverish both. The revival of Anglicanism, beginning in Cornwall before Benson arrived, and which Benson helped to sustain and develop, never undermined Methodism in Cornwall. It is clear that many Cornish Methodists admired Benson. Some even supported the Cathedral financially, though it was clear that it was moving in a moderate Anglo-Catholic direction. What Benson was able to do was to promote one strand of Cornwall which perhaps had been relatively underemphasised in Methodism, namely Cornwall's Celtic past exemplified in its place names and in most of the Canons' stalls. It would be left to a later generation of Cornish historians such as Henderson and Doble to determine and evaluate the historicity of this story. Benson certainly believed the history to be true, but even as myth the story was powerful. It has been said by a contemporary historian that "the quip that all the oldest traditions were invented in the last quarter of the nineteenth century has great point".⁹

The substance of Benson's achievement can perhaps be best evaluated in comparison with his friend Frederick Temple, who invited Benson onto the staff of Rugby School, recommended him to Wellington College, was Bishop of Exeter when Benson was Bishop of Truro and succeeded Benson as Archbishop of Canterbury when Benson died in 1896, though he was eighteen years older than Benson. Two modern sympathetic studies of Temple by Simon Green and Frank Field have drawn attention to Temple's modernity, particularly his commitment to a genuinely meritocratic society and a thoughtful educated understanding of Christian truth, even if his commitment to these principles caused controversy, as his contribution to *Essays and Reviews* achieved.¹⁰

Benson's achievements were almost the exact opposite of Temple's. Benson was particularly good at dampening down controversy by reconciling Temple's views with those of his opponents. Instead of courting controversy by

advocating a way forward, which Field and Green argue has been partially achieved in the twentieth century, Benson looked back to historical and mythical elements of the past. It was famously said by George Canning that he called into existence the New World in order to redress the balance of the Old World. It could be said of Benson that he called into existence the Old World in order to try and redress the balance of the New World. Benson's knowledge of, and love for, the historical past yielded great achievements. Truro Cathedral, the Lincoln Judgement and the Chicago/Lambeth Quadrilateral helped, respectively, to reimagine the Gothic past, redefine Anglicanism to include Anglo-Catholic elements and provide the beginnings of a theological basis for world-wide Anglicanism. All depended on Benson's love of the past, medieval architecture, cathedral statute, the rubric of the Book of Common Prayer and a lifetime of research into the theology of Bishop Cyprian. It was his misfortune for him to live in an age for which Temple was increasingly more suited, an age that did not look to past precedents to solve its problems but to new ideas for a new twentieth century which was only four years away at the time of Benson's death. Reinforced concrete skyscrapers, not Gothic cathedrals became an icon of the modern age, an age that would also see fierce controversy in parliament over the Book of Common Prayer by Catholic and Protestant and a complete alteration in the status of the colonies, the countries which made up most of the worldwide Anglican Communion. Benson's autocratic personality, self-confidence, energy and intellectual ability could achieve much. But he could not hold an umbrella large enough for Methodists to shelter under. Nevertheless, Benson was able to reconcile opposing ideas among Anglicans and inspire a Cathedral to be built. Despite the changes of outlook in the twentieth century,

changes more congenial to Temple's outlook than to Benson's, this remains a substantial legacy.

Footnotes to Conclusion

1 Rosemary Ann Mitchell, quoted by Valerie Gray in her *Charles Knight: Educator, Publisher, Writer*, (Ashgate Publishing, 2006), p.96.

2 Samuel Bickersteth, *Life and Letters of Edward Bickersteth, Bishop of South Tokyo*, (London, 1899).

3 MS Benson Adds 12/2 90 A study of Gladstone's papers shows that Gladstone was selective in his correspondence with Bishops and other prominent Anglican clergy. There were five, in particular, that Gladstone corresponded extensively with: Benson (Add 44109), Tait (Add 44330-44331), R. W. Church, Dean of St Paul's (Add 44127), Christopher Wordsworth (Add 44346) and H.P. Liddon, Canon of St Paul's, (Add 44237). In his correspondence with B. F. Westcott, there are only five letters within Gladstone's General Correspondence (Add 44469, 44482 and 44490). Letters to and from E. W. Browne are confined to invitations to breakfast and found in lists of guests entertained by Gladstone with related correspondence (Add 44785). Gladstone's decision not to recommend Liddon to be a bishop or dean may owe something to Benson's influence, since Gladstone rated Liddon's abilities very highly. It also shows Benson's priorities and his determination that all bishops should speak with a common mind on matters of controversy. For Truro City see Beckett and Windsor, *Cornish Studies*, 11, pp.222, 226.

4 Simon Skinner, *Tractarians and the 'Condition of England': The Social and Political Thought of the Oxford Movement*, (Oxford, 2004), p.152.

5 Rodney Bolt, *As Good as God, as Clever as the Devil: the Impossible Life of Mary Benson*, (London, 2011) xxi; for Elizabeth Wordsworth's comment see above p.118.

6 Mark Chapman, *Bishops, Saints and Politics*,(London, 2007) p.64.

7 J. V. Beckett, *Edward Trollope, the Archbishop's Palace and the Founding of the Diocese of Southwell in 1884* in J. V. Beckett, (ed.), *Nottinghamshire Past: essays in honour of Adrian Henstock* (Cardiff, 2003); Leonard W Cowie, *That One Idea: Nathaniel Woodard and his Schools*, (Woodard Corporation, 1991).

8 A. C. Benson, *Life* vol. 1 pp.448-449.

9 Robert Colls and Philip Dodd (eds.), *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880-1920* (London, 1987), p.1, citing Richard Shannon, *the Crisis of Imperialism 1865-1915*, (St Albans, 1976) pp.12-13

10 Simon Green, 'Archbishop Frederick Temple on meritocracy, liberal education and the idea of a clerisy' in Michael Bentley (ed.) *Public and Private Doctrine Essays in British History presented to Maurice Cowling* (Cambridge,1993) p.149f; Frank Field *Saints and Heroes: Inspiring Politics* (London, 2010) p.15f

Appendix 1

Fund-raising in London

Liberal opponents of the increase in the number of dioceses objected not just to the creation of the Diocese in Truro, but also to St Albans and the four Dioceses (Liverpool, Wakefield, Newcastle and Southwell) provided for in the Bishopricks Bill presented in May 1877, the same month as Benson was enthroned. Harcourt's objection was the vagueness of the way the various schemes were to be brought about. "It was as if Parliament were asked to pass a Railway Bill, which proposed to sanction a line from anywhere to anywhere, and where there was no capital, no subscribers and no directors".¹ 1880 was a peak year for appeals not just for Truro diocese, but for Liverpool as well. "Cross followed through by urging the bishops to see that money was found to make full use of the Bill. Otherwise, he said, the advocates of legislation would look ridiculous. The deepening depression in agriculture and trade made exclusive reliance on local contributions impossible. The bishops and the Additional Home Bishopricks Endowment Fund issued appeals to the public at large. As a result, the Liverpool See was set up early in 1880... The three other new dioceses had to wait until, in the case of Wakefield Diocese, 1888. In old age, Cross was able to claim that no-one except Henry VIII and himself had been concerned with the formation of six new sees".² It is in this context that we must see the difficulties which Benson, the Lord Mayor of London, Edgcumbe and others had in raising money from the City of London in 1880. F Wyatt Truscott, Lord Mayor of London, of Cornish lineage, wrote to the *West Briton* on 15 July 1880, setting out the needs of Truro Cathedral in familiar terms. He stresses the difference between those other dioceses which could be formed with ready-made churches, which could be converted into a new cathedral. Truscott does not

mention Liverpool, which also needed a new building to be built as a cathedral. “The grand church revival of this century has demanded the erection of the new sees, of which the restored diocese of Cornwall is the first. For this new see, which (unlike others projected) possesses no suitable church, a cathedral is absolutely required”. Then, in words which seemed to echo Benson’s own thoughts, he continues, “for want of such a central church the work there begun must be and is distinctly impaired. A vast amount of central work in immediate connection with the Bishop is required which parochial institutions isolated and unassisted cannot touch. A cathedral staff without residences or salaries has undertaken for the time portions of such work – the conducting of parochial missions, a successful theological college with training in active parish work, religious instructions for the young, lectures throughout the diocese on historical church subjects... Some provision is already made for future stipends. It is therefore the fabric which, for all purposes is now imperatively required. This will cost £100,000(to)£120,000. Above £40,000 has been raised. Cornwall by herself can do no more. Men naturally look in England to the City of London to initiate great works, and when the City itself required the erection of St Paul’s, Cornwall from her remotest villages was forward in contributing to that work”.³

Edgcumbe amplified Truscott’s letter in a letter printed the same day in *The Times*: the £40,000 so far raised towards the Cathedral “represents but a small portion of the total amount provided by voluntary liberality for the requirements of the Diocese. When the ancient bishopric in Cornwall was reconstituted the only available money for the purpose consisted of £800 a year surrendered from the Bishop of Exeter. The endowment of the new bishopric and a residence for the Bishop had to be provided as well as a cathedral church. The county of Cornwall is poor and sparsely inhabited, containing no

large towns, its population and mineral resources have decreased considerably of late years, and had it not been for the munificence of one lady there would have been little or no prospect of the object being attained. Lady Rolle's magnificent donation of £40,000 added to the £800 a year already mentioned and supplemented by £30,000 provided by voluntary efforts, made up the modest income of £3,000 a year for our diocesan (bishop). The £40,000 collected for the building is addition to the other sums I have named. It will thus be seen that during the last three or four years £110,000 (of which £1000 was contributed by his Royal Highness the Duke of Cornwall) has been collected, mostly within the limits of the old dioceses – a sum which would have been sufficient to complete a cathedral, had that alone been required". It seemed to be only fair, Edgcombe continued, for those who had been invited to contribute to know what Devon and Cornwall had already done for itself. "Their names associated, as Lady Rolle's will ever be, with the first cathedral founded in England, in connection with the national church, during the last six centuries".⁴

Edgcombe's letter had the merit of stressing the importance of Devon as well as Cornwall as a place where money could be collected. Lady Rolle was herself living in Devon – "the limits of the old dioceses" was a good turn of phrase. Despite the eloquence and passion of Truscott's and Edgcombe's letters, actually raising money from the City of London proved very difficult. Benson's son wrote "Sir F. W. Truscott was a native of Truro, a man who had risen by his own exertions to the honourable position of chief magistrate of the metropolis. He was anxious that the Bishop should see certain city magnates and obtain if possible subscriptions for the new Cathedral. My father did not much like the task but he went so far as to call on the representatives of several great firms, who refused to subscribe".⁵ Benson himself committed the following thoughts to

his diary: "We went to lunch, and the Lord Mayor received a note from Rothschilds, saying that as they would not like to refuse a Lord Mayor, they hoped the Lord Mayor would not put them to the pain of calling on them with a request they could not accede to...This was not an expedition suited to its purpose. For our people's sake, it was not fitting that I should have to say no to the proposal of this Lombard Street tour. But while I was more impressed than ever in my life with the existence, presence, activity and potentiality of 'Money' as a living world power, our expedition was bound to fail. It was approaching the power from below, not from above. It was being a suitor to it, whereas those earthly kings are intended to *bring* their glory and honour with them".⁶ Compared with the love of working men in Lincoln and elsewhere whose presence Benson esteemed for life, the response which Benson received from London appeared to hurt him.⁷ "So rather sick, determined to despair of nothing but to work no more in this fashion, I hurried off for Vespers at Westminster Abbey, full of the looks and words and pompous ways of the kings who would not help, and assured us every *other* king *would*".⁸ Certainly, Benson did not like being, to use his word, the suitor. He did not like looking up to power or consorting with equals. Benson's understanding of divine power given to bishops meant that he was more comfortable with himself in charge and others being suitors to him.

The lack of money coming from outside Devon and Cornwall must not be exaggerated or romanticised, implying that everyone within Cornwall was generous financially towards the new Cathedral. G H Wilkinson, Benson's successor as Bishop of Truro, brought to the attention of his second Diocesan Conference in 1884 the fact that "more than one half of the Diocese, as represented by parochial officers, had ignored the appeal for the Cathedral,

now rising fast, had made no collection, had tendered no excuse. Neither was there much response to the call for Readers. In contrast with the nonconformists they had about one Reader to every five lay-preachers".⁹ Thus the appeal for money had not been very well supported by every Anglican parish. Yet, as Brown also says "the rich merchants of Liverpool had not built a Cathedral...while poor Cornwall had done that, or was doing that".¹⁰

Footnotes to Appendix 1

¹ P. T. Marsh, *Victorian Church in Decline* .p204

³T C M 250/6/1

⁴T C M 250/6/2

⁵ A. C. Benson *Life* Vol. 1 p.452

⁶Ibid

⁷A. C. Benson *Life* Vol.1 p.424

⁸A. C. Benson *Life* Vol.1 p.453

⁹ Miles Brown *A Century for Cornwall* pp.41-42

¹⁰ Miles Brown *ibid* . pp. 46-47

Appendix 2

Reconciliation in Cornwall

The Burial Laws Amendment Act was simple in its main idea, but far-reaching in its consequences. The Act in its first clause allowed that “notice may be given that burial will take place in a churchyard or graveyard without the rights and ceremonies of the Church of England”. Bishop Benson in an “*ad clerum*” to clergy at Michaelmas 1880 advised the clergy: “Those who have done what they could as defenders of the church... know that the hour of resistance is past”.¹ Edgcumbe was one of these who sought to offer heroic resistance in parliament and his letter to Benson dated 14 August 1880 indicated that a shared attitude on the Burial Act had brought the two together again after strained relationships had followed the ceremony on 20 May.

In a long letter to Benson, Edgcumbe explained: “the principle I want to see carried and which I have tried to get Sir Richard Cross (the Home Secretary) and other MPs to advocate is as I have already told you:

- 1) To allow the Bill to apply unconditionally to all graveyards except churchyards.
- 2) To allow it to apply after a year of grace to all churchyards where there is then no other burial ground.
- 3) To make it lawful (even in those churchyards then excepted) for the clergyman to allow a non-conformist service when application is made to bury a dissenter near a parent, husband, wife, sister, brother or child.

My object being to resolve all the dissenters’ grievances and yet to enable churchmen if they please to provide other burial grounds to save their churchyards being the precincts of their churches from the introduction of

concurrent rights inconsistent with the responsibility of the clergyman – and which will be used as a stepping stone to the church”.²

The “stepping stone to the church” probably refers to the threat of disestablishing the Church of England altogether, making removal of the parson’s property rights over the churchyard the thin end of the wedge. Not the first time, Edgcumbe hoped to be the conciliatory voice. The idea behind giving churchyards a year of grace was in the hope that secular graveyards would be established in the year, keeping churchyards free for Anglican burials. Such conciliation did not work because parliament favoured an Act with fewer caveats – though the controversy that surrounded the Bill ensured that even the simpler Act still was interpreted differently by various protagonists. Clause 6 was perhaps the most far-reaching part of the Act: “The burial may take place either without any religious service or with such Christian and orderly service at the grave, as such person shall think fit.” This clause allowed an agnostic or atheist to be buried without Christian ceremony; although the Act was never tested in this way, it would appear to allow a member of another world religion to be buried in the churchyard, so long as no religious service was included at the churchyard.

Nevertheless it is Clause 7 which Benson highlighted in his own copy of the Act: “it was forbidden to deliver any address, not being part of, or incidental to, a religious service permitted by this Act, and not otherwise permitted by lawful authority, or who shall, under colour of any religious service or otherwise, in any such churchyard or graveyard, wilfully endeavour to bring into contempt or obloquy the Christian religion... shall be guilty of a misdemeanour”. The part that concerned Benson the most was the prohibition of an attack “on the belief or worship of any church or denomination of Christians, or its members, or any

minister of any such church or denomination or any other person". Benson does not specify which churches or denominations are most at risk of attack, but in Cornwall it had to be assumed that he was referring to Anglican-Methodist relations. The least adhered-to part of the Act was Clause 9. "When any burial has taken place under this Act the person having the charge... shall, on the day thereof, or the next day thereafter, transmit a certificate of such burial, in the form or to the effect of schedule (A) annexed to this act, to the rector, vicar, incumbent, or other officiating minister in charge of the parish or district in which the churchyard or graveyard is situate or to which it belongs".³

Most non-conformist ministers or undertakers informed the parson that they were going to take a service in the churchyard, but did not bother with the second letter informing the parson that they had done it. This is what led parson Hocken at Phillack to have a separate section of his burial register in which the deceased were declared to be illegally buried. In response to these developments, Bishop Benson's letter to the clergy was considered so measured by some of his fellow bishops that it became a template for their communications with their clergy over this matter. It was a significant step on Benson's journey to becoming *primus inter pares*, first among equals, a Bishop who might become an Archbishop.

"Dear Reverend Brethren,

I feel deeply with those who hold that in redressing a little wrong a great wrong has been done. This must not sever me from those who think that it was a called-for sacrifice on our part... Our first duty now is to act as one man with one spirit. There can be no oneness except on the grounds of simple adherence to the law as it stands.

They who have done what they could as defenders of the churchyard know that the hour of resistance is passed. They who have believed that peace is served by enactments to permit lay funerals have no excuse for going on further to make private rules in the same direction.

There seem to be four main points on which questions arise as to the conduct of incumbents.

- 1) Should the church bell be rung...The bell of the church be not tolled unless the minister of the church is about to perform the Office of the Church.
- 2) As to the acceptance of fees. They are part of the property of his successors, which a life tenant has no right to give up. He may lay them out as he will, provided he does not suffer his use of them to provoke reflections on his brethren.
- 3) The clergyman keeps the right of fixing as before the place of the grave. I most earnestly entreat that every spot may be assigned as if the grave were that of a churchman with church rights, and families allowed, so far as can be, to rest together. That division line which we have deplored in cemeteries must not reappear where it would be still more grievous. I refuse to believe the public prediction of un-Christian people that Christian ministers will so act.

On the above three heads there might seem to be room (without direction from the Ordinary) for discretion.

- 4) On the fourth is no room. The officiating minister in charge of the parish is by law to enter the burial in his register. He has not to enter the name of the person who performs the ceremony, but that only of the representative of the deceased who, having had charge of the burial, certifies that it is done.

Honestly, I do not think that we ought to look on this as irksome. It in fact secures for the incumbent rights worth saving... Retaliation, grudge, ill- grace, stinted loyalty are not in the armoury which Christ has laid up for his Church to prevail by. Peace yields to its sowers not Peace only but Justice".⁴

The controversy over the extension of burial rites in the churchyard to ministers who were not of the Church of England affected two of the great debates that were current in society. The first was to what extent were property rights sacrosanct for the men who held those rights? In nearly every case, it was men who held these rights. Until the Married Women's Property Rights Bills came into law in 1870 and 1882, the only significant exception to this monopoly were widows. We have seen the resentment in Falmouth caused by the property rights of the largely absentee rector of Falmouth, a problem which the Kimberley family saw Benson about almost as soon as he came to Cornwall. The problem of Canonries at Exeter Cathedral, and one reason why none of the Canons except for Arthur Thynne switched to being a Canon of Truro Cathedral, was that they were seen as (often lucrative) property rights.⁵ Benson accepted that this was the case, but still felt that the large sums of money usually attached to residentiary canonries could be used by the church in many better ways.

If property rights were sacrosanct, then in some cases massive financial compensation was needed if those property rights were reduced. This was also

a concomitant of the 1833 Bill to abolish slavery throughout the British Empire, except in those lands controlled by the East India Company, Ceylon and St Helena. Henry Phillpotts, the future Bishop of Exeter, with three others, was a significant slave owner in the West Indies and the four received a considerable sum of money, (£12,700) in compensation for the loss of 665 slaves.⁶ The Burial Laws Amendment Act reduced the property rights over the churchyard of the incumbent without compensation. The principle of justice, in this case, allowing non-conformist ministers to officiate, or for there to be no religious ceremony at all in an Anglican churchyard was seen by parliament as overriding any concern over property rights. This left a number of, particularly High Church and Tory-leaning, clergy indignant, as the correspondence of the Rev F C Hingeston-Randolph, Rector of Ringmore, Devon and Rural Dean of Woodleigh showed. Hingeston-Randolph wrote both to Lord Chancellor Selbourne (on 25 May 1880) and on two occasions to the Archbishop of Canterbury; he published both sides of the correspondence and sent a copy of the pamphlet to Benson. In his letter to Selbourne, he describes the Burials Act as the plot of the Liberal party: “to us our loved and consecrated ground will become desecrated ground”. In his letter to A. C. Tait, Archbishop of Canterbury, Hingeston-Randolph launches into a stream of invective, especially in the second letter. In the first letter, Tait tries to offer a conciliatory answer; in the second, he largely urges Christian humility on Hingeston-Randolph.⁷

The second, wider Victorian problem that the Burial Laws Amendment Act highlighted was how to bring those who were largely outside the political and ecclesiastical centres of power to be more involved in the political and ecclesiastical process: in short, how to make the institutions more democratic. The Great Reform Act of 1832 started the process of enlarging the franchise,

continued by subsequent Reform Acts in Victorian times, so that more people could vote. Victorian legislators tried to differentiate between the deserving and the undeserving poor, keeping out what were called “the residuum”, believing that to hand power to them was to invite anarchy. Something of this concern may be seen in Archdeacon Phillpotts’ letter of 5 October 1880, (he was also Chancellor of the Diocese) copying Benson into a letter of advice to a clergyman in the diocese.

“My dear sir...

Of course, on occasion of these dissenting burials, you will keep the doors of the church locked and not go near the place while they are going on. I have had one of these funerals here – it was accompanied by such a rabble that everyone was disgusted. I do not expect to have another for some time”.⁸

The registrar, Burch, agreed with Chancellor Phillpotts’ hard-line stance, that clergyman could not allow non-parishioners the right to burial under the Act, using Clause 14 of the Act as justification. This stated that the Act did not allow a Church of England minister to do anything not previously allowed except when specifically required by the Act.

The Bishop of Lincoln, in a speech delivered in the House of Lords on 3 June 1880, was content with the status quo before the Act was passed precisely because, in his view, it differentiated between “peaceful religious dissenters” and the rest. “The Diocese of Lincoln is the largest diocese in England. I can assure your Lordships that I have never heard of a single case of such grievances during those 12 years (that Wordsworth had been Bishop of Lincoln). Indeed, the peaceful, religious dissenters and I am thankful that most of them are such – thankfully accept the burial service of the Church of England

performed by ministers of the Church in our churchyards, and would be sorry to be deprived of it”.⁹

It is the more liberal bishops who generally quote Benson or even reproduce his *ad clerum* in their addresses to their own clergy. The Bishop of Oxford quotes large chunks of it in his address to Rural Deans on 12 October 1880. He only differs from Benson in recommending the tolling of the bell. “I see no good reason why if it is asked that consent should be refused... the peal... was not meant to be an invitation to the service, and ought not to be so regarded. It has, by custom come to be looked upon as a mark of respect to the friends and family of the deceased, which, in my judgement, it would be neither wise nor kind (if asked for) without special cause to withhold”. The Bishop of Peterborough circulated Benson’s address in its entirety to the clergy of his Diocese. He wrote to Benson that he had explained to the clergy of Peterborough Diocese his course of action as follows: “after careful thought, I feel that I cannot better do this than by adopting the admirable words upon this subject lately addressed to the clergy of his diocese by my Right Reverend Brother, the Bishop of Truro. I do not think that any words of mine could improve either on the substance, or the tone of counsels so wise and so fatherly as these, and I’m glad to be able (by adopting them) to gain for the advice which I thus make my own the added weight of a name so justly honoured by you all”.¹⁰ It was not the case that Bishop Benson supported a liberal interpretation of the Act in its entirety. The Bishop of Carlisle, Harvey Goodwin, told his Diocese that he would consecrate additional burial ground when requested. Benson annotated Goodwin’s letter to the clergy of Carlisle Diocese, which was written on 20 October 1880, where Goodwin permitted the burial of non-parishioners in certain circumstances: “The power of refusing burial to non-

parishioners exists as heretofore: but if the permission be conceded, I see nothing in the Act to prevent the funeral from being conducted according to the method legalised by its provisions". Benson, in an annotation, called this "fallacious."¹¹

The Burial Laws Amendment Act did not mark the start of Benson's reputation as a leader of the national church. As the Bishop of Peterborough said – Benson's was already "a name so justly honoured by you all." But it enhanced Benson's reputation as someone who could, almost more than anyone else at the time in the Church of England, bring peace to the Church. The Act was intended to bring peace to the churchyards. Benson's decisive intervention ensured that those conservative Christians who were against its provision would not rebel but, however unwillingly, submit to the regulations. There were worries from that constituency and Benson was by no means the only bishop who contributed to the peace-making. Archdeacon Hobhouse wondered what would happen if a clergyman were prosecuted for not conforming to the regulations of the Act. Frederick Temple, the Bishop of Exeter, stated that the assurance that a bishop would not prosecute a clergyman should be enough: "an assurance from his Bishop that he would not be prosecuted... ought, in my judgement be enough for him... It is settled law that no-one can be prosecuted in any Ecclesiastical Court without the consent of the Bishop, and in case of a refusal to read the service there is no action possible in any but an Ecclesiastical Court. The case must certainly be extreme, which could justify a clergyman in assuming that the grace of Baptism was extinct. And in such an extreme case no Bishop would permit the clergyman to be prosecuted. And in a matter of this kind where it is well nigh impossible to have a judicial decision in the conditions of each deceased person, it is difficult

to see what more effectual relief can be given than is given them”.¹² Benson’s efforts in conciliation, enabling compliance and not resistance to the Act meant that its benefits could be recognised by the Church as it had to move to an era when it was in partnership with other churches in its ministry to the departed. Benson was able to make a piece of national legislation work for Cornwall, giving Methodist ministers access to parish churchyards, even though many burials took place in the public cemeteries that were opening at this time. It was one less thorn-in-the-flesh regarding the disagreements between the two churches.

Footnotes to Appendix 2

¹TCM 249/3a

²TCM 249/1b

³TCM 249/1a

⁴TCM 249/3a

⁵TCM 199

⁶John Danks, *Devon’s Plantation Owners* BBC 28 Feb 2007, cited by Wikipedia. According to the BBC report the present Bishop of Exeter believes that Phillpotts may have been unaware that he owned slaves, being encouraged by the government to invest in a sugar plantation.

⁷TCM 249/15

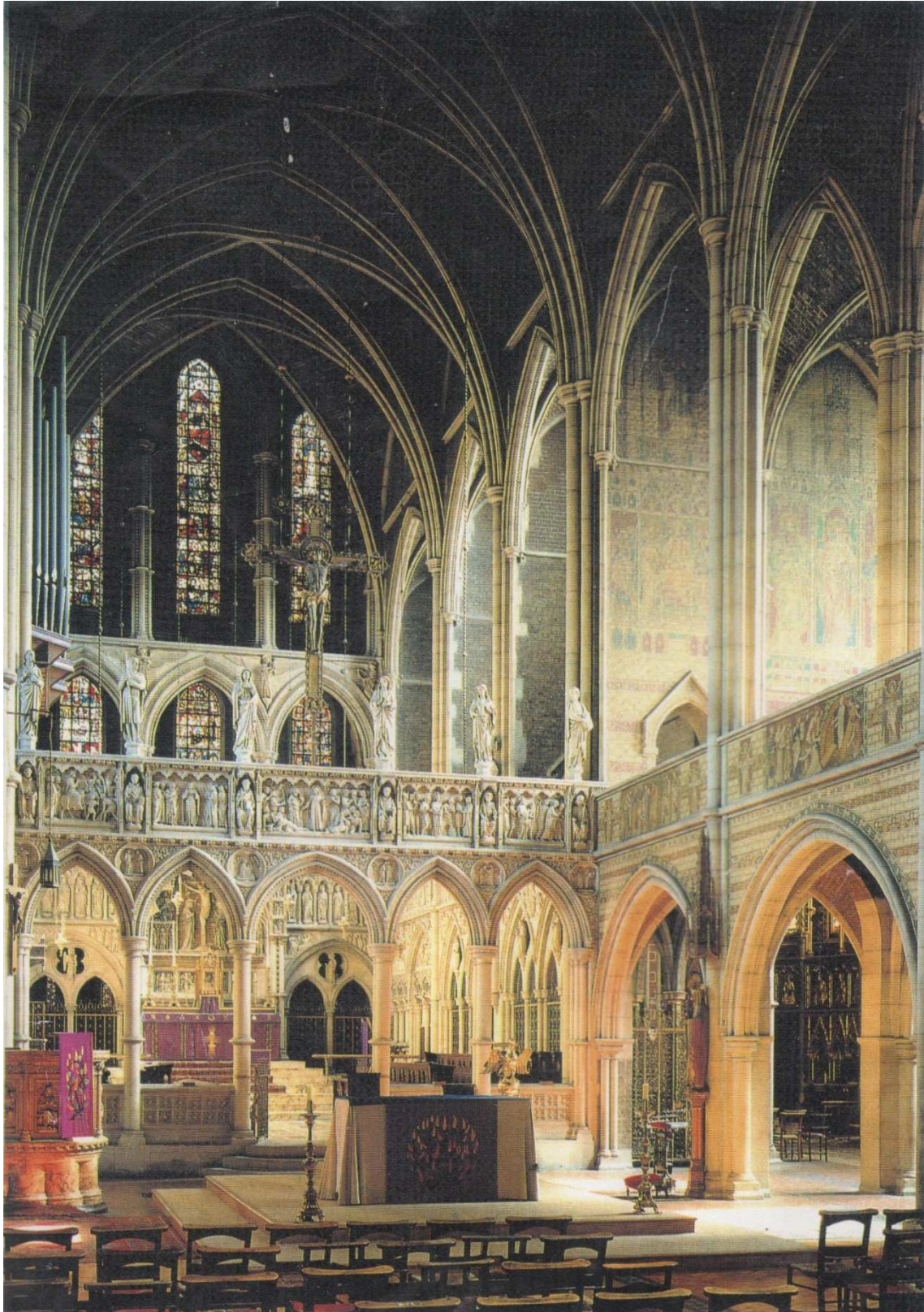
⁸TCM 249/6

⁹TCM 249/7b

¹⁰ TCM 249/9 shows the Bishop of Lichfield’s similar sentiments in his pastoral letter: “you know as well as I do how little such a measure was really desired by the great mass of religious Nonconformity in your own parishes.”

¹¹TCM 249/8/4

¹²TCM 249/8/2



Appendix 3 The interior of St Augustine's Church Kilburn, opened the year the foundation stone of Truro Cathedral was laid, designed by the same architect.

Bibliography

Primary sources used:

My main use of primary sources has been from the Cornwall Record Office, Truro and the Cornwall Studies Library, Redruth. I have particularly used Truro Cathedral Muniments (TCM) for the history of the foundation of Truro Cathedral and Benson's involvement with it. I have particularly used Benson's papers for an insight into his character and how he approached the various problems and challenges he faced during his time in Cornwall. I have concentrated my research on parish archives in the parishes of Penwith Deanery before the boundary changes of 1875 removed from it the parishes in Redruth, Camborne, and the Illogan area (Deposited Documents Parishes or DDP now classified as P).

At Cornwall Studies Library, I have examined the newspaper records of the eight local papers (two published in Penzance, two in Redruth, two in Falmouth and two in Launceston), which were published in Cornwall, alongside the *Royal Cornwall Gazette* and *West Briton* published in Truro. I have concentrated my researches on 1877, the year that Benson arrived in Cornwall, in order to consider the mood of the newspapers towards the churches in general and Benson, in particular.

Truro Cathedral Muniments (TCM)

TCM 1– 12 Chapter Muniments, Archbishop Temple's Collection

TCM 13 – 16 Correspondence 1878 – 1893

TCM 17 – 20 Photographs, Artefacts and Benson Relics.

TCM 21 – 36 Benson collected notes and papers (original file).

TCM 37 – 44 Diocesan Conferences 1877 – 1882 Benson's original file

TCM 45 – 51 Notes and Letters, 1876 – 1884

TCM 52 Finance Committee Minutes, 1878 – 1905

TCM 53 Executive Committee Minutes, 1878 – 1885

TCM 54, 55 Benson's Papers (various)

TCM 56 Cathedral Committee Minutes 1877--1893

TCM 57 Acts of Parliament (Cathedral) 1876 –1936.

TCM 58 – 60 Benson's Sermons and Notes, 1851, 1870.

TCM 61 – 104 Letters to and from Benson (original file), and printed lists of subscriptions to Truro Cathedral.

TCM 105 Copy of Service of Nine Lessons and Carols.

TCM 108 Pictures from *Building News* 7/2/1879 showing J.P. St Aubyn's design for an enlarged St Mary's – a drawing made prior to the creation of Truro diocese.

TCM 109 – 114 Copies of *London Gazette* referring to the foundation of Truro Diocese.

.TCM 115/1 –8 Letters relating to the Canon Missioner at Truro 1877.

TCM 116/1 – 68 Packet of correspondence concerning canonries, the foundation of the Cathedral and associated matters.

T. C. M. 117/1 – 36 Packet of papers relating to the transfer of fifth Exeter Canonry to Truro 1876 – 1882.

TCM 118 Essays by Benson on Cathedrals and the more general work of the Church with letters and newspaper cuttings.

TCM 122/1 EW Benson's notebook on his tour of German schools 1858.

TCM 145 Benson's Diaries 1871 – 1880.

TCM 146 Benson's Diaries 1877 – 1881

TCM 147 Benson's Diaries 1882

TCM 148 Benson's Diaries 1883 –1886

TCM 157/158 Documents relating to the laying of the foundation stone of the Cathedral 1879 – 80.

TCM 161 *Royal Cornwall Gazette* article 21/5/80.

TCM 165 *West Briton* 21/5/80.

TCM 166 *The Graphic* 29/5/80.

TCM 168 *Illustrated London News* 22/5/80.

TCM 171 Letter from Sir Henry Ponsonby to Dean of Windsor regarding the Queen not subscribing to the Cathedral Fund.

TCM 172 Edgcumbe to Benson regarding the Foundation Stone Ceremony of 1880.

TCM 186 – 218 Legal Documents (statutes).

TCM 249/1/1 – 17 Letters relating to the Burial Laws Amendment Act.

TCM 252/1 –3 Diaries of James Bubb, Clerk of Works for Truro Cathedral and other Bubb memorabilia.

TCM 253/1 – 64 Correspondence on what stone was to be used for the Cathedral.

Parish Records (Cornwall Record Office numbers)

I would like to thank all the staff at the Cornwall Record Office, Truro (CRO), especially David Thomas, for their help with the TCM and P archives.

Within the P Archives, I have found the following particularly helpful:

Redruth CRO P197/2/3

Paul CRO P172/8/1

St John's Penzance CRO P181/2/2

St Mary's Penzance CRO P179

Towednack CRO P226/8/1

Madron CRO P133/5/7

Ludgvan CRO P129/8/4

St Erth CRO P59/2/9 (Parson Mills' Parish Diary 1872--1882)

St Just in Penwith CRO P95/8/1

Morvah CRO P156/5/1

Marazion CRO P136

St Elwyn Hayle CRO P54/8/1

Zennor CRO P255/5/1

Lanner CRO P112/6/1-4

St Levan CRO P122/8/1

St Buryan CRO P23/5/3; P23/8/1

Perranuthnoe CRO P183/5/2

St Hilary CRO P87/8/1

Crowan CRO P42/6/1

Gulval CRO P77/2/33; P77/2/13; P77/8/5

St Peter Newlyn CRO P164/2/11

Illogan CRO P88/5/2

Gwinnear CRO P80/2/1

Gwithian CRO P81/2/1

Penponds CRO P176/2/18

Camborne CRO P27/5/1

Sancreed CRO P205/8/1

Pendeen CRO P175/2/3

Phillack CRO P186/8/1; P186/1/17(Phillack Burial Register)

I have also studied the early Deanery material for Penwith Deanery (DY/PEN).I would like to thank Christine Edwards for her help in drawing my attention to this Deanery material and also that for Powder Deanery (DY/POW).

As well as press cuttings of reports from the annual Truro diocesan conference in October from the *Royal Cornwall Gazette* and *West Briton*, I have researched the reports of these conferences in the CRO archives especially the Truro Diocesan Conference 1877 – 1885 (D/E1/1).

Lambeth Palace Library

Archbishop Tait papers folio 68 especially letter 274

Archbishop Benson papers volume 29 especially p218-9. Questions asked of beneficed clergy at the Bishop of Truro's Primary Visitation 1880.

The *Index to the Letters and Papers of Edward White Benson Archbishop of Canterbury 1883-1896 in Lambeth Palace Library* (Mansell Publishing London 1980) contains a list and index of the 181 bound volumes of Benson's correspondence and papers in Lambeth Palace Library

Bodleian Library, University of Oxford

Benson Family Papers:

C2 M/SS. Benson 3/3-6 – esp3/6 Letters from figures in public life in correspondence with E W Benson.

C3 MSS Benson 3/16-40 Correspondence of Mary 'Minnie' Benson (E W Benson's wife) nee Sidgwick (1841-1918)

C3.2 MSS Benson 3/14-15 Letters from her husband E W Benson.

D Add. Papers (further works and correspondence.) MSS Benson adds 1-22.

Especially, MS Benson adds 12/2: Memoirs of Mary Benson (1891) Vol. 1 with some additional material in AC Benson's hand and MS Benson adds 15: Typescript Selection from Diaries of Bishop Benson 1893-1895.

Trinity College Cambridge

Papers of Edward White Benson (1829-1896) Archbishop of Canterbury

Ref: GBR/0016/ BENSON (6 boxes)

The collections contain items which were used by AC Benson in his biography of his father. It includes diaries 1850-1896, commonplace books 1848-1896 and typescript copy correspondence 1842-1896.

See especially within Box 1 (A 1-5): A3 Diary 1871-1881

A4 Diary 1882

A5Diary 1883

Within Box 2 (A6-11): 1884-1889 (yearly diaries)

Within Box 3 (A12-17): 1890-1896 (yearly diaries)

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Add. 44109 Gladstone Papers Vol. XX1V Correspondence with E W Benson 1871-1896.

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