The Activity and Influence of the Established Church in England, c. 1800-1837

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This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

November 2018

Declaration

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my dissertation has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

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Nicholas Dixon
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Thesis Summary

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This thesis examines the various ways in which the Church of England engaged with English politics and society from c. 1800 to 1837. Assessments of the early nineteenth-century Church of England remain coloured by a critique originating in radical anti-clerical polemics of the period and reinforced by the writings of the Tractarians and Élie Halévy. It is often assumed that, in consequence of social and political change, the influence of a complacent and reactionary church was irreparably eroded by 1830. While some historians have moved beyond this restrictive framework, their focus has generally been on the Church's internal affairs and the ways in which the clergy were affected by political and social reforms. By contrast, this thesis investigates not only how the Church responded to change, but also, above all, how the Church itself was able to shape political and social life. The thesis presents a national, as opposed to a regional, picture of Anglican activity by way of geographically dispersed case studies from throughout England. Five main strands are explored. The first chapter delineates the nature and extent of mainstream Anglican allegiance in this period. On this basis, the role of the clergy in political life is considered in the next two chapters, with reference to both the contribution of the bishops to the proceedings of the House of Lords and clerical involvement in parliamentary politics at a local level. In the final two chapters, the extra-parliamentary participation of the Church in English society is discussed, by reference to the growth of Anglican schools for the poor and the expanding efforts of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. From these multifarious strands emerges a new picture of early nineteenth-century English politics and society, in which the Church of England was a pivotal agent, rather than only a beleaguered victim, of significant socio-political changes.

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Abbreviations

Arch.	Archives
BL	British Library, London
Bodl.	Bodleian Library, Oxford
CERC	Church of England Record Centre, London
CUL	Cambridge University Library, Cambridge
DCM	A. R. Wellesley (Duke of Wellington) (ed.), *Despatches, Correspondence and Memoranda of Field Marshal Arthur Duke of Wellington, K.G.* (8 vols., London, 1867-80)
DUL	Durham University Library, Durham
ECA	Exeter Cathedral Archives, Exeter
Hansard	*Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*
HL	Papers of the 1st Duke of Wellington (shelfmark: MS 61), Hartley Library, Southampton
HoP 1790-1820	R. G. Thorne (ed.), *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1790-1820* (5 vols., London, 1986)
HoP 1820-1832	D. R. Fisher (ed.), *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1820-1832* (7 vols., Cambridge, 2009)
LDN	T. Gornall, I. T. Ker, G. Tracey, F. J. McGrath and C. S. Dessain (eds.), *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman* (32 vols., London and Oxford, 1961-2008)
LPL	Lambeth Palace Library, London
NS AR	*Annual Report of the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church throughout England and Wales* [cited by year of publication]
RO	Record Office
SPCK AR	*Report of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge* [cited by year of publication]
StC	St Catharine's College Archives, Cambridge
WP(B)	Papers of John William Whittaker (shelfmark: G3WHIT), Blackburn Central Library, Blackburn
WP(C)	Papers of John William Whittaker, St John's College Library, Cambridge

Introduction

In her novel of 1814 *Mansfield Park*, Jane Austen has the character Mary Crawford declare, 'Men love to distinguish themselves, and in [the law and the army], distinction may be gained, but not in the church. A clergyman is nothing.' The context of this remark is a conversation during which Edmund Bertram, Crawford's suitor, reveals his desire to be a clergyman. Bertram then launches into an impassioned defence of the clergy's role:

> A clergyman cannot be high in state or fashion. He must not head mobs, or set the ton [sic] in dress. But I cannot call that situation nothing, which has the charge of all that is of the first importance to mankind, individually or collectively considered, temporally and eternally, – which has the guardianship of religion and morals, and consequently of the manners which result from their influence. No one here can call the *office* nothing. If the man who holds it is so, it is by the neglect of his duty, by foregoing its just importance, and stepping out of his place to appear what he ought not to appear.

Crawford is unconvinced, stating that Bertram assigns 'greater consequence to the clergyman than one has been used to hear given, or than I can quite comprehend' and that '[o]ne scarcely sees a clergyman out of his pulpit.' Bertram, however, responds that Crawford is 'speaking of London. *I* am speaking of the nation at large.' He further explains that '[t]he *manners* I speak of, might rather be called *conduct*, perhaps, the result of good principles; the effect … of those doctrines which it is their duty to teach and recommend; and it will, I believe, be every where found that as the clergy are, or are not what they ought to be, so are the rest of the nation.' Yet Mary Crawford maintains her opinion.[1]

During the two centuries following the publication of *Mansfield Park*, the historical profession has had a far larger share of Mary Crawfords than Edmund Bertrams. In many accounts of early nineteenth-century England, the Anglican

[1] [J. Austen], *Mansfield Park* (3 vols., London, 1814), I, 190-94.

clergyman and his church have practically amounted to 'nothing' outside of pulpit and reading desk. Moreover, studies of the clergy in London and other conurbations as well as regional case studies have predominated over evaluations of the Church's role in 'the nation at large'. And, as Bertram suspects of Crawford, many historians have not judged for themselves 'but from prejudiced persons, whose opinions you have been in the habit of hearing.'[2] Ideological critiques of the pre-Victorian Church have been perpetuated with little research as to their empirical basis. To most historians, the early nineteenth-century clergyman remains a hapless bystander and victim of social and political developments, as opposed to an active agent in such changes.

However, as Jane Austen evidently believed, the office of clergyman was not 'nothing'. The English branch of the United Church of England and Ireland was both a state church whose bishops were legislators and the largest religious denomination in England throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, accounting for around half of all church attendees as late as 1851.[3] The parish system, for all its lack of adaptation to demographic change, ensured that the Church had a reach that other public institutions – the government, political associations, law enforcement, charities – could not match. Moreover, the Church possessed unparalleled resources in its tithes, landholdings, charitable custodianship and role in local government. In many respects, the Church of England was the central pivot around which the rest of English society turned. This commanding position gave the clergy multifarious opportunities to be active and influential in English public life.

The principal contention of this thesis is that, during the period from c. 1800 to 1837, the clergy of the Church of England, from the bishops in the House of Lords to curates in rural parishes, successfully took advantage of these opportunities and thereby had a significant, and often decisive, impact on politics and society throughout England. The novelty of this argument lies primarily in its attribution of

[2] Ibid., 229.
[3] B. I. Coleman, *The Church of England in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: A Social Geography* (London, 1980), 7.

considerable agency to the Church, in its national as opposed to regional coverage of its activities across England and in its presentation of the mainstream of early nineteenth-century Anglicanism as a distinct and unitary phenomenon. But in order fully to comprehend the parameters of this argument, it is necessary to survey the ways in which the Church has been presented by historians during the past two centuries.[4] The discussion which follows focuses on broader historical accounts of the early nineteenth-century Church; more specific historiographies will be considered throughout the thesis.

Radicalism and Tractarianism

Historians have consistently displayed a reluctance to appreciate the Church's position, activity and influence. This can be traced back to the early nineteenth century, which witnessed vigorous attempts to undermine the Church's position, especially from radicals. Among its most prominent detractors were the printer William Hone, utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham and Unitarian writer John Wade.[5] Each asserted that Anglicanism was devoid of spiritual energy and positive

[4] For recent historiographical overviews that partially concern the early nineteenth-century Church, see F. Knight, *The Nineteenth-century Church and English Society* (Cambridge, 1995), 1-20; J. Evertsson, *Bishops, Politics and Anti-clericalism in Nineteenth Century England and Sweden* (Falun, 2005), 9-21; G. Sanna, 'The Eighteenth Century Church of England in Historical Writing', in M. Caricchio and G. Tarantino (eds.), *Cromohs Virtual Seminars: Recent Historiographical Trends of the British Studies (17th-18th Centuries)*, 2006-7, 1-6 [http://www.fupress.net/public/journals/49/Seminar/sanna_church.html]; N. A. Dixon, 'Church and Monarchy in England, 1811-1837' (unpublished MPhil thesis, University of Cambridge, 2015), 5-19.

[5] W. Hone, *Regency Radical: Selected Writings of William Hone*, ed. D. A. Kent and D. R. Ewen (Detroit, MI, 2003), 35-185; J. Bentham, *Church-of-Englandism and its Catechism Examined* (London, 1818); [J. Wade], *The Extraordinary Black Book: An Exposition of the United Church of England and Ireland, Civil List and Crown Revenues, Incomes, Privileges, and Power, of the Aristocracy, Privy Council, Diplomatic, and Consular Establishments, Law and Judicial Administration, Representation and Prospects of Reform under the New Ministry, Profits, Influence, and Monopoly of the Bank of England and East-India Company, with Strictures on the Renewal of their Charters, Debt and Funding System, Salaries, Fees, and Emoluments in Courts of Justice, Public Offices and Colonies, Lists of Pluralists, Placemen, Pensioners, and Sinecurists, the Whole corrected from the Latest Official Returns*

influence. In Hone's *Political Litany*, a satire on the Anglican liturgy, was a prayer that the clergy, by having 'their fleshly appetites … reduced' might increase 'their spiritual-mindedness'.[6] Bentham argued that the Church was 'in danger now, as the Church of Rome was three centuries ago, and exactly from the same cause.'[7] Wade put forward a highly misleading statistical case for considering the Church a bastion of 'old corruption' and condemned 'the inefficiency of the clergy as public teachers … and their inertness in the promotion of measures of general utility.'[8] Similar views were advanced in a milder form by such Whig critics as Henry Brougham and Thomas Babington Macaulay.[9]

The most common response of the Church to such detractors was confident refutation.[10] But two groups of Anglican clergy originating in Oriel College, Oxford, endorsed radical and Whig arguments. The 'Oriel noetics' were a group of Latitudinarian churchmen at the college in the 1820s. Among them was Richard Whately, who anonymously advocated disestablishment. Contrasting the Church negatively with dissenting denominations, Whately likened it to a body 'somewhat feeble in muscle … and ill qualified for energising with vigour, when compared with a frame less perfectly compacted, but possessing a more lively circulation and a more lively activity.'[11] This critique informed the evolution of the 'broad church' movement, which had a decisive impact on the development of Victorian

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and presenting a Complete View of the Expenditure, Patronage, Influence, and Abuses of the Government, in Church, State, Law and Representation (London, 1831). On the deficiencies of Wade's account, see P. Harling, 'Rethinking "Old Corruption"', *Past and Present*, 147 (1995), 127-58. Another important critic of the Church of England was William Cobbett, whose views on the Church are expressed in W. Cobbett, *A History of the Protestant Reformation in England and Ireland* (2 vols., London, 1829); idem., *Rural Rides* (London, 1830); idem., *Cobbett's Legacy to Parsons* (London, 1835).

[6] Hone, *Selected Writings*, 111.

[7] Bentham, *Church-of-Englandism*, 54.

[8] Wade, *Black Book*, 8.

[9] H. P. Brougham (Baron Brougham and Vaux), *Works* (11 vols., London, 1855-7), IX, 226; *Edinburgh Review*, September 1828, 110; October 1840, 239.

[10] See e.g. Evertsson, *Bishops, Politics and Anti-clericalism*, 53-63.

[11] An Episcopalian [R. Whately], *Letters on the Church* (London, 1826), 183-4.

Anglicanism.[12] Another Oriel fellow, John Henry Newman, was also influenced by Whately and, supported by Richard Hurrell Froude, John Keble and Edward Pusey (also Oriel fellows), synthesised the 'noetic' pessimism about the viability of a state church with a 'High Church' concern for catholic dogma.[13] Their position, dismissive of the Reformation and the Royal Supremacy alike, was propagated by the Oxford or Tractarian Movement.[14]

Anglo-Catholic History

Though Tractarian sentiment was a marginal phenomenon when it first emerged, it would come largely to determine the way in which Anglican ecclesiastical history was written. The Anglo-Catholic successors of the Tractarians wrote the first historical accounts of the early nineteenth-century Church. Perhaps the earliest such attempt was *Bishop Blomfield and his Times* (1857) by George Biber, who situated the noted reforming prelate in the 'transition' stage between the 'dry, insular respectability' of George III's reign and 'the Church of the future … a Church differing in all her proportions, and in her whole aspect … from the Church of whose ideas and feelings the Episcopal wig was a fitting type.'[15] Biber's first chapter presented his view of the state of the Church in 1828, the year in which Blomfield succeeded to the see of London, as gathered from bishops' charges. The headers were a veritable litany of errors: 'low state of the Church', 'Non-Residence. – Plurality.', 'disorderly employment of curates', 'simoniacal titles', 'slovenly ministration of baptism', 'neglect of catachumens', 'infrequency of communion',

[12] R. Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics: Whiggery, Religion and Reform, 1830-1841* (Oxford, 1987), 179-80; P. Corsi, *Science and Religion: Baden Powell and the Anglican Debate, 1800–1860* (Cambridge, 1988), 85-95; D. de Giustino, 'Disconnecting Church and State: Richard Whately's Ideas in the 1830s', *Albion*, 35 (2003), 53-70.
[13] J. H. Newman, *Apologia pro vita sua* (London, 1893), 12-13, 48-56.
[14] P. B. Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context: Anglican High Churchmanship 1760-1857* (Cambridge, 1994), 72-85, 122-7.
[15] G. E. Biber, *Bishop Blomfield and his Times: An Historical Sketch* (London, 1857), vii-viii.

'irregularities in divine service', 'imitation of the conventicle', 'corrupt exercise of patronage', 'shameless nepotism', 'indications of a rising storm'.[16]

The acceptance of this schema was placed on firmer ground with the posthumous publication of R. W. Church's *The Oxford Movement* (1891). Church had been a close associate of Newman and an early supporter of the Oxford Movement. Like Biber, he used his first chapter to paint a highly unflattering picture of the pre-Tractarian Church: '[m]en were afraid of principles'; the clergyman was 'certainly not alive to the greatness of his calling'; the Church was 'slumbering and sleeping'.[17] The Oxford Movement was a 'strong reaction against slackness of fibre in the religious life; against the poverty, softness, restlessness, worldliness, the blunted and impaired sense of truth, which reigned with little check in the recognised fashions of professing Christianity.'[18] Church's narrative became the standard view of nineteenth-century Anglican history, and many subsequent histories of the Oxford Movement were based upon it.[19] Crucially, it was promoted by the early twentieth-century bishop and theologian Charles Gore, whose synthesis of Anglo-Catholic and 'broad church' thought – termed 'Liberal Catholicism' – became the dominant Anglican ecclesiological framework of the twentieth century, and remains potent.[20]

Consequently, Anglo-Catholic assumptions largely determined how the ecclesiastical history of the early nineteenth century was written during the twentieth. John Moorman's *History of the Church in England* (1953), the standard single-volume account of its era, demonstrates how little the study of the early nineteenth-century Church travelled in the half-century following R. W. Church's

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[16] Ibid., 1-25. Cf. W. N. Molesworth, *History of the Church of England from 1660* (London, 1881), 308-9, 313, 318.
[17] R. W. Church, *The Oxford Movement: Twelve Years, 1833-1845* (London, 1891), 3-4.
[18] Ibid., 19.
[19] See e.g. G. H. F. Nye, *The Story of the Oxford Movement: A Book for the Times* (London, 1899), 62-3; S. Hall, *A Short History of the Oxford Movement* (London, 1906), 25-8; S. L. Ollard, *A Short History of the Oxford Movement* (London, 1915), 4-26; J. T. McNeill, 'Anglicanism on the Eve of the Oxford Movement', *Church History*, 3 (1934), 95-114.
[20] C. Gore, *The Anglo-Catholic Movement Today* (London, 1925), 4. On Gore's influence, see K. Hylson-Smith, *High Churchmanship in the Church of England from the Sixteenth Century to the Late Twentieth Century* (Edinburgh, 1993), 175-90, 350-51.

account. According to Moorman, bishops 'took their duties lightly and found plenty of time to enjoy the good things which their affluence provided', while Church life was characterised by 'a general slackness and indifference'.[21] Anglicans were '[g]radually' coming to the realisation that the Church was not 'a department of State', and it was the Oxford Movement which 'put new life and new self-confidence into the Church' and represented the '[o]nly' means of 'any real revival and reform'.[22] Thus, '[i]f the Church at the beginning of the nineteenth century had been somnolent, by the 1840's [sic] it was very much awake and full of life and activity.'[23]

The distinguished church historian Geoffrey Best likewise endorsed Church's narrative, claiming in 1970 that it was 'reliable, accurate and fair on almost all matters of fact and most of opinion'.[24] Best articulated the influential notion of a 'constitutional revolution' occurring between 1828 and 1832, positing that the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, Catholic emancipation and the Reform Act had the cumulative effect of leaving the Church 'afloat and to outward appearances remarkably the same, but bereft of its anchors and rudder, waiting in the sultry calm to see what wind would blow and whether it could safely make the harbour.'[25] This

[21] J. R. H. Moorman, *A History of the Church in England* (London, 1953), 333-4.
[22] Ibid., 335-6, 347.
[23] Ibid., 351.
[24] R. W. Church, *The Oxford Movement: Twelve Years, 1833-1845,* ed. G. F. A. Best (Chicago, IL, 1970), xvii.
[25] G. F. A. Best, 'The Constitutional Revolution, 1828-32, and its Consequences for the Established Church', *Theology*, 62 (1959), 231. Best's arguments were anticipated in 1958 by Olive Brose, but she did not use the term 'revolution' in relation to the reforms of 1828-32: O. J. Brose, *Church and Parliament: The Reshaping of the Church of England, 1828-1860* (Stanford, CA, 1959), 7-21. For reiterations of the 'constitutional revolution' thesis, see e.g. N. Gash, *Reaction and Reconstruction in English Politics 1832-1852: The Ford Lectures delivered in the University of Oxford in the Hilary Term 1964* (Oxford, 1965), 61-2; G. I. T. Machin, *Politics and the Churches in Great Britain 1832 to 1868* (Oxford, 1977), 21-2, 26-7; R. K. Webb, *Modern England: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present*, (2nd edn, London, 1980), 186-203; W. H. Conser, *Church and Confession: Conservative Theologians in Germany, England, and America, 1815-1866* (Macon, GA, 1984), 99-111; R. Brown, *Church and State in Modern Britain 1700-1850* (London, 1991), 203-29; S. J. Brown, *The National Churches of England, Ireland, and Scotland, 1801-46* (Oxford, 2001),

framework was derived from the Tractarian leader Richard Hurrell Froude.[26] In *Temporal Pillars* (1964), Best further argued that the pre-Victorian Church 'failed to carry out its vital role'; its 'needs were desperate'; 'the pace of its reforms … far too slow'.[27]

Social Criticism

Anglo-Catholic verdicts were confirmed from outside the discipline of ecclesiastical history. The early twentieth-century French historian Élie Halévy was, in his own words, 'a "liberal" in the sense that I was an anti-clerical, a democrat and a republican' at the time he embarked upon his four-volume *History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century* (1912-32).[28] Soon appearing in English translation, this monumental work exercised a towering influence over any discussion of its subject matter. Halévy posited that Methodism was the most widespread form of religious expression in England and restrained the revolutionary energies of the English people. By contrast, Anglicanism was 'a religion in which … the "Erastian" principle was scrupulously respected, a religion essentially national whose source was the will of the secular government.'[29] This produced clergy about whom 'there was nothing whatever of the "priest"' and churches that were 'empty'.[30]

168; F. Knight, *The Church in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 2008), 14-15; and below, 11, 14-15.

[26] R. H. Froude, *Remains of the Late Reverend Richard Hurrell Froude: Part the Second* (2 vols., Derby, 1839), I, 184-207.

[27] G. F. A. Best, *Temporal Pillars: Queen Anne's Bounty, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and the Church of England* (Cambridge, 1964), 171. Some ecclesiastical historians have continued to endorse such views. See e.g. P. Virgin, *The Church in an Age of Negligence: Ecclesiastical Structure and Problems of Church Reform, 1700-1840* (Cambridge, 1989), 264-7; Hylson-Smith, *High Churchmanship*, 124; P. B. Nockles, 'The Oxford Movement and the Legacy of Anglican Evangelicalism' in J. van Eijnatten and P. Yates (eds.), *The Dynamics of Religious Reform in Northern Europe, 1780-1920: The Churches* (Leuven, 2010), 65-6.

[28] E. Halévy, *The Era of Tyrannies: Essays on Socialism and War*, tr. R. K. Webb (London, 1967), 209.

[29] Idem., *England in 1815*, tr. E. I. Watkin and D. A. Barker (New York, 1961), 390.

[30] Ibid., 395, 399.

The same framework for analysing the religious situation in early nineteenth-century England was employed by the 'new left' historian E. P. Thompson in his seminal *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963, rev. 1968). Thompson cursorily dismissed the possibility that Anglicanism had shaped the working class:

> For centuries the Established Church had preached to the poor the duties of obedience. But it was so distanced from them … that its homilies had ceased to have much effect. The deference of the countryside was rooted in bitter experience of the power of the squire rather than in any inward conviction. And there is little evidence that the evangelical movement within the Church met with much greater success: many of Hannah More's halfpenny tracts were left to litter the servants' quarters of the great houses. But the Methodists – or many of them – *were* the poor.[31]

During the ensuing decade, social historians sought to substantiate Halévy and Thompson's assertions. Richard Soloway wrote that the Church 'had barely begun to adjust to the changes of the eighteenth century'. Furthermore, 'Church lethargy contrasted sharply with the expansionist efforts of many Dissenter congregations.'[32] A. D. Gilbert used figures concerning communicant numbers in thirty Oxfordshire parishes to claim that '[t]he period of 1740-1830 was a disaster, for whereas the Church of England had controlled something approaching a monopoly of English religious practice only ninety years earlier, in 1830 it was on the point of becoming a minority religious Establishment.'[33] He also presented the Church as 'a static

[31] E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (3rd edn, Harmondsworth, 1980), 386. See also idem., 'Patrician Society, Plebeian Culture', *Journal of Social History*, 7 (1974), 391, 397.
[32] R. A. Soloway, *Prelates and People: Ecclesiastical Social Thought in England, 1783-1852* (London, 1969), 281-2. Cf. W. R. Ward, *Religion and Society in England, 1790-1850* (London, 1972), 54-62.
[33] A. D. Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England: Church, Chapel and Social Change, 1740-1914* (London, 1976), 27.

institution, characterised by inertia'.[34] Similar views have been lately advanced by Penelope Corfield, Hervé Picton and David Cannadine.[35]

Revisionism

An alternative historiographical strain has sought partially to exculpate the Church from the charges of lethargy and irrelevance. As early as 1894, the 'High Church' clergyman John Overton wrote a mildly sympathetic but largely unnoticed account of the Church's activities between 1800 and 1833.[36] However, revisionist historians of the Georgian Church have largely concentrated their attention on the 'short' eighteenth century.[37] A notable exception to this tendency was Edward Norman's *Church and Society in England, 1770-1970* (1976). Norman took issue with Halévy and Thompson's view of Methodism, stating that the Church 'retained a far larger following from all classes than Methodism did.'[38] Furthermore, 'the spiritual life of

[34] Ibid., 28. Similar conclusions were reached at a micro level in a case study of the same year: J. Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey, 1825-1875* (Oxford, 1976), 103-82. For a more recent case study in this vein, see M. R. Austin, '*A Time of Unhappy Commotion': The Church of England and the People in Central Nottinghamshire, 1820-1870* (Chesterfield, 2010).
[35] P. J. Corfield, *Power and the Professions in Britain 1700-1850* (London, 1995), 125-8; idem., '"An Age of Infidelity": Secularization in Eighteenth-century England', *Social History*, 39 (2014), 246; H. Picton, *A Short History of the Church of England: From the Reformation to the Present Day* (Newcastle, 2015), 85-93; D. Cannadine, *Victorious Century: The United Kingdom, 1800-1906* (London, 2017), 125-8.
[36] J. H. Overton, *The English Church in the Nineteenth Century (1800-1833)* (London, 1894). Cf. E. Stock, *The English Church in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1910).
[37] See e.g. the limited coverage or omission of the early nineteenth century in N. Sykes, *Church and State in England in the XVIIIth Century* (Cambridge, 1934); F. C. Mather, 'Georgian Churchmanship Reconsidered: Some Variations in Anglican Public Worship 1714-1830', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 36 (1985), 255-83; J. Walsh, C. Haydon and S. Taylor (eds.), *The Church of England, c. 1689-c. 1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism* (Cambridge, 1993); W. T. Gibson, *The Achievement of the Anglican Church, 1689-1800: The Confessional State in Eighteenth-century England* (Lewiston, NY, 1995); J. Gregory and J. S. Chamberlain (eds.), *The National Church in Local Perspective: The Church of England and the Regions, 1660-1800* (Woodbridge, 2003).
[38] E. R. Norman, *Church and Society in England, 1770-1970: A Historical Study* (Oxford, 1976), 34.

the Church … had an impressive integrity'.[39] Yet when it came to politics, Norman affirmed conventional assumptions about Anglican ineffectiveness, stating that the Church was 'surprisingly weak politically'.[40]

Further revisionist accounts appeared in the 1980s, the most significant of which was J. C. D. Clark's *English Society, 1660-1832* (1985, rev. 2000). Clark challenged the common perception of eighteenth-century England as a cradle of modernity and secularism by arguing that it remained a confessional *ancien régime*, in which 'High Church' Anglicanism was dominant. However, though he cast doubt upon Gilbert's use of communicant statistics as an indicator of church attendance, Clark affirmed '[t]he quantifiable phenomenon' of 'the rise of Dissent and the spread of religious disengagement', resulting in a 'numerical erosion of the Church's former predominance.'[41] By the 1790s, 'popular disengagement from the established Church had already begun.'[42] Echoing Best and in line with the contemporary philippics of ultra-Tory Lord Eldon, Clark argued that the reforms of 1828-32 resulted in the entire displacement of Anglican hegemony.[43] However, he also stated that '[t]his was so despite the fact that almost as many people were still churchmen, and almost as many churchmen as before were prepared to subscribe to her political doctrine.'[44] This created a fundamental inconsistency, for if the Church retained a similar level of allegiance as before 1828, how was Anglicanism no longer hegemonic? In his urge to formulate a dramatic endpoint to his narrative of the *ancien régime*, Clark overlooked important continuities and endorsed theories of secularisation he has elsewhere convincingly challenged.[45]

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[39] Ibid., 71.
[40] Ibid., 72.
[41] J. C. D. Clark, *English Society, 1660-1832: Religion, Ideology and Politics during the Ancien Regime* (2nd edn, Cambridge, 2000), 192.
[42] Ibid., 485.
[43] Ibid., 527-64.
[44] Ibid., 564. Cf. J. C. D. Clark, *From Restoration to Reform: The British Isles, 1660-1832* (London, 2014), 287.
[45] This criticism of Clark draws upon W. T. Gibson, *The Church of England 1688-1832: Unity and Accord* (London, 2001), 18. For Clark's objections to theories of secularisation, see J. C. D. Clark, 'The Re-enchantment of the World? Religion and Monarchy in

In *Pulpits, Politics and Public Order in England, 1760-1832* (1989), Robert Hole accepted Clark's basic premises but argued that the Church abandoned political arguments long before 1828, turning towards the inculcation of social theory.[46] Two important studies of the 1990s also emphasised the Church's social and communal aspects while downplaying its political role. Clergymen now appeared active and even influential in their pastoral office, if not as public figures. Frances Knight's *The Nineteenth-century Church and English Society* (1995) represented the first comprehensive attempt to reconstruct the lay Anglicanism of the period. She averred that the Anglican clergy 'continued to be able to attract high levels of interest', and that the number of donations for Anglican enterprises indicated 'commitment of a most tangible kind'.[47] However, Knight saw the general direction of travel for the Church in its political aspect as being 'from national Church to denomination'.[48]

Arthur Burns's study of *The Diocesan Revival in the Church of England, c. 1800-1870* (1999) demonstrated the extent to which the diocesan mechanisms of the Church were being reinvigorated in the decades before the advent of Tractarianism through the revival of the offices of archdeacon and rural dean, more frequent and thorough visitations and local voluntarism. Burns presented the Church as being to some extent constrained by a state which 'increasingly refused to underwrite its efforts', and situated those efforts primarily within the context of nineteenth-century

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Eighteenth-century Europe' in M. Schaich (ed.), *Monarchy and Religion: The Transformation of Royal Culture in Eighteenth-century Europe* (Oxford, 2007), 41-75; J. C. D. Clark, 'Secularisation and Modernization: The Failure of a "Grand Narrative"', *Historical Journal*, 55 (2012), 161-94.

[46] R. Hole, *Pulpits, Politics and Public Order in England, 1760-1832* (Cambridge, 1989). Hole's dualistic approach derived from his assertion that, by separating spiritual and temporal authority, early nineteenth-century English Roman Catholics could 'see and explain the spiritual nature of governmental authority much more clearly than Anglicans could.': ibid., 25. In Clark's view, this appeared to reflect 'a normative Roman Catholic perspective on the correct separation between sacred and secular spheres': Clark, *English Society*, 239.

[47] Knight, *Nineteenth-century Church*, 23.

[48] Ibid., 201.

institutional reforms and debates concerning 'old corruption'.[49] This focus on the Church's internal workings and clerical careers has been characteristic of more recent scholarship, most notably the fine volumes of W. M. Jacob on the clerical profession and of Sara Slinn on the education of the Anglican clergy.[50]

A number of other works in a similarly revisionist vein have deepened historians' understanding of the early nineteenth-century Church of England. In *The Oxford Movement in Context* (1994), Peter Nockles challenged conventional Tractarian understandings of 'High Churchmanship', positing the persistence of a non-partisan 'High Church' tradition within the Church of England from the mid-eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century.[51] This line of argument has been extended by Arthur Burns, who has proposed a clear dividing line between 'party' and 'churchmanship' in assessing the Church's internal divisions.[52] Mark Smith's *Religion and Industrial Society* (1994) demonstrated the pastoral effectiveness of the Anglican clergy in the ostensibly unpropitious context of the industrial towns of Oldham and Saddleworth.[53] Smith has also contributed to historical discussions concerning the nature of pre-Victorian Anglicanism, analysing Bishop Henry Ryder's distinctive Anglican Evangelicalism, as well as showing the centrality of the doctrine of 'conditional justification' to Anglican parochial ministry.[54]

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[49] R. A. Burns, *The Diocesan Revival in the Church of England, c. 1800-1870* (Oxford, 1999), 3-5, 268-75.
[50] W. M. Jacob, *The Clerical Profession in the Long Eighteenth Century, 1680-1840* (Oxford, 2007); S. Slinn, *The Education of the Anglican Clergy, 1780-1839* (Woodbridge, 2017).
[51] Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*. See also idem., 'Church Parties in the pre-Tractarian Church of England 1750-1833: the "Orthodox" – Some Problems of Definition and Identity' in Walsh, Haydon and Taylor, *From Toleration to Tractarianism*, 334-59.
[52] R. A. Burns, 'Introduction' to W. J. Conybeare, 'Church Parties' in S. Taylor (ed.), *From Cranmer to Davidson: A Church of England Miscellany* (Woodbridge, 1999), 215-52.
[53] M. A. Smith, *Religion in Industrial Society: Oldham and Saddleworth, 1740-1865* (Oxford, 1994). Alistair Beecher has also emphasised the enduring strength and popularity of Anglicanism in a recent case study: A. Beecher, 'Keeping the Faith: Church and Community in Alresford c. 1780-1939' (unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2017).
[54] M. A. Smith, 'Introduction' to H. Ryder, 'A Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Gloucester in the Year 1816' in M. A. Smith and S. Taylor (eds.), *Evangelicalism in the*

Anglican political and social activity has also received renewed attention from historians, if not in a systematic manner. In the political sphere, the decade of the Reform Act has attracted the greatest interest. Philip Salmon has argued that the clergy were crucial to the 'Conservative revival' which historians have long placed in that decade.[55] With regard to the House of Lords, Arthur Burns has charted the vicissitudes which attended measures concerning clerical discipline from 1833 onwards, while Jakob Evertsson has re-interpreted bishops' public pronouncements around the time of the Reform crisis as political interventions.[56] Anglican initiatives in education have also been accorded greater acknowledgement. M. J. D. Roberts has written in passing of the 'wide support and considerable staying power' of organisations such as the National Society, while Mary Clare Martin and Akira Iwashita have offered important reappraisals of Anglican voluntary initiatives in this area.[57] Concurrently, Stewart J. Brown has provided a useful account of the established churches throughout Britain during this era, which, while it upholds the 'constitutional revolution' thesis, describes ways in which the Church of England could exert considerable public influence prior to 1828.[58]

Church of England c. 1790-c. 1890: A Miscellany (Woodbridge, 2004), 53-85; idem., 'The Hanoverian Parish: Towards a New Agenda', *Past and Present*, 216 (2012), 79-105.

[55] P. Salmon, *Electoral Reform at Work: Local Politics and National Parties 1832-1841* (Woodbridge, 2002), 69-72, 149-51. For the notion of a 'Conservative revival' in the 1830s, see Gash, *Reaction and Reconstruction*, 11, 136; idem., *Politics in the Age of Peel* (2nd edn, Hassocks, 1977), 20; R. Stewart, *The Foundation of the Conservative Party, 1830-1867* (London, 1978), 77, 117, 144, 165; Salmon, *Electoral Reform*, 66; E. J. Evans, *Sir Robert Peel: Statesmanship, Power and Party* (London, 1991), 80.

[56] R. A. Burns, 'The Costs and Benefits of Establishment: Clergy-Discipline Legislation in Parliament, *c*. 1830-*c*. 1870' in J. P. Parry and S. Taylor (eds.), *Parliament and the Church, 1529-1960* (Edinburgh, 2000), 81-95; Evertsson, *Bishops, Politics and Anti-clericalism*, 51-63. See also R. A. Saunders, 'God and the Great Reform Act: Preaching against Reform, 1831-32', *Journal of British Studies*, 53 (2014), 378-99.

[57] M. J. D. Roberts, *Making English Morals: Voluntary Association and Moral Reform in England, 1787-1885* (Cambridge, 2004), 71; M. C. Martin, 'Church, School and Locality: Revisiting the Historiography of "State" and "Religious" Educational Infrastructures in England and Wales, 1780-1870', *Paedagogica Historica*, 49 (2013), 70-81; A. Iwashita, 'Politics, State and Church: Forming the National Society 1805-c. 1818', *History of Education*, 47 (2018), 1-17.

[58] Brown, *National Churches*, 2-15. Brown writes of the legislative reforms of 1828-32, 'These changes had come so suddenly that the description of a "constitutional revolution" is

Yet it is evident that this outpouring of revisionism has not had the wider effect it merits. The present position of scholarship may be gleaned from the recently published volumes of the *Oxford History of Anglicanism*, which slices the pre-Victorian period at 1829. Jeremy Gregory's introduction to the second volume of this series (1662-1829) emphasises the broader societal influence of the Church of England: 'If there is one single message that the volume seeks to convey it is that the Anglican Church was far more vital to the life of the period than is often maintained, and its history should be of interest to more than just those concerned with religion.'[59] But the volume as a whole falls short of this intention, devoting little space to such crucial topics as the clergy's political activities and educational endeavours. The third volume (1829-c. 1914), edited by Rowan Strong, strongly adheres to Best's 'constitutional revolution' thesis in its assessment of the Church's position after 1829.[60] For example, Stewart J. Brown writes that the reforms of 1828-32 'brought a legal end to the confessional state' and 'weakened the influence and authority' of the Church.[61] The impression imparted of the early nineteenth-century Church in these volumes is of an institution of great internal interest and vitality, but with a diminishing societal role beyond a circumscribed spiritual sphere.

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an appropriate one. The confidence and sense of purpose that had characterized the established Churches in the 1820s evaporated; the balance of power in the parliamentary State seemed to be shifting away from supporters of the established Churches to religious Dissenters, whose numbers had so swelled since the 1790s.': ibid., 168.

[59] J. Gregory, 'Introduction' in idem. (ed.), *The Oxford History of Anglicanism, Volume II: Establishment and Empire, 1662-1829* (Oxford, 2017), 3.

[60] R. Strong, 'Introduction' in idem. (ed.), *The Oxford History of Anglicanism, Volume III: Partisan Anglicanism and its Global Expansion, 1829-c. 1914* (Oxford, 2017), 1; S. J. Brown, 'Anglicanism in the British Empire, 1829-1910' in ibid., 46, 50; R. Strong, 'Anglicanism and the State in the Nineteenth Century' in ibid., 93-4, 105, 111; R. M. Andrews, 'High Church Anglicanism in the Nineteenth Century' in ibid., 145-6, 153, 158, 162; H. M. Carey, 'Anglicanism in Australia, c. 1829-1910' in ibid., 339.

[61] Brown, 'Anglicanism in the British Empire', 46.

A New Approach

In certain respects, therefore, the task of probing older assumptions concerning the early nineteenth-century Church has not yet begun. While the pastoral effectiveness of the pre-Victorian clergy in many contexts has been established, no thorough reassessment has been made of their effectiveness as political actors, educators and opinion formers. Historians' focus on the Church's internal affairs has served to conceal the clergy's wider spheres of activity and position them as victims rather than as participants in broader social and political changes. It is still widely assumed that, concurrently with the so-called 'constitutional revolution' of 1828-32, clergymen acquiesced in what Brown terms a 'new, more democratic political order'. And where their social role is acknowledged, this is often detached from politics.[62] However, no such rigid boundaries existed at this time. The political, social and religious spheres were in a state of constant interaction such that they cannot be discussed in isolation.

The key to navigating this complex nexus lies in the recognition that clergymen had agency beyond the doors of their churches and parsonages. This recognition has been impeded by previous models postulating a dichotomy between structure and agency. Hitherto stress has been placed on the pre-Victorian Church as a structure playing a role predetermined by its legal position in what many have characterised as a confessional state.[63] In this framework, the Church exists primarily to maintain the status quo; there is no opportunity for it to transform society, because society is already bounded by static norms imposed by the Church. When society rejects these norms, the clergy lack the room for manoeuvre to respond effectively.[64] But, as

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[62] Hole, *Pulpits*; Brown, *National Churches*, 216-7, 242-3; Strong, 'Introduction', 5.
[63] Soloway, *Prelates and People*, 1-18; Thompson, 'Patrician Society', 391; Ward, *Religion and Society*, 7-12; Gilbert, *Religion and Society*, 74-6; Clark, *English Society*, 26-34; Hole, *Pulpits*, 248-52; Virgin, *Age of Negligence*, 1-31; Corfield, *Power and the Professions*, 102-36; Brown, *National Churches*, 1-15; Picton, *Church of England*, 85-6.
[64] Soloway, *Prelates and People*, passim; Thompson, 'Patrician Society', 397**,** Ward, *Religion and Society*, 54-62; Gilbert, *Religion and Society*, 76-81; Clark, *English Society*,

many social theorists have argued, structure does not preclude agency, which can adapt and reconstitute existing structures.[65] Moreover, it has long been recognised that established churches can, under certain conditions, act as agents of change, if mostly with regard to twentieth-century Latin America.[66] As W. M. Jacob has put it in relation to long eighteenth-century England, '[t]he ancient constitution of the English Church … continued to provide the framework within which bishops and clergy worked', but 'within this continuity clergy initiated and experienced change.'[67] These seem to be logical principles in approaching the matter at hand, offering a plausible way out of the constraints which result from deterministic frameworks. Furthermore, these principles extend the concept of historical 'agency' outside the working-class context in which it is usually employed.[68] If the Church is viewed as an adaptable institution (albeit with inflexible characteristics) and the clergy as a group with a collective agency to breach the status quo, compelling avenues of enquiry are opened.

471-87; Hole, *Pulpits*, 252-3; Virgin, *Age of Negligence*, 264-7; Corfield, *Power and the Professions*, 126-9; Brown, *National Churches*, 184-5; Picton, *Church of England*, 93-4.

[65] See e.g. A. Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Cambridge, 1984), 25-6; W. H. Sewell, 'A Theory of Structure: Duality, Agency, and Transformation', *American Journal of Sociology*, 98 (1992), 20-21; S. B. Ortner, *Anthropology and Social Theory: Culture, Power, and the Acting Subject* (Durham, NC, 2006), 130, 149.

[66] See e.g. H. A. Landsberger (ed.), *The Church and Social Change in Latin America* (Notre Dame, IN, 1970), K. Westhues, 'The Established Church as an Agent of Change', *Sociology of Religion*, 34 (1973), 106-23; B. H. Smith, 'Religion and Social Change: Classical Theories and New Formulations in the Context of Recent Developments in Latin America', *Latin American Research Review*, 10 (1975), 3-34; D. H. Levine (ed.), *Religion and Political Conflict in Latin America* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1986), S. R. Pattnayak (ed.), *Organized Religion in the Political Transformation of Latin America* (Lanham, MD, 1995); P. Ingesman (ed.), *Religion as an Agent of Change: Crusades – Reformation – Pietism* (Leiden, 2016).

[67] Jacob, *Clerical Profession*, 308.

[68] For an interesting discussion of the ways in which historians have utilised the notion of 'agency', see M. C. Webber, 'Troubling Agency: Agency and Charity in Early Nineteenth-century London', *Historical Research*, 91 (2018), 116-36. Webber argues that historians 'must … accept that historical actors may have conceived of and exercised agency in ways that are alien to modern eyes. There can be agency beyond the autonomous, secular and individualist twenty-first-century characterization.': ibid., 135.

The activity and influence of the clergy can only be understood if two further conditions are fulfilled: they are viewed as a single body and their activities are assessed on a national scale through geographically dispersed examples. Both conditions necessitate some reconceptualisation. For it is often with a section of the Church as opposed to the whole with which historians have been concerned. Anachronistic models of ecclesiastical 'parties' still hold sway for the pre-Victorian period, and, partially due to technological limitations, regional case studies of counties, dioceses and parishes have been *de rigeur*. Many such studies are impressive and are cited below. However, the advent of online archival catalogues and other useful resources has rendered nationwide studies at once desirable and practicable.[69]

In this thesis, the approach outlined above is pursued with regard to the clergy's involvement in three institutions which had a far-reaching impact over English society: Parliament, the National Society and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK). Though the focus of the thesis is on clerical activity, the role of the laity in furthering clerical designs is also widely considered. Anglican activity in Wales, Ireland and Britain's colonies lies beyond the scope of the thesis, though English bishops holding Welsh sees are included in the analysis. This limitation of geographical scope has been adhered to on the grounds that a study with a broader scope could not do justice to the profusion of sources touching upon Anglicanism

[69] Of particular importance are the National Archives 'Discovery' catalogue (online resource, 2012, last updated 2018) [http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk], in which the catalogues of English local archives are extensively integrated; 'Google Books' (online resource, 2004, last updated 2018) [https://books.google.co.uk], whereby a vast number of early- and mid-nineteenth century publications are searchable; and 'Internet Archive' (online resource, 1996, last updated 2018) [https://archive.org], where many late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century volumes are digitised. R. A. Burns, K. Fincham, and S. Taylor (eds.), *Clergy of the Church of England Database, 1540-1835* (1999, last updated 2017) [http://www.theclergydatabase.org.uk] has been invaluable in identifying obscurer clergymen throughout the thesis. For an interesting demonstration of the utility of 'Google Books' when investigating nineteenth-century clergymen, see M. D. W. Jones, 'Uncovering the Enthusiasms and Prejudices of a 19th-century Country Parson: Maurice Smelt, Rector of Binstead (1815-63) and Slindon (1815-65)', *Sussex Archaeological Collections,* 155 (2017), 157-64.

outside of England in this era or the particularities of each distinct social, political and religious context. Among the merits of the *Oxford History of Anglicanism* is its extended consideration of Anglicanism as a global confession, including in regions which have hitherto not received very much attention from historians.[70] In light of this survey and the variation it conveys, generalisations about the Church of England across the globe can only be made on the basis of original research far beyond what has been possible during the present project. The complexities of covering the entirety of the United Kingdom are sufficiently challenging; had a 'four nations' approach been pursued for the period and topic under discussion, this would probably have been at the expense of nuance. Additionally, there are types of clerical activity within England which, while their significance is not contested here, could not be addressed at length in the space and time allotted for this project.

The most obvious of these omissions is the church building movement initiated by the Church Building Acts of 1818 and 1824, for which M. H. Port's monumental study remains the best account.[71] Largely through the impetus of the Church Building Commission and the Incorporated Church Building Society, 1,047 Anglican churches were built or rebuilt during the period from 1800 to 1840.[72] Port conjectures that without such efforts 'the Church of England would surely have declined to a numerically insignificant position, and became a church of rank and wealth disassociated from the mass of the people.'[73] The Church's role in war and military affairs is a further area which is not discussed in detail here, but which

[70] Gregory, *Establishment and Empire*; Strong, *Partisan Anglicanism*. See also W. M. Jacob, *The Making of the Anglican Church Worldwide* (London, 1997).
[71] M. H. Port, *600 New Churches: The Church Building Commission 1818-1856* (2nd edn, Reading, 2006). See also A. Saint, 'Anglican Church Building in London, 1790-1890: From State Subsidy to the Free Market' in idem. and C. Brooks (eds.), *The Victorian Church: Architecture and Society* (Manchester, 1995), 30-50; Dixon, 'Church and Monarchy', 78-81; W. Walker, 'The Anglican Assertion in Lancashire: The Role of the Commissioners' Churches in Three Lancashire Townships, 1818-1856' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Central Lancashire, 2018).
[72] Gilbert, *Religion and Society*, 130.
[73] Port, *600 New Churches*, 277.

Michael Snape and Richard Blake have gone some way towards addressing.[74] Both authors have found significant evidence of religious commitment throughout all military ranks during the era of the Napoleonic Wars, apparently often of a distinctively Evangelical kind. Furthermore, the early nineteenth century witnessed significant developments in the organisation of military chaplaincies. Far less studied has been the role of Anglicanism in the House of Commons as well as in vestry and municipal politics, neither of which is addressed directly here. The religious composition of the Commons and the heavy clerical presence in local government are subjects which still await sustained analysis, though Frances Knight and W. M. Jacob have both touched upon the latter topic.[75] It seems from their work that Anglican influence may have been as prominent in local affairs as it was in national politics, and that the clergy's role in these areas warrants further research.

The primary sources of relevance to the present undertaking are profuse and varied. Collections of correspondence are especially important. In private letters, clergymen frequently displayed a greater candour than in public pronouncements.[76] Additionally, the letters of statesmen contain much relevant material.[77] Such collections, when augmented with smaller tranches, encompass correspondence from a vast sample of clergy and laity from all regions of England. Substantial use is also

[74] M. F. Snape, *The Redcoat and Religion: The Forgotten History of the British Soldier from the Age of Marlborough to the Eve of the First World War* (London, 2005); idem., *The Royal Army Chaplains' Department, 1796-1953: Clergy under Fire* (Woodbridge, 2007); R. Blake, *Evangelicals in the Royal Navy, 1775-1815: Blue Lights & Psalm-singers* (Woodbridge, 2008); idem., *Religion in the British Navy, 1815-1879: Piety and Professionalism* (Woodbridge, 2014).

[75] Knight, *Nineteenth-century Church*, 61-105; Jacob, *Clerical Profession*, 216-9. Basic data concerning the religious affiliations of MPs from 1790 to 1832 is given in the relevant *History of Parliament* volumes: HoP 1790-1820, I, 294-7; HoP 1820-1832, I, 253-5.

[76] The most significant collections of clerical correspondence used in this study are those of Henry Bathurst (Bishop of Norwich, 1805-37), Thomas Burgess (Bishop of Salisbury, 1825-37), George Elwes Corrie (Tutor of St Catharine's College, Cambridge, 1821-49), Edward Venables Vernon Harcourt (Archbishop of York, 1807-47), William Howley (Archbishop of Canterbury, 1828-48), John Kaye (Bishop of Lincoln, 1827-53), Henry Phillpotts (Bishop of Exeter, 1830-69) and John William Whittaker (Vicar of Blackburn, 1822-54).

[77] Among the most illuminating collections of such correspondence for the purposes of this study are those of Earl Grey, Lord Grenville, Lord Liverpool, Sir Robert Peel, Lord Sheffield, Lord Sidmouth, Lord Suffield and the Duke of Wellington.

made of the newspapers digitised by the British Library.[78] Such sources are seldom used by historians of Anglicanism and are to be treated with caution on account of their frequently partisan agendas. However, newspapers of conflicting political persuasions present a convincingly mixed and often colourfully detailed picture of the successes and difficulties the Church encountered. The positive Tory press and negative Whig press received by the Church may have been susceptible to hyperbole, but it would be wrong to suppose that either is inadmissible as evidence. Many such reports were of a primarily descriptive nature, concerning events which would have been familiar to readers, and therefore unlikely to be excessively inaccurate.

Though correspondence and newspapers form the largest source base for the thesis, many other types of sources, both primary and secondary, have been used. These include visitation returns, diaries, periodicals, parliamentary proceedings, minute books, annual reports, handbills, local historical volumes, biographies, memoirs and *History of Parliament* entries. Archives have been searched across the length and breadth of England. In no previous study regarding the early nineteenth-century Church of England's socio-political role has such an extensive and varied set of sources, in terms of content and geography, been assembled.

Structure

The five chapters which follow are thematic and, while they do not constitute an exhaustive account of the Church's interventions in English politics and society, they do offer a comprehensive appraisal of the most prominent institutional foci for such interventions. For Parliament, the National Society and the SPCK were the most

[78] The 'British Newspaper Archive' (online resource, 2011, last updated 2018) [https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk] currently incorporates 152 English newspapers held in the collection of the British Library which were published during the period from 1800 to 1837. The newspapers are from all regions of England and of a variety of political persuasions. This constitutes the largest and broadest sample accessible through digital resources of English local newspapers from this period.

vital means of clerical interaction with society at large, and of the Anglican laity's active facilitation of such interaction. Before discussing such activity, it is necessary to establish the Church of England's basic belief system and its strength relative to dissenting denominations. In the first chapter, the leading features of normative Anglicanism are described and a realistic measure of the reach of Anglicanism sought by reference to church attendance statistics, accounts of Anglican commemorative services and manifestations of the pastoral role played by the clergy at a parochial level. From this evidence, it is argued that 'normative' Anglicanism was a coherent system of belief with a widespread degree of popular support.

Having established the parameters of 'normative' Anglicanism, it becomes possible to pursue an informed investigation of the Church of England's political role. In the second chapter, the focus is on the participation of bishops in the proceedings of the House of Lords, the most significant features of which were a growing independence from parliamentary parties, a greater willingness to speak in Parliament and an increasing tendency to appeal to popular opinion in their attempts to defend the Church's interests. The implications of this reinterpretation for the 'constitutional revolution' thesis are considered. The following chapter relates the ways in which the clergy intervened in parliamentary politics locally in election contests, petitioning campaigns, political societies and partisan sermons. With respect to both Parliament and localised politics, it is contended that the Church underwent significant politicisation as clergy became more active and influential within this sphere.

In the final two chapters, the clergy's activities in educating the English public through two clerically led societies are considered. The fourth chapter is largely devoted to the National Society, an organisation founded in 1811 to maintain free Anglican schools for the poor. The society's structure, support base, aims, personnel, teaching and influence are discussed. It is maintained that the National Society precipitated an increase in adherence to Anglican political and religious ideals among the working class. The SPCK is considered in the next chapter. Though this society had existed since 1698, its capacity to affect the population at large was

greatly increased by the formation of district committees throughout England, occasional incursions into political affairs and a diversification of its printing activities through ambitious anti-infidelity campaigns. It is argued that the SPCK successfully nurtured the tradition of 'normative' Anglicanism. Moreover, it was part of a broader Anglican print culture, the disintegration of which prefigured the Church's fragmentation from the 1830s.

From this analysis, a new picture of early nineteenth-century English society becomes apparent. Contrary to previous appraisals, the Church was a crucial agent of socio-political developments in early nineteenth-century England. Of course, any assessment of 'activity' and 'influence' is fraught with difficulty because of the shortcomings of quantitative and qualitative measures. But, from the considerable evidence assembled here, it is clear that Jane Austen's vision of a clergy that stepped outside of their pastoral role and could effect changes across their surroundings was not mere fiction. If this phenomenon is acknowledged, our understanding of nineteenth-century English society will require revision.

Chapter 1: The Nature and Extent of Anglicanism

The early nineteenth-century Church of England was not the loose agglomeration of conflicting parties and interests it was to become by the end of the nineteenth century, but rather a body in broad agreement on matters of doctrine, liturgy and conduct. To belong to the established church was a religious identity requiring no lengthy explanations or caveats; one could simply be, as an anonymous donor to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) expressed it in 1818, 'a sincere Friend to the Church of England, to her Scriptural Doctrines, & Rational Piety'.[1] Yet this default position had distinctive characteristics and variations of emphasis. The *via media* which Anglicans propounded consisted in specific claims, which were manifested differently according to the preferences and inclinations of individual believers. Correspondingly, the extent to which the established church secured the allegiance of the populace throughout the country was uneven and variegated. Nonetheless, a detailed study of the surviving letters and writings of early nineteenth-century Anglicans reveals clear patterns in the ways in which they understood their identity and the degree of success with which they propagated their exclusive claims. This chapter uses these patterns as a basis for establishing what was normative, dominant and popular in the Anglican tradition.

This task is made challenging by the volume of historical literature presenting the Church of England in terms of ecclesiastical 'parties'. Following the example set by W. J. Conybeare in his seminal *Edinburgh Review* article of 1853, Church historians have expended much energy in attempting to isolate, describe and evaluate such groups.[2] For instance, the important works of Richard Brent, Boyd Hilton and Peter Nockles have pursued this approach with reference to 'liberalism', Evangelicalism

[1] SPCK Lewes District Committee minute book, 8 January 1818, CUL, SPCK.MS A38/11, p. 89.
[2] W. J. Conybeare, 'Church Parties', ed. R. A. Burns in S. Taylor (ed.), *From Cranmer to Davidson: A Church of England Miscellany* (Woodbridge, 1999), 213-386.

and the 'High Church' respectively.[3] Clive Dewey's study of the patronage network of the 'Hackney Phalanx' and Simon Skinner's re-evaluation of the Tractarians have also maintained the 'party' framework of analysis.[4] Concurrently, Brian Young has characterised Anglican identity in the long eighteenth century as 'a history of variations', while J. C. D. Clark has proposed a new genealogy of 'High Church' and 'Low Church' throughout the same period.[5] But an account of Anglican 'parties', however comprehensive, will only ever produce a partial history of the Church of England. For, before the mid-nineteenth century, the majority of Anglicans did not identify with any 'party' or species of 'churchmanship'. Consistently, they claimed only to be faithful members of the established church. The present discussion contends that their claims should be taken seriously.

This argument, though novel in its conclusion, reflects a longstanding historiographical direction of travel. In 1966, David Newsome wrote, 'The deeper one delves into the history of the nineteenth-century Church, the more inadequate the traditional labels appear.'[6] Subsequent studies have vindicated this supposition. Richard Brent, in seeking to trace the contribution of Anglican 'liberals' found such affinities between them and the so-called 'High Church' that he suggests that '[i]t is debatable … whether it makes much sense to draw a distinction between liberals and

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[3] R. Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics: Whiggery, Religion, and Reform, 1830-1841* (Oxford, 1987), 144-83; B. Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1785-1865* (Oxford, 1988); P. B. Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context: Anglican High Churchmanship, 1760-1857* (Cambridge, 1994).

[4] C. Dewey, *The Passing of Barchester: A Real Life Version of Trollope* (London, 1991); S. Skinner, *Tractarians and the 'Condition of England': The Social and Political Thought of the Oxford Movement* (Oxford, 2004).

[5] B. W. Young, 'A History of Variations: The Identity of the Eighteenth-century Church of England' in in T. Claydon and I. McBride (eds.), *Protestantism and National identity: Britain and Ireland, c. 1650-c. 1850* (Cambridge, 1998), 105-30; J. C. D. Clark, 'Church, Parties and Politics' in J. Gregory (ed.), *The Oxford History of Anglicanism, Volume II: Establishment and Empire, 1662-1829* (Oxford, 2017), 289-313. Similarly, Tony Claydon speculates that 'the Anglican Church of the long eighteenth century was both characterized and overthrown by its confused European identity.': T. Claydon, 'The Church of England and the Churches of Europe' in Gregory, *Establishment and Empire*, 331.

[6] D. Newsome, *The Parting of Friends: The Wilberforces and Henry Manning* (London, 1966), 318.

High Churchmen in the years before the Whig government of the 1830s.' Before that decade, 'the defence of Anglicanism was a collaborative enterprise, a source of union rather than a cause for dispute.'[7] Peter Nockles posits a distinctive 'High Church' strain of Anglicanism characterised by professions of 'Orthodoxy', but also accepts that there was 'a greater degree of consensus' within the Church before 1833 and that 'the less dogmatically precise character of pre-Tractarian High Churchmanship compared to a later period' allowed 'High Church' Anglicans to participate in an 'Orthodox apologetic against the Church's Dissenting and Unitarian opponents.'[8] Moreover, '[a] silent majority may have belonged to no particular sub-group in the Church.'[9] Rowan Strong has pursued a similar line of argument, stating that '[t]he Church of England in the first half of the nineteenth century was predominantly, but vaguely, High Church … but some were more so than others, and a minority were more extremely Evangelical or Latitudinarian.' Nevertheless, a 'broad High Churchmanship' embraced most of the clergy, and, even if some Evangelicals 'departed from this theological concord with their revived Calvinism', a 'broad theological compatibility within the ranks of clergy' lasted until the 1830s, when Tractarianism 'drove a wedge between new and old High Churchmen, and between them and the Evangelicals.'[10]

This chapter attempts to demonstrate both the existence and the potency of the normative Anglicanism evoked by Strong. Where it diverges from his framework and that of Nockles is in its assessment of the utility of 'party' terminology. Nockles argues that 'the insistence of pre-Tractarian High Churchmen that they belonged to no party but were simply part of the Anglican mainstream … need not be taken at face value', since this was 'a rhetorical defence against an opprobrious label bestowed by the Church's external critics.'[11] Strong lends credence to this judgement

[7] Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*, 148-9.
[8] Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 28-9.
[9] Ibid., 273.
[10] R. Strong, *Anglicanism and the British Empire, c. 1700-1850* (Oxford, 2007), 39.
[11] Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 27.

by labelling the majority of the Anglican clergy 'High Church'. But it is here suggested that Anglicans' rejection of party labels was not simply rhetorical, but reflected something of the unitary nature of Anglicanism in the early nineteenth century. To apply to Anglicans a label which they rejected is to adopt the rhetorical perspective of those unsympathetic critics to whom Nockles refers, and to misunderstand Anglican identity. Thus, this chapter seeks to define the most salient characteristics of Anglicanism *per se*, and position this set of beliefs in relation to various forms and traditions of English Christianity which stood outside of this mainstream. Once the existence of an Anglican mainstream is demonstrated, it becomes possible to investigate the influence of the Church of England in a less fettered manner than before. For if the efforts of Anglicans who have hitherto been considered members of various factions are combined in one analysis, the overall potential of the Church to influence society appears considerably greater than narratives with a limited 'party' focus suggest.

Hence the second purpose of this chapter is to measure the extent of normative Anglicanism on the ground. This aim is pursued through a discussion of both anecdotal and statistical evidence relating to church attendance, officially-sanctioned religious observances and other manifestations of attachment to the Church's teachings, liturgy and social role. While such measures have been attempted before, these have generally been limited in geographical scope, and often confined to one region or a group of parishes.[12] By contrast, this study draws upon the letters, diaries and papers of Anglicans throughout England in order to build up a comprehensive picture of the Church in its functioning as a national institution. In subsequent chapters, the wider political and social implications of mainstream Anglican influence will be explored; first, it is necessary to describe the religious foundations

[12] See e.g. D. McClatchey, *Oxfordshire Clergy, 1777-1869: A Study of the Established Church and of the Role of its Clergy in Local Society* (Oxford, 1960); J. Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey, 1825-1875* (Oxford, 1976); M. A. Smith, *Religion in Industrial Society: Oldham and Saddleworth, 1740-1865* (Oxford, 1994); F. Knight, *The Nineteenth-century Church and English Society* (Cambridge, 1995), x-xi.

upon which the extensive interaction of Anglicanism with English society was constructed.

Normative Anglican Belief

In 1819, William Howley, Bishop of London, informed prospective ordinand John William Whittaker that his examination for orders regarded 'general competency in the evidences of Christianity, and the leading doctrines of Christianity as contained in the Scriptures and extracted from the Scriptures in our authentic formularies of belief & prayer.'[13] This seemingly prosaic phrase captures the essence of normative Anglican belief in the early nineteenth century. Its basic premise was that the Church's 'authentic formularies' (i.e. the 39 Articles and the *Book of Common Prayer*) had been fashioned from the authority of the Bible. Furthermore, both the Bible and the 'authentic formularies' were considered to be supported by 'evidences' as well as faith.[14] Such a framework had gradually emerged in Anglican thought during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but only crystallised in the second half of the eighteenth century. While many Anglicans had been content to question doctrine, scripture and liturgy for much of that century, the failure of the Feathers Tavern petition of 1772 against clerical subscription precipitated a turn towards rigid orthodoxy, in which the Church of England came to be held up as uniquely pure,

[13] William Howley to John William Whittaker, 13 May 1819, WP(B). On requirements for ordination more generally, see Knight, *Nineteenth-century Church*, 112-3; S. Slinn, *The Education of the Anglican Clergy, 1780-1839* (Woodbridge, 2017), 75-108.

[14] The classic statements of the evidential tradition in early nineteenth-century Anglicanism were W. Paley, *A View of the Evidences of Christianity in Three Parts* (3 vols., London, 1794); idem., *Natural Theology: or, Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity, collected from the Appearances of Nature* (London, 1802). On William Paley and his influence, see M. L. Clarke, *Paley: Evidences for the Man* (Toronto, ON, 1974); P. Searby, *A History of the University of Cambridge, Volume III: 1750-1870* (Cambridge, 1997), 295-313. See also William Howley's thoughts on 'evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion': Howley to Lord Aberdeen, 1 June 1812, BL, Add MS 43195 ff. 18-22.

scriptural and rational among Christian confessions. The threat of irreligion emanating from France solidified this powerful tendency into a standard of belief.[15]

The principal element in Anglican doctrine was the Bible. As the sixth of the 39 Articles put it, 'Holy Scriptures containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.'[16] To Anglicans, all authority in the Church was subordinate to biblical teaching. As Lord Kenyon wrote to Bishop Burgess in 1827, 'The Bible alone is the sole Protestant authority assuredly, but then it is the true sense of that Bible & not the dead letters so interpreted as the enthusiasm of some, the pride of others, or the lukewarmness of too many may induce them to construe its sacred & truly heart-stirring doctrines.'[17] By simultaneously denigrating 'enthusiasm', 'pride' and 'lukewarmness' Kenyon took aim at the extremes of Evangelical, 'High Church' and 'Latitudinarian' opinion alike. To the normative Anglican, the sense of scripture was plain, albeit requiring learned explication. Accordingly, Herbert Marsh, Bishop of Peterborough, asserted that the primary function of the clergy was to expound the Bible: 'The Holy Scriptures, from which we derive our notions of religion and virtue, must be explained, and defended. […] It is … necessary to maintain the authenticity, the credibility, the divine origin, and inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.'[18]

The 39 Articles derived their authority from that of the Bible. In his *Refutation of Calvinism* (1811), Bishop Pretyman-Tomline argued that the Calvinist theological

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[15] The turn towards orthodoxy and exceptionalism is described in N. U. Murray, 'The Influence of the French Revolution on the Church of England and its Rivals, 1789-1802' (unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 1975), 80-124; W. T. Gibson, *The Church of England 1688-1832: Unity and Accord* (London, 2001), 98-104, 206-8, 222-3.
[16] B. Cummings (ed.), *The Book of Common Prayer: The Texts of 1549, 1559 and 1662* (Oxford, 2011), 675.
[17] Lord Kenyon to Thomas Burgess, 20 November 1827, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 136, f. 159.
[18] H. Marsh, *A Charge, delivered at the Primary Visitation of Herbert Lord Bishop of Peterborough in July, 1820* (London, 1820), 8. Cf. C. R. Sumner, *A Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Winchester in September and August, 1829, at the Primary Visitation* (London, 1829), 32-4.

understanding of predestination had not been prevalent when the 39 Articles were framed, and that the English reformers 'followed no Human authority – they had recourse to the Scriptures themselves as their sole guide.' Consequently, the Church of England was 'not Lutheran – it is not Calvinistic – it is not Arminian – It is Scriptural: it is built upon the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.'[19] Accordingly, the Duke of Gloucester's chaplain Thomas Waite stated of the articles in 1826, 'In the present day some maintain that they are Calvinistic, and others that they are Arminian, while the firmest adherents of the Church, rejecting the distinctions of parties, believe them to be scriptural.'[20] In line with this orthodoxy, the period witnessed the publication and re-publication of a large corpus of works claiming to offer 'scripture proofs' of the doctrines set forth in the articles.[21] The *Book of Common Prayer*, though primarily a liturgical text, was also presented as a yardstick of scripturally sanctioned doctrine. As Andrew Braddock has shown, the defenders of the Prayer Book used biblical precedents to

[19] G. Pretyman-Tomline, *A Refutation of Calvinism; in which, the Doctrines of Original Sin, Grace, Regeneration, Justification, and Universal Redemption are Explained, and the Peculiar Tenets maintained by Calvin upon those Points are proved to be Contrary to Scripture, to the Writings of the Antient Fathers of the Christian Church, and to the Public Formularies of the Church of England* (8th edn, London, 1823), 589-90.

[20] T. Waite, *Sermons Explanatory and Practical on the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England, in a Series of Discourses delivered at the Parish Church of St. Alphage, Greenwich* (London, 1826), iv. Such arguments were aimed against Lord Chatham's *bon mot*, 'the service of the Church of England was Catholic, the articles Calvinistic, and the Clergy Arminian.': *The Times*, 7 December 1829, 2.

[21] See e.g. S. Wix, *Scriptural Illustrations of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England, with a Practical Comment upon each Article; affectionately intended to promote Religious Peace and Unity* (London, 1808); W. Wilson, *The Thirty Nine Articles of the Church of England illustrated by Copious Extracts from the Liturgy, Homilies, Nowell's Catechism, and Jewell's Apology: and confirmed by Numerous Passages of Scripture* (Oxford, 1821); E. Welchman, *The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England, illustrated with Notes, and confirmed by Texts of the Holy Scripture, and Testimonies of the Primitive Fathers, together with references to the Passages in Several Authors, which more largely explain the said Articles* (13th edn, London, 1823); A Member of the University of Oxford, *The Articles of the Church of England, with Scripture Proofs, and a Short Commentary* (2nd ed, Oxford, 1825); T. Pigot, *The Churchman's Guide in Perilous Times; or, the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England Explained and Commented upon* (London, 1835).

argue not only that using a set liturgy was a scriptural practice but also that the prayers and canticles used by Anglicans had their origins in the apostolic era.[22] An important function of the Prayer Book, and in particular its catechism, was to elucidate scripture. While the Bible was considered authoritative, it was generally thought unwise to disseminate it without the Prayer Book's doctrinal gloss.[23]

Thus the keynote of normative Anglicanism was a rigid adherence to the Bible, the 39 Articles and the Prayer Book. In theological terms, this amounted to a belief in the Nicene, Athanasian and Apostles' creeds, original sin, Christ's sacrifice for humanity's sins, justification by faith, good works proceeding from faith and the two divinely-ordained sacraments of baptism and communion. But this was not all. A further strongly held belief, which was not specified in the articles, was the insistence that divine Providence guided human affairs, operating through the settled laws of nature and without recourse to miracles or extraordinary inspiration. Through Providence, God could reward or punish mankind.[24] This idea was ubiquitous in early nineteenth-century England, in no small part due to the Church's teaching. Providence was invoked by George IV in his correspondence, and by Jane Austen in her novels.[25] It was alluded to in the act constituting the regency in 1811 and, at Bishop Blomfield's insistence, in the act regarding measures to prevent the cholera of 1832.[26]

Like many of his contemporaries, Howley believed that Britain had been specially blessed by Providence in its avoidance of revolution and victory over France. In 1820, in the aftermath of Queen Caroline's 'trial', he stated, 'we have been so often indebted to the mercies of Providence during the last thirty years, that I

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[22] A. Braddock, *The Role of the Book of Common Prayer in the Formation of Modern Anglican Church Identity, 1750-1850* (Lewiston, NY, 2010), 57-61.
[23] Ibid., 77-9, 165-7.
[24] See Howley's explanation of Providence: Howley to Aberdeen, 4 November 1811, BL, Add MS 43195, f. 5.
[25] N. A. Dixon, 'Church and Monarchy in England, 1811-1837' (unpublished MPhil thesis, Cambridge, 2015), 36-7; L. M. White, *Jane Austen's Anglicanism* (2nd edn, Abingdon, 2016), 86-90.
[26] 51 Geo. 3, c. 1; *Hansard*, 3rd Series, X, 443-5 (17 February 1832); 2 Will. 4, c. 10.

trust we shall not lose its protection amidst the dangers which threaten us.'[27] Two years later, he affirmed that 'whilst the world was involved in confusion around us, this country, by the blessing of Providence, was not only preserved from destruction, but rose to an eminence of glory and power, which it had never attained in former times.'[28] But by 1831, deprecating those who looked for relief 'in vain from political changes', he anticipated national judgement: 'we have grossly misused the blessings bestowed on us by a bountiful Providence, and must henceforth expect to have wisdom from the experience of the bitter effects of our ingratitude and folly.'[29]

Clergy across the political spectrum shared such attitudes. Henry Bathurst, the Whig Bishop of Norwich, wrote following William Pitt's death in 1806, 'If I were not most firmly convinced of the moral Government of God, and not merely this, in a *general* sense, but that "even the hairs of our heads are numbered" or in other words, that the most trifling events, as well as the greatest, are directed by Providence; the present appearance of Political matters would throw a gloom over my spirits, which nothing could dispel'.[30] Referring to Napoleon, he was 'persuaded' that Britain's 'great cause' was one which 'Providence hath decreed to check the wild career of this modern Attila.'[31] When Catholic emancipation was debated by Anglicans, both opponents and proponents of the measure appealed to Providence. Colchester rector William Marsh, in a speech opposing emancipation, asserted that '*expediency is a short-sighted policy, but Providence would be a lasting friend*.'[32] Yet others hoped that Providence would mitigate any deleterious effects of emancipation. Charles Sumner, Bishop of Winchester, after voting for emancipation in Parliament stated he could 'leave the result with confidence to Him, whose never

[27] Howley to Thomas Grenville, 6 December 1820, BL, Add MS 41859, ff. 28-9. Cf. Robert Southey to Henry Phillpotts, 2 November 1819, ECA, ED11/58/1.
[28] W. Howley, *A Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of London, at the Visitation in July 1822* (London, 1822), 10.
[29] Howley to Burgess, 22 March 1831, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 136, f. 56.
[30] Henry Bathurst to James Bathurst, 16 January 1806, Norfolk RO, DCN/154/2/1.
[31] Henry Bathurst to James Bathurst, 19 November 1808, Norfolk RO, DCN/154/2/11.
[32] W. Marsh, 'The Rev. W. Marsh's Speech at the Anti-Catholic Meeting at Colchester', [1829], Cambridgeshire Arch., R89/82/46.

failing Providence ordereth all things in heaven and earth', while prominent layman George Marriott prayed that the optimism of 'Emancipationists' would be 'verified by Him whose most wonderful providences are constantly shewn by drawing good out of evil!'[33] Henry Phillpotts, Bishop of Exeter, was less sanguine. He had supported emancipation in 1829 but by 1832 had changed his mind and was lamenting the 'misery and danger' it was causing: 'Are these the judicial punishment of the concession? This we shall not know till the day of Judgement.'[34]

The obverse of a strong belief in Providence was a disbelief in post-apostolic miracles, and a stress on the importance of human actions. In 1803, Suffolk rector John Longe made an address to his parishioners urging them to play their part in defending the country from foreign invaders. Longe was careful to discourage a dependency on divine intervention:

> [F]rom the Justice of our Cause we may be allowed to hope & trust, that the Shield of the Almighty, which has heretofore protected us in many & great dangers, will still be extended over us. But we are not to expect that Miracles will be worked in our Favour. If we are sensible of the Danger to which our Country is exposed, we must join our own individual Exertions to our Prayers, & commit the Event to God.

Whether the enemy was successful would depend 'Under Providence, upon Ourselves.'[35] A similar message was conveyed to the clergy of the Diocese of Chester by Blomfield in 1825: 'Environed as we are by dangers of no ordinary kind,

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[33] G. H. Sumner, *Life of Charles Richard Sumner, D.D. Bishop of Winchester, and Prelate of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, during a Forty Years' Episcopate* (London, 1876), 163; George Wharton Marriott to Burgess, 6 February [1830], Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 137, f. 118. Cf. John Peers to George Elwes Corrie, 25 April 1834, StC, T/3/1/8/50.

[34] Phillpotts to Burgess, 18 July 1832, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 138, f. 8. For examples of Anglican politicians invoking Providence similarly, see E. Hicks, '"Christianity Personified": Perceval and Pittism' (unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2018), 66-70.

[35] J. Longe, 'Address to the Inhabitants of Coddenham a Parish in Bosmere & Claydon Hundred on calling a meeting to put into execution the Act for the Defence of the Country; Delivered in the Parish Church', 28 July 1803, Suffolk RO, HA24/50/19/4.4 (6).

it will depend upon ourselves, under Divine Providence, to repel them.'[36] Cessationism thus functioned as a spur for Anglican activism. In the advertisement to his influential work *Elements of Tuition* (1808), the clergyman Andrew Bell stated, 'The Gospel has, in former times, been promulgated by means of miracles, and of the sword. The one mean has ceased – the other mean will not now be recommended. There remains only the silent, gradual, and sure mean of Religious Education.'[37] The extensive effects of Bell's methods will be discussed in a later chapter.[38]

Another facet of normative Anglicanism which impelled believers towards an active approach to their faith was its soteriology. As Mark Smith has shown, the mainstream of the eighteenth-century Church of England rejected alike the reformed notion of justification by faith alone and the Catholic belief in justification by works. Instead, mainstream Anglicans held to a 'conditional' understanding of justification whereby faith was the cause of justification, which nevertheless was only granted through the 'practice of holiness and good works'.[39] In the early nineteenth century, this was the orthodox understanding of the portions of the 39 Articles relating to justification. As Bishop Pretyman-Tomline put it, 'To the much agitated question … Whether works be necessary to Justification, we answer, that if by Justification be meant the first entrance into a state of Justification, works are not necessary; if by Justification be meant the continuance in a state of Justification, works are necessary.'[40] The implication of such a doctrine was that a continual attendance upon

[36] C. J. Blomfield, *A Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Chester at the Primary Visitation in August and September 1825* (London, 1825), 12. Cf. William Van Mildert to Howley, 26 July 1828, LPL, MS 2185, ff. 17-8.
[37] A. Bell, *The Madras School, or Elements of Tuition* (London, 1808), ix-x.
[38] See below, ch. 4.
[39] M. A. Smith, 'The Hanoverian Parish: Towards a New Agenda', *Past and Present*, 216 (2012), 85-6.
[40] Pretyman-Tomline, *Refutation of Calvinism*, 125. See also W. Walker, 'The Anglican Assertion in Lancashire: The Role of the Commissioners' Churches in Three Lancashire Townships, 1818-1856' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Central Lancashire, 2018), 91-2, 273.

religious duties on the part of the individual believer was paramount.[41] Belief had to assume a practical form.

Besides an attachment to scriptural formularies, Providence and conditional justification, normative Anglicanism was informed by a prescriptive view of the religious role of the British monarchy. Anglicans believed that monarchs had a solemn obligation to uphold the established church, founded upon the coronation oath. The parameters and effects of this premise have been discussed at length by the present author elsewhere.[42] Yet there is a body of evidence for Anglican monarchism that has not yet been considered, namely the loyal addresses to monarchs framed by the Convocation of Canterbury during this era. Convocation had not assembled as a deliberative body since 1717, but it continued to be convened to settle certain disputes and present addresses to the throne. These loyal addresses were not mere perfunctory compositions, but rather varied according to circumstance.

In the earlier part of the period, the challenge of managing dissent was uppermost in the concerns of the clergy. In 1803, Convocation gave thanks that God had 'raised up for us in your majesty so great and powerful a protector, in times when Christianity is attacked with a malignity unparalleled since the persecutions of the first ages … while our excellent church formed upon the model of the earliest and purest ages is incessantly assailed by various discordant sects'.[43] Four years later, it was asserted that the Church 'is in its constitution tolerant, and because it is tolerant, depends largely for its existence on external regulation'. The clergy accordingly thanked the King for 'the vigilance and firmness your majesty has uniformly displayed in maintaining those laws upon which … the strength and security of the established church depend'.[44] In 1812, Convocation expressed confidence to the Prince Regent that he would exhibit 'the same wise, liberal and benevolent

[41] Smith, 'Hanoverian Parish', 86-101.
[42] Dixon, 'Church and Monarchy', 27-32.
[43] G. Bray (ed.), *Records of Convocation XII: Canterbury 1761-1852* (Woodbridge, 2006), 115.
[44] Ibid., 136.

disposition towards those of his majesty's subjects who differ from the established church, and the same fixed principle in maintaining the establishment that marked the character of our sovereign.' It was the Church's aim 'to inculcate among our fellow subjects obedience and fidelity to your royal highness … the deepest reverence and veneration for the laws of the land and the tenderest regard for the consciences of those who differ from us in matters of religious faith.'[45]

From 1826, the general tenor of the addresses shifted from guarded toleration to respectful self-assertion. In that year, Convocation could not 'dissemble … the just apprehensions we entertain of the efforts that are making to arrive at authority and power in the state dangerous to the existence of the protestant constitution of the country'. But the clergy nevertheless had 'full confidence' in George IV's 'protection'.[46] In 1830, a similar confidence was expressed in William IV's 'belief in the doctrines and concern for the interests of our holy religion, of respect for the ordinances of the church, determination to uphold her rights, and favourable disposition towards her ministers.' Yet the address also adverted to 'the attacks so frequently made on the faith, the discipline and the government of the church which never stood more in need of support and protection than at the present time'.[47] Five years later, the clergy were satisfied that such support had not been absent: 'At this particular juncture when the church is assailed with increasing hostility … it is hardly possible to calculate the benefits which our venerable establishment has derived from the firmness and fortitude evinced by your majesty in its defence.'[48] A clear ideal of kingship emerges from these addresses. The monarch was expected to protect, maintain and cherish the Church and its pre-eminent position with both tact and firmness. As long as the Church perpetuated this expectation, a distinctive form of sacral monarchism formed a core component of normative Anglicanism.

[45] Ibid., 147-8.
[46] Ibid., 199.
[47] Ibid., 211-2.
[48] Ibid., 244.

External Threats

The defining characteristics of the Anglican tradition in the early nineteenth century were a rigid adherence to the Bible and Church formularies, a belief in Providence and an insistence on the duty of the monarchy to protect the Church. These elements, when combined with a belief in 'conditional justification', gave Anglicans a coherent and shared sense of purpose. But it is not the intent of this chapter to argue that there were no discernible divisions in the Church of England. Any institution as large as the Church, by its very nature, incorporated adherents who differed in their interpretations of how the norms of Anglicanism could be most faithfully expressed. Most conspicuously, there was a subculture of Evangelicalism within the Church of England whose adherents largely accepted Anglican orthodoxy but departed from it in their emphasis on 'conversion' independent of baptism, their tendency towards a reformed understanding of justification and their mode of preaching.[49] Moreover, there were distinct groupings of Anglicans such as the Evangelical 'Clapham Sect', the 'Oriel Noetics' – conventionally characterised by historians as 'liberal'– and the 'Hackney Phalanx', who have been seen as 'Orthodox' or 'High Church'.[50]

Nevertheless, a unitary Anglican identity transcended any overriding sense of faction. The terms 'High Church' and 'liberal' largely signified political Toryism and Whiggism respectively or disagreement over the issue of Catholic emancipation, as opposed to theological differences.[51] As Mark Smith writes, the views of the

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[49] Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 229-30; M. A. Smith, 'Introduction' to H. Ryder, 'A Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Gloucester in the Year 1816' in M. A. Smith and S. Taylor (eds.), *Evangelicalism in the Church of England c. 1790-c. 1890: A Miscellany* (Woodbridge, 2004), 57, 72, 75-80, 83-4; Braddock, *Book of Common Prayer*, 80-83; Smith, 'Hanoverian Parish', 101-4; G. Atkins, 'Anglican Evangelicalism' in Gregory, *Establishment and Empire*, 465-6, 469-70; W. T. Gibson, 'Sermons' in ibid., 281-2.
[50] Atkins, 'Anglican Evangelicalism', 466; Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*, 144-83; Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 14-15.
[51] See e.g. *Bury and Norwich Post*, 23 December 1812, 2; John Buckner to Lord Sheffield, 23 January 1813, East Sussex RO, SPK 1/113/3; W. J. Aislabie to Earl Grey, 8 May 1815, DUL, GRE/B2/1/9; Henry Bathurst to Edward Daubeny, [?] March 1821, Norfolk RO, DCN/154/5/12/1; Henry Bathurst to Phil Williams, 21 January 1822, Norfolk RO, DCN/154/5/8; Joseph Blanco White to Phillpotts, 8 March 1827, ECA, ED11/11/6; Van

'Hackney Phalanx' were 'not at all remarkable, being the theological and political commonplaces of the vast majority of the English clergy.'[52] Furthermore, several studies have shown that close links existed between so-called 'High Church' Anglicans and so-called 'liberals' including 'Oriel noetics' throughout the early nineteenth century, often making them virtually indistinguishable in religious terms.[53] Additionally, the practical convergence of Evangelical and 'Orthodox' has been well documented by historians.[54] In 1834, Marianne Dyson, the wife of a Tractarian clergyman, wrote that 'after all the difference between those of the Orthodox & Evangelical Party seems chiefly to be, that each dwells on their favourite points of Doctrine, not that the Doctrines in themselves are opposed, as they both profess those of the Church of England.'[55] Of far more moment than internal divisions for Anglicans of this period was the perceived threat of those who stood outside of the mainstream Church and criticised its doctrines, liturgy and relationship to the state. This perceived threat, which is discussed in this section, came in three main guises: extremes of Anglican Evangelicalism, dissent in all its

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Mildert to Robert Peel, 30 March 1828, BL, Add MS 40343, f. 264; Henry Bathurst to James Bathurst, 28 July 1828, Norfolk RO, DCN/154/2/98; True Blue Club minute book, 20 November 1828, CUL, MS Add 5996, flyleaf; Marriott to Burgess, 10 February 1830, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 137, f. 122; Diary of Lord Holland, 17 November 1834, in A. D. Kriegel (ed.), *The Holland House Diaries 1831-1840* (London, 1977), 277; September 1836, 344; 26 March 1837, 359; Hastings Robinson to John William Whittaker, 9 May 1837, WP(C), 13/15. For the exceptions to this, see Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 27, 34-6.

[52] M. A. Smith, 'Hackney Phalanx (act. 1800-1830)' in D. Cannadine (ed.), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (online resource, 2004, last updated 2018) [http://www.oxforddnb.com].

[53] Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*, 148-9; P. Corsi, *Science and Religion: Baden Powell and the Anglican Debate, 1800-1860* (Cambridge, 1988), 21-35; Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 272-3.

[54] J. J. Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative: Reaction and Orthodoxy in Britain, c. 1760-1832* (Cambridge, 1993), 194-8; Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 32, 192-6, 260-61, 321-2; J. Innes, 'Politics and Morals: The Reformation of Manners Movement in Later Eighteenth-century England' in idem., *Inferior Politics: Social Problems and Social Policies in Eighteenth-century Britain* (Oxford, 2009), 214-5; Walker, 'Anglican Assertion in Lancashire', 298-300.

[55] Marianne Dyson to Anne Sturges Bourne, 23-25 April 1834, Hampshire RO, 9M55/F39/7.

forms and Roman Catholicism. In tension with these traditions, Anglican identity assumed greater clarity and cohesiveness.[56]

Most Anglican Evangelical clergy distanced themselves from Calvinism, placing it outside the norms of Anglican belief.[57] Yet there was a minority who maintained that the 39 Articles and the Prayer Book supported Calvinist notions of predestination. In some cases, they were quiescent about this conviction. During his 1831 visitation, Phillpotts encountered a clergyman named Sollis who was 'said to be a Calvinist, as he professed himself to be'. Phillpotts 'told him frankly what I heard of his opinions' and 'enquired of his preaching, which he professed to be, as I heard, free from all predestinarian tone, and practically, like other good & sober Christian Teachers.'[58] In the same year, Hampshire rector Spencer Drummond resigned from his ministry, admitting that his Calvinist views were 'totally at variance with the creed of the Church of England'.[59] But there was also a tendency among some Evangelicals, exemplified by John Overton and the editors of *The Record*, openly to avow Calvinist beliefs within an Anglican framework.[60]

Extremes of Evangelicalism were not, however, of a solely doctrinal nature. Occasionally, they involved a tendency to promote Methodism. In 1808, Bishop Porteus of London prohibited a clergyman from officiating in his diocese when he discovered that he was preaching at a Methodist meeting house.[61] Henry Gwyther, Vicar of Yardley near Birmingham, recorded that one Joseph Gilbert was 'now a very pious Methodist, and … was first inclined to the ways of God by attending to my preaching at the Workhouse on Friday evenings.'[62] At its fringes, Evangelicalism also involved a lack of sociability and unconventional ministry. James Morton, Earl

[56] This argument draws upon Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 198.
[57] Smith, 'Introduction', 75-80; Atkins, 'Anglican Evangelicalism', 465.
[58] Visitation Diary of Henry Phillpotts, 1831, ECA, ED11/86/2b, ff. 11-12.
[59] A. Beecher, 'Keeping the Faith: Church and Community in Alresford c. 1780-1939' (unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2017), 68-9.
[60] Atkins, 'Anglican Evangelicalism', 465, 471-2.
[61] Beilby Porteus to [?], 9 February 1808, LPL, FP Porteus 1, f. 36.
[62] Commonplace Book of Henry Gwyther, 10 November 1824, Birmingham Arch., MS 2740.

Grey's tutor, wrote disapprovingly of a Norfolk rector, Raikes, 'who was formerly one of the most thoughtless of clergymen & kept a pack of harriers, but his wife being last year on a visit to some *serious* friends became a convert to Methodism and returning home she in a few days converted him'. Raikes now refused to 'partake of a social dinner with his neighbours, that he may go about praying and expounding the bible among the cottagers, who admire but understand not his enthusiasm.'[63]

With regard to dissent, Anglicans were especially vexed by Methodism and Unitarianism. Although Methodists' use of the Prayer Book and sporadic church attendance persisted, it became increasingly evident that they were rivals, as opposed to associates, of the Church.[64] The journal of John Skinner, Rector of Camerton in Somerset, bears testimony to this fracture. In 1811, Skinner had a conversation with 'a very staunch Methodist' named Green, who said that he was looking for a catechism to teach the children in a Methodist school. Skinner remarked that 'John Wesley himself … always recommended' the Anglican Catechism. Green replied, 'to be sure John Wesley had recommended many good things, but there were other things of much importance to be attended to besides what he had mentioned.' Skinner observed that 'alterations had taken place in the doctrines of the Methodists since John Wesley's time', and Green agreed.[65] Five years later, Skinner had an enormous argument with two Methodist preachers, who announced their intention to 'convert … everyone in the parish of Camerton'. Skinner argued that 'they had no place or pretence to take that office from my hands', and, in response to such provocations, preached against schism, criticising the Methodist view that 'they do not separate from the Church, and that it is the same thing whether the people go to

[63] Journal of James Morton, 9 January 1828, Lincolnshire Arch., MISC DEP 306/1/4.
[64] On Methodists' continuing affinity with Anglican worship, see Knight, *Nineteenth-century Church*, 24-36; Gibson, *Unity and Accord*, 204-6; Braddock, *Book of Common Prayer*, 92-3.
[65] Journal of John Skinner, 18 July 1811, in J. Skinner, *Journal of a Somerset Rector, 1803-1834*, ed. H. Coombs and P. Coombs (Bath, 1971), 66. A further major concern of Skinner's was Methodists' deviation from the Anglican belief in conditional justification: R. Hole, *Pulpits, Politics and Public Order in England 1760-1832* (Cambridge, 1989), 197-8.

their Chapel or to their Church.'[66] When a Methodist woman 'of the most enthusiastic description' claimed to have seen Christ, Skinner 'told her it was my duty as the clergyman of the parish to declare to her that … the visions that she pretended to were no other than delusive dreams, since Christ did not now manifest Himself on earth, and that visions and miracles had long ceased'.[67] He further challenged the Methodist belief in assurance of salvation and the view that 'uninstructed persons' could expound scripture.[68]

In such a climate, the building of Methodist chapels was viewed with cautious suspicion. When Lord Dartmouth was requested to provide land for a meeting house at Slaithwaite, Yorkshire, in 1822, he told local Methodists that 'disclaiming … any hostile or illiberal feeling towards your Society of Christians I must consider it my bounden duty in the first instance to attend to the wants of those Christians who are members of the established Church and therefore I w[oul]d not unwillingly give up to others a spot of ground which might probably afford *them* an eligible situation for a place of worship in the event of their desiring to build one.'[69] In Coveney, Cambridgeshire, Lord Rokeby granted land for a Methodist chapel on the conditions that baptism and communion would not be administered there, and that services there would never 'interfere' with those in church.[70]

Such restrictions reflected widespread anxieties concerning the possibility that Methodist places of worship would assume the functions of churches. At South Kelsey, Lincolnshire, in 1836, the curate expressed alarm that a parishioner had taken 'advantage of a missionary meeting held at the Methodist chapel in this place to have his child baptized by the preacher – and his wife returned thanks for her deliverance at the same time, in the same place.' This was unprecedented, and it was expected that the curate 'should notice it in a particular manner, and compel the

[66] Journal of Skinner, 16 February 1816, 92-3; 28 July 1822, 213.
[67] Ibid., 11 February 1816, 91.
[68] Ibid., 16 July 1822, 204; 13 July 1823, 240.
[69] Lord Dartmouth to J. Slack, [1822], Staffordshire RO, D(W)1778/I/ii/1758.
[70] Coveney composite parish register, Cambridgeshire Arch., P51/1/2.

parties to be brought to church.'[71] For Anglicans, Methodism increasingly represented a disturbingly disruptive influence at a parochial level. Political agitation by dissenters, especially regarding church rates, caused further strains. In 1837, Hastings Robinson declared, 'Dissent is no longer a religion, but a policy, and its author is Satan.'[72]

The threat from Unitarianism was of a different order. Unitarians did not have the numbers to disrupt parochial life or influence politics to any great degree.[73] However, their denial of Christ's divinity and the doctrine of the Trinity struck at the heart of normative Anglicanism. Christopher Wordsworth wrote in 1812 that 'the Socinian or Unitarian Doctrine' was 'a Doctrine … of more evil Tendency than any other (absolute Calvinism only excepted) for if our Saviours being God be generally denied what Authority do the Gospels give the Oath which is the grand Security of our Lives & Property?'[74] In 1827, Lord Eldon stated, 'I do not look upon Unitarians as Christians but as denying the first & most essential revealed doctrine'.[75] A similar view had been expressed in 1814 by Bishop Thomas Burgess in response to a reference in a charge by Howley to a type of Unitarian 'who, while he rejects its peculiar dogmas, admits the general truth of Christianity.'[76] To Burgess, this was a non sequitur, as 'they never can be said to admit the general truth of Christianity, who reject the peculiar doctrines of Christianity to the extent, in which the Unitarians do. In other words, they cannot be said to admit the general truth of

[71] Thomas Holdsworth to John Kaye, 16 November 1836, in R. W. Ambler (ed.), *Lincolnshire Parish Correspondence of John Kaye, Bishop of Lincoln 1827-53* (Woodbridge, 2006), 248.
[72] Robinson to John William Whittaker, 23 October 1837, WP(C), 13/16.
[73] C. D. Field, 'Counting Religion in England and Wales: The Long Eighteenth Century, c. 1680-c. 1840', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 63 (2012), 704. Note, however, the disproportionately large number of Unitarian MPs in the early nineteenth century: D. W. Bebbington, 'Unitarian Members of Parliament in the Nineteenth Century: A Catalogue', *Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society*, 24 (2009), supplement to no. 3.
[74] Christopher Wordsworth to Lord Rolle, 6 February 1812, Devon Heritage Centre, 152M/C1812/OE.
[75] Marriott to Burgess, 22 June 1827, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 137, f. 87.
[76] W. Howley, *A Charge delivered to the Clergy, of the Diocese of London at the Primary Visitation of that Diocese in the Year 1814* (London, 1815), 22.

Christianity, who are *not Christians*.'[77] By taking a firm stand against such heterodox opinions, Anglicans asserted their own claim to be the arbiters and upholders of Christian orthodoxy.

In prosecuting this claim, their only serious contender was the Roman Catholic Church. The early nineteenth-century Church of England was uniformly 'Protestant' in the sense that all of its members rejected the Pope's authority. Not all went as far as to consider the Pope the Anti-Christ, but this was nevertheless a view maintained by some Anglicans.[78] Shute Barrington, Bishop of Durham, laid out in extended fashion the reasons for the separation of the churches of England and Rome in a charge of 1806. He reminded his clergy that '[m]uch the largest portion of our Church Articles (after the general doctrines of Christianity) respects the errors of the Church of Rome.' Barrington accordingly condemned the veneration of images, prayers to saints, penances, transubstantiation, communion in one kind, ritualism, indulgences and Latin liturgies. In response to Catholic emigration to Britain, he exhorted his hearers to concentrate in their sermons on 'the purity and spirituality of Christian worship; – on the one sacrifice of Christ once offered; – on the inefficacy of all other means of atonement for sin; – on Christ, the only Mediator and Intercessor; – on the duty of searching the Scriptures; and of diffusing the knowledge of them among the poor; – on the sole infallibility of God, and of his written revelation.'[79] Four years later, in another charge, Barrington contemplated the possibility that a 'measure of CATHOLIC UNION' might be effected between the two churches, but that this was dependent on Catholics accepting that they were sacrilegious idolaters and blasphemers.[80] Bishop Burgess went further in his

[77] Burgess to Howley, 5 December 1814, LPL, MS 2184, f. 176.
[78] Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 244-5.
[79] S. Barrington, *The Grounds on which the Church of England separated from the Church of Rome, stated in a Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Durham, at the Ordinary Visitation of that Diocese, in the Year 1806* (London, 1807), 20.
[80] N. Yates, 'Anglican Attitudes to Roman Catholicism in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries' in S. J. Brown, F. Knight and J. Morgan-Guy (eds.), *Religion, Identity and Conflict in Britain: From the Restoration to the Twentieth Century* (Farnham, 2013), 123-4.

denunciation of Roman Catholicism, and in a charge set out to 'substantiate the assertion made by the Archbishop of Dublin, that the Church of Rome is a Church without religion.'[81] Admittedly, there were some clergy who looked more favourably upon Roman Catholicism, most notably Bathurst and Burgess's critic Samuel Wix.[82] But the natural Anglican posture towards Roman Catholicism was one of superiority. Phillpotts put it thus in 1833:

> The Papists hate us, not because we approach the dissenters, but because we depart from the Ch[urch] of R[ome] without approaching the others – because, in short, we are a *Church*, retaining all the essentials of a Church in government and in doctrine. They know that we have only cast off their corruptions, for even those among them who are sincere in holding to those corruptions … know that they cannot be proved by Scripture, and that we hold all their doctrines which Scripture supports.[83]

The relative scarcity of Roman Catholics in England meant that, in most English parishes, they remained an abstract threat. Yet events in Ireland and debates concerning Catholic emancipation meant that the English Catholic minority increasingly became objects of Anglican suspicion by the 1820s. In 1826, Thomas Rennell, Dean of Winchester, wrote to Howley, 'To suppose, as we may do, that there is an Atom less bigotry or ferocity among the *English* than the *Irish* Papists, is a most fond & *dangerous* delusion.'[84] Such a hardening of attitude is also evident in Skinner's journal. In 1823, he went out of curiosity to a Catholic service in Bath and heard a bishop preach 'on the subject of the Real Presence'.[85] The following year, when visiting the Catholic Lord Arundel, he remarked that, though he was 'decidedly against the Catholic claims', 'where there are such liberal-minded men who are excluded from a participation of what the most worthless and irreligious

[81] Burgess to Howley, 27 November 1824, LPL, FP Howley 9, ff. 11-11a.
[82] J. C. Hanekamp, *An Appeal for Justice: The Life of Dr. Henry Bathurst, Lord Bishop of Norwich, 1744-1837* (Utrecht, 1992); Yates, 'Anglican Attitudes', 125-32.
[83] Phillpotts to John Wilson Croker, 4 December 1833, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 353, ff. 17-18.
[84] Thomas Rennell to Howley, 20 November 1826, LPL, MS 2184, f. 206.
[85] Journal of Skinner, 29 May 1823, 236-7.

actually do enjoy, it then assumes rather an injurious appearance.'[86] But in 1825 Skinner wrote, 'The more I read on the subject, the more I am convinced of the duplicity of the Catholics.'[87] Two years later, a Catholic neighbour gave him an 'extremely impudent' look when passing him beside a canal, which, he considered, 'clearly shewed there was bad blood among them, and I sincerely hoped they would never have the power openly of shewing what they would do in my days.'[88]

Around the same time, Henry Handley Norris was making enquiries about English Catholics among his clerical correspondents. Charles Le Bas, Headmaster of the East India College in Hertford, wrote that Catholics there were 'understood to be highly respectable *in their way*', while Charles Lloyd, Bishop of Oxford, wrote that 'the Rom[an] Cath[olic]s here have always been so quiet and inoffensive that it is not easy to discover much about them.'[89] Norris also wrote to Whittaker, now Vicar of Blackburn, Lancashire, to ask about the Jesuit college of Stonyhurst, and, though his response does not appear to survive, it seems impossible that Whittaker would have replied to Norris's query in a similar vein to Le Bas or Lloyd.[90] Lancashire was one of the few English counties with a significant proportion of Catholics and Blackburn was only several miles away from Stonyhurst. In 1827, Whittaker attempted to levy a rate for the heating and lighting of his church, but was strongly opposed in this by local Catholics, who objected to paying the tax as a matter of conscience. The town clerk of Blackburn convened a poll in consequence, in which a clear majority of ratepayers voted in favour of the tax.[91] Archbishop Manners-Sutton, who had presented Whittaker to his living, congratulated him on his 'triumph over [the] factious opposition of [the] Roman Catholics to your most reasonable

[86] Ibid., 4 January 1824, 259.
[87] Ibid., 12 May 1825, 284.
[88] Ibid., 12 January 1827, 295.
[89] Charles Le Bas to Norris, 22 October 1827, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 789, f. 158; Charles Lloyd to Norris, 2 June 1828, ibid., f. 170.
[90] Norris to Whittaker, 4 February 1828, WP(B). On Whittaker's background and career, see Walker, 'Anglican Assertion in Lancashire', 88-90.
[91] *Morning Chronicle*, 18 September 1827, 1; *The Standard*, 1 October 1827, 3; 6 October 1827, 3.

proposition. This victory will I trust, relieve your Parish for some time from [the] vexatious hostilities of [the] Roman Catholics.'[92] However, Henry Wilkinson, master of Sedbergh Grammar School, told Whittaker, 'really I fear these Catholics will one day overthrow the state and the Vicar of Blackburn.'[93] Two years later, Whittaker's aunt asked him to 'give me hopes we are not to become catholic England'.[94] Whittaker accordingly did not avoid confrontation. Following the passage of Catholic emancipation, Whittaker led several local clergymen in challenging the Jesuits of Stonyhurst to a public debate on the relative merits of Anglicanism and Roman Catholicism. A lengthy correspondence ensued, in which the Jesuits, insulted by some expressions regarding them, refused the challenge.[95] In 1835, Whittaker wrote bluntly of his 'antipathy' towards 'Popery'.[96] An attitude of antagonism between Anglicans and Catholics was thereby maintained at their closest point of contact in England.

Measures of Piety

Through a corporate consciousness and in conflict with non-Anglicans, early nineteenth-century Anglicans had a clear sense of what they were and what they

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[92] Charles Manners-Sutton to John William Whittaker, 11 October 1827, WP(B).
[93] Henry Wilkinson to John William Whittaker, 10 December 1827, WP(C), 15/18.
[94] Bessy Whittaker to John William Whittaker, 22 March 1829, Wigan Arch., EHC/205/M1006A/31.
[95] J. W. Whittaker et al., *Correspondence between the Rev. John William Whittaker, Vicar of Blackburn, and the Rev. Richard Norris, Principal of Stonyhurst, and other Romish Priests in Lancashire, occasioned by an invitation from the Vicar and Clergy of Blackburn to a Public Discussion of the Differences in Faith between the Churches of England and Rome* (London, 1829). The Sussex clergyman Maurice Smelt 'fought a short but furious pamphlet war in 1832 against Slindon's Catholic priest, Joseph Silveira, over "errors of the Roman Catholic religion".': M. D. W. Jones, 'Uncovering the Enthusiasms and Prejudices of a 19th-century Country Parson: Maurice Smelt, Rector of Binstead (1815-63) and Slindon (1815-65)', *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, 155 (2017), 160.
[96] John William Whittaker to Sarah Whittaker, 29 April 1835, WP(B). See also B. Lewis, *The Middlemost and the Milltowns: Bourgeois Culture and Politics in Early Industrial England* (Stanford, CA, 2001), 203-4, 366-7; Walker, 'Anglican Assertion in Lancashire', 250.

were not. But to what extent did Anglicanism have a popular following? The primary, but by no means the sole, way of addressing this question is to estimate the level of church attendance in this period. Possibly the most oft-quoted statistic relating to the history of the Church of England is the report (attributed to Bishop Pretyman-Tomline of Lincoln) that on Easter Day 1800, only six people received communion at St Paul's Cathedral in London.[97] This has been presented as symptomatic of a church which attracted little popular interest. But communicant statistics, and especially those relating to places of worship with no parochial function like cathedrals, tell us very little about the level of Anglican allegiance during this era. Communion was a rare occurrence, usually being celebrated no more than four times a year.[98] If taken without entire repentance for sins and forgiveness of injuries, the sacrament was considered, as the Prayer Book's exhortation put it, to do 'nothing else than increase your damnation.'[99] Accordingly, most Anglicans were

[97] The history of the multifarious contexts in which this statistic has appeared would justify a separate study. It first appears in [T. Haweis], *The Church of England Vindicated from Misrepresentation; shewing her Genuine Doctrines as contained in her Articles, Liturgy, and Homilies* (London, 1801), 5. For subsequent citations, see e.g. C. J. Abbey and J. H. Overton, *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century* (2 vols., London, 1878), 479; J. H. Overton and F. Relton, *The English Church: From the Accession of George I to the End of the Eighteenth Century (1714-1800)* (London, 1906), 297; S. L. Ollard, *The Anglo-Catholic Revival, Some Persons and Principles: Six Lectures Delivered at All Saints', Margaret Street* (London, 1925), 10; E. Underhill, *Mixed Pasture: Twelve Essays and Addresses* (London, 1933), 136; J. A. Dix, *A History of the Parish of Trinity Church in the City of New York, Part V: The Rectorship of Dr. Morgan Dix* (New York, 1950), 38; F. R. Bolton, *The Caroline Tradition of the Church of Ireland, with particular reference to Bishop Jeremy Taylor* (London, 1958), 170; H. Davies, *Worship and Theology in England, Volume III: From Watts and Wesley to Maurice* (Princeton, NJ, 1961), 58; N. Temperley, *Music in Britain: The Romantic Age, 1800-1914* (London, 1981), 171; D. E. W. Harrison and M. C. Sansom, *Worship in the Church of England* (London, 1982), 64; R. Pattison, *The Great Dissent: John Henry Newman and the Liberal Heresy* (Oxford, 1991), 11; P. D. L. Avis, *A Church Drawing Near: Spirituality and Mission in a Post-Christian Culture* (London, 2003), 132; A. Jacobs, *The "Book of Common Prayer": A Biography* (Princeton, NJ, 2013), 129; R. R. Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution: A Political History of Europe and America, 1760-1800* (Princeton, NJ, 2014), 638.

[98] Braddock, *Book of Common Prayer*, 20-22.

[99] Cummings, *Book of Common Prayer*, 396.

reluctant to communicate.[100] Communicants only accounted for somewhere between one tenth and one fifth of attendees at Anglican churches.[101] Hence studies which have used communicant statistics as an indication of church attendance vastly underestimate the size of Anglican congregations.[102]

Figures for average overall church attendance were not officially collected as part of episcopal visitations until the 1820s and 1830s, and then, so it appears, only in four dioceses: Chester, Oxford, Lichfield and Coventry and Winchester.[103] Of these returns, only three sets survive that are close enough in time to a census for one to estimate church attendance in relation to reliable figures for the population of parishes and chapelries. Two of these sets are roughly contemporaneous, and as such constitute the only basis upon which an accurate proportion of church attendance in more than one diocese can be calculated, namely the Diocese of Oxford visitation of 1831 and the returns from the Archdeaconry of Salop from the Diocese of Lichfield and Coventry visitation of 1832. From the Oxford returns, it is evident that, on average, 38% of the population of an Oxfordshire parish would attend church

[100] Knight, *Nineteenth-century Church*, 53-4; Braddock, *Book of Common Prayer*, 24. John Skinner's parish clerk, upon being questioned as to why 'he had not for three times staid the Sacrament', explained that 'he was not fit, for he could not get out of his mind the ideas he entertained of those who had had him turned out of his situation of bailiff.': Journal of Skinner, 25 December 1827, 306. Bishop Kaye believed that '[t]he very excuses which men are accustomed to make for absenting themselves from the Holy Communion, weak and unsatisfactory as they must appear to the eye of Reason, clearly prove the importance which those who urge them attach to a participation in that Sacred Rite.': J. Kaye, *A Charge, delivered by the Right Rev. John Lord Bishop of Bristol, at his Primary Visitation of that Diocese, in August 1821* (Bristol, 1821), 14.

[101] Field, 'Counting Religion', 718.

[102] J. C. D. Clark, *English Society, 1660-1832: Religion, Ideology and Politics during the Ancien Regime* (2nd edn, Cambridge, 2000), 485; R. Gill, *The 'Empty' Church Revisited* (Aldershot, 2003), 12. The underestimates stem largely from Alan Gilbert's analysis of Oxfordshire communicant statistics. See A. D. Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England: Church, Chapel and Social Change, 1740-1914* (London, 1976), 27-9; R. Currie, A. D. Gilbert and L. S. Horsley, *Churches and Churchgoers: Patterns of Church Growth in the British Isles since 1700* (Oxford, 1977), 22-6, 85; Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, 21.

[103] C. D. Field, 'A Shilling for Queen Elizabeth: The Era of State Regulation of Church Attendance in England, 1552-1969', *Journal of Church and State*, 50 (2008), 234.

regularly.[104] In Shropshire, this figure was slightly lower, with around 34% being the average proportion of the population of an individual parish who attended regularly.[105] Extrapolating from Clive Field's estimates that around 80% of the population of England and Wales was at least nominally Anglican around 1830, it appears that just under half of Anglicans came regularly to their parish church.[106] But this does not account for church attendance as a whole. It is evident from various sources that church attendance fluctuated, and that there was a recognisable category of occasional attendees.[107] In the view of one meticulous Hampshire clergyman in 1832, these accounted for 37% of his parishioners.[108] Allowing for the 20% of the population who were non-Anglicans, this figure may be reduced to around 30%. Thus, if evidence brought forward here is representative, approximately two-thirds of Anglicans (and hence around half of the entire population) were church attenders of some kind.

What this imperfect estimate fails to convey is the divide between urban and rural parishes. The Oxfordshire and Shropshire parishes surveyed around 1831 were predominantly, though not exclusively, rural villages. The highest church attendances were usually found in those villages with comparatively small populations.[109] Conversely, in towns and cities the average proportion could be much

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[104] Figure derived from Diocese of Oxford Visitation Returns, 1831, Oxfordshire History Centre, MS. Oxf. Dioc. Papers b. 38. On these returns, see C. D. Field, 'A Godly People? Aspects of Religious Practice in the Diocese of Oxford, 1738-1936', *Southern History*, 14 (1992), 53-4.

[105] Figure derived from Archdeaconry of Salop Visitation Returns, 1832, Lichfield RO, B/V/5/22.

[106] Field, 'Counting Religion', 711.

[107] In both the Oxfordshire and Shropshire returns cited above, clergy often estimated their average congregations by stating ranges that could extend to 100. For fluctuations within one parish, see Skinner, *Journal*, 235, 292, 298, 304-5, 314, 317-8, 376, 428, 434, 437, 461, 480.

[108] Field, Counting Religion', 718.

[109] Field observes that of the 18 Oxfordshire parishes where more than half of the population attended church, 'sixteen had fewer than 500 inhabitants and nine had fewer than 250': Field, 'Godly People', 54. The populations of 12 Shropshire parishes where the proportion attending exceeded 50% ranged from 52 to 512: Archdeaconry of Salop Visitation Returns, 1832, Lichfield RO, B/V/5/22.

lower, not least because of a lack of church accommodation. This problem was particularly acute in the Diocese of London in the earlier part of the period. In 1812, the parish of St Pancras, with a population of over 46,000, had a church with free seats for only 180 people, while the Anglican chapels in the parish contained 2,200 seats, all of which were rented. The upshot, according to the vicar, was that the expanding population 'must either join the Dissenters, or live without the public exercise of Religion.'[110] At Coggeshall in Essex, a parish with a population of 3,000, the church was generally full but could only contain 1,000 people. Many had resorted to meeting houses as a result, but the vicar was persuaded that they would 'cheerfully profit by an opportunity of returning to us, could they find room in the church'.[111] Six years later, a parliamentary enquiry found that only 48% of the population could be accommodated within Anglican churches and chapels.[112] Despite widespread and significant church building efforts in the ensuing decade, church provision continued to lag behind population growth. In around 1835, Anglican places of worship could only accommodate around 15% of the population in both Birmingham and neighbouring Aston.[113] Contemporaneous surveys revealed that in other urban areas where church accommodation was limited, the local population did not necessarily avail themselves of existing provision in its entirety. In Stockton, 20% could be seated and 10% attended, while in York 44% could be seated and 21% attended.[114]

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[110] Thomas Fanshaw Middleton to Spencer Perceval, 14 January 1812, LPL, FP Randolph 6, ff. 26-9.
[111] Richard Mant to John Randolph, 18 August 1812, LPL, FP Randolph 6, f. 3. Cf. M. A. Smith (ed.), *Doing the Duty of the Parish: Surveys of the Church in Hampshire 1810* (Winchester, 2004), 49.
[112] Figure derived from *Account of Benefices and Population; Churches, Chapels, and their Capacity; Number and Condition of Glebe Houses; and Income of all Benefices not exceeding £150 per ann. together with Abstracts of the Same* (London, 1818), 215.
[113] Figures derived from 'Abstracts of the Returns relative to the state of Parishes with a view to Church Extension', c. 1835, Lichfield RO, D30/11/114, 'Birmingham', 'Aston'.
[114] Gill, *'Empty' Church Revisited*, 224. It was asserted in 1834 that 'the parliamentary Churches in general are but very indifferently attended. Trinity Church in Bolton is not half filled, and St. George's in Wolverhampton not one tenth part.': Peter Potter to Lord Bradford, 1 December 1834, Staffordshire RO, D1287/18/26 (K/95). The argument that

Anglican churches, therefore, were neither empty nor resorted to by entire communities. Instead, they were sustained by a solid element in each parish for whom churchgoing remained habitual, which generally ranged from around 10% to 40% except in smaller villages where the proportion in attendance could be much higher. Moreover, in many places, there was a popular demand for additional services.[115] But ordinary Sunday worship was only one component of the liturgical life of the Church. Parish churches were also the scene of the various rites of passage, days of national commemoration, anniversary sermons, ordinations, confirmations and consecrations. On such occasions, churches often attracted considerably greater interest than was manifested on the average Sunday. In particular, episcopal visits frequently garnered large crowds. When Charles Blomfield preached at Manchester shortly after his appointment as Bishop of Chester in 1824, there were reportedly 5,000 in attendance.[116] In 1826, his consecration of a new Blackburn church was said to be attended by 4,000 people.[117] After the consecration of another church in Blackburn by Blomfield's successor John Bird Sumner in 1829, Whittaker's wife wrote, 'I think there must have been three thousand people there & the whole service was so beautifully performed, that the Bishop expressed himself as perfectly delighted, he said the music was magnificent; so I trust in future Blackburn will stand conspicuous for its Church & Vicar & not be celebrated for riots alone.'[118] A similar optimism was expressed by Bishop Edward Maltby after his translation from Chichester to Durham in 1836. He reported, 'I laid the first Stone of a New Church in Darlington (a town abounding with Dissenters) in

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increased church accommodation did not increase church attendance is made in R. A. Soloway, *Prelates and People: Ecclesiastical Social Thought in England, 1783-1852* (London, 1969), 306-15.

[115] Smith, *Surveys of the Church in Hampshire*, 55, 119; Richard Fenton to Kaye, 23 May 1828, in Ambler, *Lincolnshire Parish Correspondence*, 44; Knight, *Nineteenth-century Church*, 76.

[116] George Pearson to John William Whittaker, 22 December 1824, WP(C), 12/15.

[117] Thomas Calvert to John William Whittaker, 18 September 1826, WP(B).

[118] Mary Haughton Whittaker to Sarah Whittaker, 16 September 1829, WP(B). Mary Whittaker was making reference to the Blackburn riots of 1826, concerning which see Lewis, *Middlemost and the Milltowns*, 71-4.

a procession which was accompanied by high & low & so thronged as completely to fill the town … At Newcastle a similar feeling was manifested, when I went to preach; and the Confirmations, in which I have been hitherto engaged have been conducted with unexampled order & very strong appearance of the right feeling among the young people.'[119]

Two royal funerals, those of Princess Charlotte in 1817 and George III in 1820, also evinced the resilience of Anglican feeling. Giles Chippindall, curate of Winwick in Lancashire, recorded that on the day of the princess's funeral his rector 'preached a beautiful and pathetic Sermon to an uncommonly numerous Congrega[tio]n who were all much affected.'[120] Birmingham minister John Hume Spry wrote that, as a result of Charlotte's death, a 'sweeping tide of loyal feeling' had 'taken a devotional turn' which had 'really produced a religious effect, for a time at least, most edifying'. His congregation was 'not only large, but in conduct so properly serious, that the effect was too much for me.' He hoped to 'make a harvest for religion of the temporary feeling.'[121] In 1820, Chippindall wrote the King's funeral was 'observed with great solemnity every where. At Winwick the Church was hung with black cloth, and the Rector preached on the occasion to a rather full congregation.'[122]

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[119] Edward Maltby to Samuel Butler, 9 October [1836], BL, Add MS 34590, f. 373. Cf. Maltby to Butler, 15 November [1836], ibid., f. 413.
[120] Journal of Giles Chippindall, 19 November 1817, Cheshire Arch., D8503/1.
[121] [John Hume Spry] to Norris, 5 December 1817, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 789, f. 89. Newspapers reported high levels of church attendance at the time of the funeral. See e.g. *Northampton Mercury*, 22 November 1817, 3; 29 November 1817, 3; *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 22 November 1817, 2; *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 22 November 1817, 4; *Hampshire Chronicle*, 24 November 1817, 4; *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, 24 November 1817, 4; *Cumberland Pacquet*, 25 November 1817, 2; *Kentish Chronicle*, 25 November 1817, 4; *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post*, 27 November 1817, 4; *Taunton Courier*, 27 November 1817, 7; *Chester Chronicle*, 28 November 1817, 3; *Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury*, 28 November 1817, 3; *Lancaster Gazette*, 29 November 1817, 3; *Norfolk Chronicle*, 29 November 1817, 2.
[122] Journal of Chippindall, 17 February 1820, Cheshire Arch., D8503/1. For other examples of the widespread commemoration of the funeral in churches, see *Evening Mail*, 18 February 1820, 3; *Leeds Mercury*, 19 February 1820, 3; *Norfolk Chronicle*, 19 February 1820, 2-3; *Northampton Mercury*, 19 February 1820, 3; 26 February 1820, 2; *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 19 February 1820, 3; *Yorkshire Gazette*, 19 February 1820, 2; *Hampshire Chronicle*, 21 February 1820, 4; *Leeds Intelligencer*, 21 February 1820, 3; *Sussex*

A further outlet for Anglican sentiment was the national days of fasting and thanksgiving prescribed by royal authority on the advice of the Archbishop of Canterbury. These days reinforced the normative Anglican belief in Providence by encouraging the population to acknowledge divine favour or judgement in national affairs. The decision to set aside such days was not made for the sake of form or tradition, but rather in response to calculations concerning the likelihood of their having a beneficial effect.[123] When Lord Liverpool suggested a thanksgiving for the good harvests of 1813, Archbishop Manners-Sutton stated his belief that 'we cannot be too thankful, nor express our thanks too frequently as a nation, for [the] many blessings which God has bestowed upon us.' However, he suggested postponing the day 'in order to give time to every part of [the] Kingdom to close [the] harvest, & to take an honest share in [the] general thanksgiving.'[124] His successor, William Howley, was conscious in 1831 that, due to the variable nature of that year's harvest, 'a general thanksgiving where the blessing is partial would give offence to many congregations'.[125] But the following year Howley was directed to prepare 'a prayer of thanksgiving for the late abundant harvest'.[126] Over the possibility of holding a fast day Howley agonised for many months. In August 1831, he told William Wilberforce:

> [F]or more than a year past … scarcely a day has passed in which the desirableness of some solemn expression of national humiliation and penitence has not presented itself to my mind. On the other hand I have felt that the minds of the people have been in a state of excitement from political

Advertiser, 21 February 1820, 3; *Kentish Chronicle*, 22 February 1820, 4; *Bury and Norwich Post*, 23 February 1820, 2-3.

[123] On national days of prayer, see P. Williamson, A. Raffe, S. Taylor and N. Mears (eds.), *National Prayers: Special Worship since the Reformation, Volume 2: General Fasts, Thanksgivings and Special Prayers in the British Isles 1689-1870* (Woodbridge, 2017).

[124] Lord Liverpool to Manners-Sutton, 13 September 1813, BL, Add MS 38254, f. 214; Manners-Sutton to Liverpool, 14 September 1813, BL, Add MS 64813, f. 42. A thanksgiving day was ordered on 20 September 1813 and observed during October: Williamson et al., *National Prayers*, 753-4.

[125] Howley to Burgess, 4 November 1831, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 136, f. 58.

[126] Howley to Earl Grey, 29 October 1832, DUL, GRE/B9A/7/18/1. On this prayer, see Williamson et al., *National Prayers*, 798-800.

> feeling, which is little in accordance with that sense of unworthiness, and entire resignation to the divine will, which is essential to sincere repentance, and consequently to a fast … I did suppose that the breaking out of the Pestilence [cholera] in the Eastern parts of Europe would have presented a favourable opportunity: that the fears of the people would have worked on their hearts, and brought them to a proper temper: I think it possible that this may still be the case: and hope that, when the effervescence has subsided a deep apprehension of threatened visitations may produce that seriousness, and spirit of devotion, which would make a solemn fast a real act of national Penitence.[127]

In November the Archbishop changed his mind upon receiving letters and a petition indicating that 'many persons are very desirous that a day of public humiliation and fasting should be appointed.' He explained to Earl Grey that '[h]ad there been no excitement in the Country I should have felt it my duty to propose such a measure to your Lordship some time ago.' Now that 'the people' were 'seriously alarmed', he trusted that 'the solemnity would be observed with becoming devotion throughout the Country.'[128]

To what extent were such hopes realised? During the Napoleonic wars, very full church attendances had been consistently recorded on fast days.[129] Howley's fast day, fixed for Wednesday 21 March 1832, presented a more mixed picture, and was flouted by some. Groups of radicals rioted in London and feasted in Oldham, while in Nottingham and Manchester public houses were packed.[130] In Liverpool, newspapers disagreed on whether the fast had been 'observed … in a manner at once solemn and impressive' or 'regarded as a holiday, and used as such'.[131] But,

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[127] Howley to William Wilberforce, 31 August 1831, Bodl., MS. Wilberforce d. 17, ff. 70-71. Cf. Howley to Burgess, 4 November 1831, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 136, f. 58.
[128] Howley to Earl Grey, 19 November 1831, DUL, GRE/B9A/7/12/1.
[129] See e.g. *Kentish Chronicle*, 21 October 1803, 4; 28 February 1806, 4; *Hampshire Telegraph*, 24 October 1803, 3; *Lancaster Gazette*, 29 October 1803, 3; *Kentish Gazette*, 29 May 1805, 4; *Chester Chronicle*, 1 June 1804, 3; *Bath Chronicle*, 21 February 1805, 3; *Hampshire Chronicle*, 25 February 1805, 4; 22 February 1808, 4; *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, 25 February 1805, 4; *Gloucester Journal*, 3 March 1806, 3.
[130] *Morning Chronicle*, 22 March 1832, 3; *Manchester Times*, 24 March 1832, 3; *Nottingham Review*, 23 March 1832, 3; *Manchester Courier*, 24 March 1832, 2.
[131] *Gore's General Advertiser*, 22 March 1832, 3; *Liverpool Mercury*, 23 March 1832, 94.

throughout provincial towns and cities, the day vindicated Howley's hope that it was still possible for the Church to call the nation to prayer. Churches were reported to be crowded and unusually full in Huntingdon, Writtle, Saffron Walden, Lancaster, Stafford, Kendal, York, Farnham, Winchester, Romsey, Hastings, Arundel, Margate, Maidstone, Bury, Mildenhall, Cheltenham and Wells-next-the-Sea.[132] Newspapers remarked thus upon this high level of observance:

> A greater number of persons were present than are ever remembered to have attended on any former occasion, including a very large proportion of the labouring class.[133]
> [Mildenhall]
>
> [N]ever was more strictly kept any day set apart for religious observance … The two Churches, particularly the Old Parish Church, and all the other places of worship were literally crammed.[134]
> [Margate]
>
> [T]he church, spacious as it is, was not sufficient to accommodate the dense congregation.[135]
> [Saffron Walden]
>
> We have seldom seen [the Collegiate Church, Manchester] so crowded as it was on this day, particularly by the lower orders…[136]
>
> [A]ll the rural churches and chapels around [Kendal] were crowded to excess, exceeding the general attendance on the Sabbath day, and proving that a holy feeling still pervades the country…[137]

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[132] *Cambridge Chronicle*, 23 March 1832, 3; *Essex Standard*, 24 March 1832, 3; 31 March 1832, 3; *Lancaster Gazette*, 24 March 1832, 3; *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 24 March 1832, 4; *Westmorland Gazette*, 24 March 1832, 2; *Yorkshire Gazette*, 24 March 1832, 2; *Hampshire Chronicle*, 26 March 1832, 1; *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, 26 March 1832, 4; *Sussex Advertiser*, 26 March 1832, 3; 2 April 1832, 3; *Maidstone Journal*, 27 March 1832, 3-4; *Bury and Norwich Post*, 28 March 1832, 2; *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 29 March 1832, 3; *Norfolk Chronicle*, 31 March 1832, 3.
[133] *Bury and Norwich Post*, 28 March 1832, 2.
[134] *Maidstone Journal*, 27 March 1832, 3.
[135] *Essex Standard*, 31 March 1832, 3.
[136] *Manchester Courier*, 24 March 1832, 2.
[137] *Westmorland Gazette*, 31 March 1832, 2. On the fast day of 1832, see Williamson et al., *National Prayers*, 786-96.

If the Church could still muster substantial congregations, it did so in perpetual competition with dissenters. According to Field's estimates, dissenters accounted for 10% of the population of England and Wales in 1800, a share which had doubled by 1840.[138] Yet such growth was sporadic and many parishes were immune from it. In 1810, 74% of Hampshire parishes reported to the Bishop of Winchester that they had no dissenting meetings, while in 1821, 40% of Devon parishes reported to the Bishop of Exeter a complete absence of dissenters.[139] The picture was different in Cornwall and Derbyshire, where visitation returns show dissent to have been far more widespread.[140] By the 1830s, there were pockets of dissenting dominance. In the Lincolnshire hamlets of Lutton and Mavis Enderby, it was complained that clerical inattention had driven parishioners in great numbers to dissenting preachers.[141] The Vicar of Hope, Derbyshire, stated in 1835 that he could not recommend the raising of funds for the building of a church in Bradwell, which was 'not only the poorest, perhaps, but the most repugnant district of any in my Parish, to the Worship of the Established Church'. Were a church built, he did not expect 'a dozen of the Inhabitants would attend', the bulk having given 'a decided preference to their Sectarian Modes of Worship.'[142] In the same year, Newark was said to be 'such a nest of radicals & dissenters, as to have given for years past intolerable trouble to its incumbents.'[143]

However, inroads made by dissent were not necessarily decisive or irreversible. It was by no means guaranteed that dissenters could persuade the Anglican laity to be

[138] Field, 'Counting Religion', 711.
[139] Smith, *Surveys of the Church in Hampshire*, liii; M. Cook (ed.), *The Diocese of Exeter in 1821: Bishop Carey's Replies to Queries before Visitation* (2 vols., Torquay, 1958-60), II.
[140] Cook, *Diocese of Exeter in 1821*, I, xxi-xxiii; M. R. Austin, *The Church in Derbyshire in 1823-4: The Parochial Visitation of the Rev. Samuel Butler, Archdeacon of Derby in the Diocese of Lichfield and Coventry* (Derby, 1972), 21.
[141] Jonathan Gibbons to Kaye, 6 October 1832, in Ambler, *Parish Correspondence*, 190-91; 'Amicus' to Kaye, [February] 1833, in ibid., 193-4.
[142] Francis Orton to Francis Hodgson, 9 January 1835, 'Abstracts of the Returns relative to the state of Parishes with a view to Church Extension', c. 1835, Lichfield RO, D30/11/114, 'Hope'.
[143] Joshua Nussey to Corrie, 19 November 1835, StC, T/3/1/9/118.

their followers. Ernest Waller, curate of Bishop's Tachbrook in Warwickshire, was concerned in 1833 at the visits to his village on four successive Sundays of 'a set of misguided enthusiasts' who were 'falling down on the ground &c whenever the name of Christ is named, and using all such extravagant gestures.' But though these itinerant preachers had 'done what they could to draw away the people from the church', they had 'completely failed in getting any of the cottagers to lend them their cottage', and Waller did not expect them to return.[144] Failures to establish dissenting congregations were also reported in five Devon parishes in 1821.[145] At Alresford, Hampshire, the local inhabitants, possibly encouraged by their rector, bombarded dissenting meeting houses with stones and let sparrows loose in dissenting meetings.[146] Elsewhere, the clergy were winning back ground lost to dissent. In Blackburn, efforts were made to consecrate St Paul's Church, which had been founded by a renegade Anglican curate and had become part of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion. Its minister, John Price, supported by Whittaker, applied for it to become an Anglican church. Although Archbishop Manners-Sutton objected to this in 1822, the object was accomplished in 1830.[147] In 1835, Whittaker wrote of taking Bishop John Sumner to Mellor Brook to see 'a Dissenting chapel w[hic]h I have converted into a little church, & w[hic]h he has licensed for divine service.'[148]

Collective conversions from dissent to Anglicanism were often remarked upon towards the end of this period. Bishop Phillpotts alluded in a charge of 1833 to 'one signal instance, where an Independent minister, and almost the whole of his large

[144] Ernest Adolphus Waller to Thomas Wathen Waller, 27 September 1833, Warwickshire RO, CR0341/327/28.
[145] Cook, *Diocese of Exeter in 1821*, II, 23, 30, 56, 88, 179. Cf. Smith, *Surveys of the Church in Hampshire*, 100.
[146] Beecher, 'Keeping the Faith', 58-60.
[147] George Henry Law to John William Whittaker, 22 June 1822, WP(B); Manners-Sutton to John William Whittaker, 29 November 1822, ibid.; *Lancaster Gazette*, 2 January 1830, 3.
[148] John William Whittaker to Sarah Whittaker, 8 July 1835, WP(B). See also Lewis, *Middlemost and the Milltowns*, 154; Walker, 'Anglican Assertion in Lancashire', 87-8, 144.

congregation, have returned to the bosom of the Church'.[149] The following year, Bedford rector Henry Tattam reported that the holding of an evening service in St Paul's Church had 'very much thinned the meeting congregations'. The 'Independents' had retaliated by dividing Bedford into districts, each with 'two persons … to look after those who usually go to Meeting.' Deprecating the dissenters' 'violent and unholy conduct towards the Church', two 'most respectable individuals' had transferred their allegiance from dissent to the Church. Tattam hoped that the building of a chapel of ease would have the effect of further 'lessening the number of Dissenters'.[150] Similar tendencies were noticeable on a smaller scale in some rural parishes. At Colne in Huntingdonshire, where '[n]early all the people' were dissenters, curate John Davies increased the Anglican congregation from '5 or 6 adults' to '50 to 70' by means of an afternoon service, inducing some dissenters to attend.[151] The Vicar of Rothwell in Northamptonshire, Alan Macpherson, wrote in 1835 that 'the Meeting House have quarrelled with, and dismissed, their Minister, and there is such a division that great numbers are daily uniting themselves to the Church'.[152]

The Pastoral Office

It is clear that the clergy possessed an ability to draw large congregations, facilitate special observances and challenge dissent. Another indication of Anglican strength was the degree of clerical involvement in social life at a parish level. Though much has been written of the clergy's role as magistrates, five-sixths of clergymen were

[149] H. Phillpotts, *Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Exeter, by the Right Reverend Henry, Lord Bishop of Exeter, at his Primary Visitation, in the Months of August, September, and October, 1833* (London, 1833), 69-70.
[150] Henry Tattam to John Kaye, 24 February 1834, Lincolnshire Arch., DIOC/COR/B/5/7/2/7. Cf. Cook, *Diocese of Exeter in 1821*, II, 83.
[151] John Davies to Corrie, 11 November 1834, StC, T/3/1/8/139.
[152] Alan Macpherson to Corrie, 20 November 1835, StC, T/3/1/9/119.

not magistrates in 1831.[153] Their activities were far more varied than the recurrent image of the draconian clerical justice of the peace suggests. It was widely acknowledged that Sunday services formed only one aspect of clerical duties. As Bishop Bathurst wrote to Edward Daubeny, curate of Sapperton in Gloucestershire, in 1807, 'I need not say, to one so well disposed as you are, that the mere weekly duty is by no means the most important part of the Pastoral Office; I very much wish you to go occasionally "from House to House" for the purpose of inquiring into the Spiritual State of our Flock; and also into their situation as to worldly matters.'[154] Accordingly, clergymen were active in gathering information about their parishioners, helping to provide for their basic needs and intervening in affairs of local significance.

In 1826, when economic hardship brought rioting to Blackburn, Whittaker's friend Thomas Greenwood wrote to him that '[y]our curate Mr. Garnett called upon me the day before yesterday and gave me a very lively account of the state of the working classes; what they could earn, what they could live upon, their characters feelings & views of the cause of their present misery.'[155] Garnett's evident desire to understand the social group to which he was ministering was reflective of a broader concern among clergymen to be well informed about their flocks. In the parish of Stowe, Lichfield, this took the form of a private register kept by curate William Gresley in which he recorded the residence, age, number of children and occupation of parishioners, together with miscellaneous 'observations'. In the register were such

[153] E. J. Evans, 'Some Reasons for the Growth of English Rural Anticlericalism, c. 1750-c. 1830', *Past and Present*, 66 (1975), 101-4; Gilbert, *Religion and Society*, 80-81; P. Virgin, *The Church in an Age of Negligence: Ecclesiastical Structure and Problems of Church Reform 1700-1840* (Cambridge, 1989), 109-25; Austin, *Time of Unhappy Commotion*, 144-6.
[154] Henry Bathurst to Edward Daubeny, 12 December 1807, Norfolk RO, DCN/154/5/10. Cf. Sumner, *Charge*, 49-56; Henry Bathurst to James Bathurst, 11 December 1830, Norfolk RO, DCN/154/2/115.
[155] Thomas Greenwood to John William Whittaker, 5 May 1826, WP(B).

remarks as 'gets in debt', 'much out of employ', 'steady sober but poorly off', 'industrious', 'very drunken', 'can't work' and 'an old scoundrel'.[156]

Equipped with such comprehensive knowledge of and opinions on their parishioners, clergymen attempted to address the hardships brought about by economic or agricultural depression. As Howley told Whittaker upon hearing of crop failures in Lancashire in 1837, 'great distress is in general unfavorable to the interests both of Church & State, not to mention the misery entailed on individuals by the sum of their fortunes.'[157] Consequently, a primary concern of many clergymen was to mitigate 'distress' and poverty. In 1804, James Plumptre, curate of Hinxton in Cambridgeshire, distributed tickets for coal to the poor. He confided in his diary, 'Gave out Tickets. I found great reluctance at going with them, and wish to have put it off. *Duty* however made me go, and I experienced peculiar satisfaction in it.'[158] Similarly, the Chester curate George Pearson wrote in 1820 that he had 'but little time to myself' as he was distributing 'coals, potatoes &c' for labourers, among whom there was 'great distress for want of the common necessaries of life.'[159] At Faldingworth, Lincolnshire, rector John Robinson visited 'the Houses of my poor Parishioners' to 'learn from themselves whether Coals or Blankets would be most beneficial', relaying this information to local benefactor Earl Brownlow.[160]

By the mid-1820s, there was an acute consciousness among the clergy that any failure to respond fairly and sensitively to 'distress' needed to be avoided. When

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[156] 'Private Register of Stowe Parish', 1830, Lichfield RO, D29/2/1. See also the similar notes made by George Thomas, curate of East Ilsley in Berkshire, concerning his parishioners: K. Sanderson (ed.), *"A Drunken Worthless Creature": Notes on Parishioners, 1831* (East Ilsley, 2010).
[157] Howley to John William Whittaker, 27 April 1837, WP(C), 10/12.
[158] Diary of James Plumptre, 14 February 1804, 18 February 1804, 31 March 1804, 7 April 1804, CUL, MS Add 5835, f. 16, 22, 23.
[159] Pearson to John William Whittaker, 18 January 1820, WP(C), 12/4.
[160] John Robinson to Earl Brownlow, 28 January 1823, Lincolnshire Arch., BNLW/3/10/1/10/2. For further examples of the clergy providing coal for the poor, see Ernest Adolphus Waller to Thomas Wathen Waller, 16 December 1833, Warwickshire RO, CR0341/327/30; R. P. Butterfield (ed.), *Ordained in Powder: The Life and Times of Parson White of Crondall from his Diary* (Farnham, 1966), 34.

Blomfield visited Blackburn to consecrate a church in 1826, he advised Whittaker that he would not attend a celebratory dinner that had been planned:

> At a time when the great bulk of the population have barely enough to subsist upon, it is not well that they should see their more fortunate neighbours publicly feasting. We all know that no religious feeling is promoted by such entertainments; and a very obvious & natural remark will be, that the money spent at such a dinner, would have gone some way towards forming a clothing fund for the winter.[161]

Cambridge fellow and clergyman Richard Gwatkin, in sending Whittaker a donation for the relief of the Blackburn poor, expressed a hope that 'it will not be given to those who cap the Vicar the lowest, or who cry Church & King the loudest but to those who want it most.'[162] A letter from the King appealing for donations to assist the distressed in manufacturing districts was read in churches early in 1827, heightening Anglican charitable concern.[163] Sometimes such concern was taken to extremes. Lincolnshire clergyman John Rashdall dispensed half a crown, more than a full day's wage, to the farm labourers he visited.[164]

Yet the social role of the clergy was not confined to giving handouts. Often independently of their positions on parish vestries and the magistrates' bench, clergymen concerned themselves in hospitals, workhouses, schools, prisons, roads

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[161] Blomfield to John William Whittaker, 9 September 1826, WP(B).
[162] Richard Gwatkin to John William Whittaker, [1826], ibid.
[163] See e.g. John Lightfoot to C. N. Newdegate, 9 January 1827, Warwickshire RO, CR0136/B4402; W. Mandell, *A Sermon on behalf of the Distressed Manufacturers, preached in the Parish Church of Histon, Cambridgeshire, on the Afternoon of Sunday, Jan. 21 1827, being the Day appointed for that Purpose, in obedience to the King's Letter* (Cambridge, 1827), 1-2; J. H. Brown, *A Sermon, preached at Aycliffe, in the County of Durham, on Sunday, February 11th 1827, on occasion of His Majesty's Letter, authorising Collections to be made for the Relief of the Distressed Manufacturers* (Durham, 1827), 11-12; F. G. Crossman, *A Sermon preached in behalf of the Distressed Manufacturers, at Queen Square Chapel, Bath, on Sunday the 11th day of February, 1827* (Bath, 1827), 14-15.
[164] Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society*, 164-5. On the Anglican clergy's attitude to poverty throughout the nineteenth century, see K. A. Francis, 'Fundraising Theology? Anglican Charity Sermons and Nineteenth-century Social Causes' in M. D. Button and J. A. Sheetz-Nguyen (eds.), *Victorians and the Case for Charity: Essays on Responses to English Poverty by the State, the Church and the Literati* (Jefferson, NC, 2014), 94-120.

and numerous other aspects of English life. To convey the full extent and implications of such engagement would require a separate study, and so a few examples must suffice here.[165] James Plumptre had a particular interest in promoting medical care, and arranged for his parishioners to be inoculated against cowpox.[166] At Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, he was one of 21 clergymen who ministered at the hospital in weekly rotation.[167] In addressing patients leaving the hospital in 1804, he distributed papers 'to deliver to the Minister of your respective places of worship on Sunday next, and return public thanks to Almighty God for all the benefits he hath conferred upon you.' For Plumptre, the hospital served an important religious function: 'You have been accustomed in this house to daily prayer and thanksgiving, and to the reading [of] the scriptures and other religious books; let this good custom begun here, continue with you at your own homes for the remainder of your lives.'[168]

Besides such spiritual encouragement, clerical interventions could also take the form of stern admonition. John Skinner was incensed in 1823 when he discovered that a pauper in the Camerton workhouse 'had actually been left for ten days in his filth, so that maggots had bred in his flesh and eaten great holes in his body.'[169] He made arrangements for this pauper to be properly attended, and severely castigated the overseer Mr Hicks and his wife for their neglectful conduct.[170] But the pauper died a couple of days later, and the following Sunday Skinner preached a sermon on charity with Mr and Mrs Hicks present, hoping that they would 'apply to themselves

[165] Much of the groundwork for such a study has been laid in W. M. Jacob, *The Clerical Profession in the Long Eighteenth Century, 1680-1840* (Oxford, 2007), 203-35.
[166] Diary of Plumptre, 2 May 1805, 5 May 1805, 13 May 1805, 17 May 1805, 14 June 1805, CUL, MS Add 5836, f. 20, 22, 26.
[167] *The State of Addenbroke's Hospital in the Town of Cambridge, for the Year ending at Michaelmas 1806* (Cambridge, 1806), 2.
[168] James Plumptre, 'Address to the Patients on leaving the Hospital', 19 June 1804, CUL, MS Add 5865/1.
[169] Journal of Skinner, 6 November 1823, 250.
[170] Ibid., 7 November 1823, 251.

the general ideas contained in my discourse'.[171] Skinner made a further foray into local affairs when in 1825 he attended two meetings in Bath concerning the positioning of a new turnpike road. However, he was unimpressed by the gatherings: 'I do not feel satisfied in giving up my time to such nonsense; a whole morning is lost in hearing a pack of interested attorneys, I fear to very little purpose as far as regards the benefit to the community'.[172] By contrast, John Longe experienced satisfaction from his participation in such deliberations, writing in 1826, 'The new turnpike road from Coombs to the bridge [at Stowmarket], altered by my first suggestion to the trustees, is now completed, & open to the publick, & a great improvement.'[173]

Conclusion

In this chapter, two main arguments have been advanced: that there was a distinct normative Anglicanism which transcended partisan divides in the early nineteenth century and that this religious tradition garnered widespread support across England, despite the challenges of dissent and religious indifference. Though Anglicans did not all share the same approach or emphases in their faith, they nevertheless had a common identity based upon the tenets contained in the 39 Articles and the *Book of Common Prayer* as well as a belief in Providence and an adherence to the Royal Supremacy. This identity was consolidated in the face of perceived threats from a Calvinist minority, dissenters (principally Methodists and Unitarians) and Roman Catholics. Furthermore, it was maintained by the substantial sections of the population who went regularly or occasionally to church, the recurrence of national commemorations centred upon church services and the frequent ability of the clergy

[171] Ibid., 8-9 November 1823, 251-2. See also ibid., 16 August 1828, 367-8; 11 January 1831, 426-7; 25 January 1831, 427.
[172] Ibid., 1 January 1825, 276; 5 February 1825, 278.
[173] Diary of John Longe, 16 June 1826, in J. Longe, *The Diary of John Longe (1765-1834) Vicar of Coddenham*, ed. M. Stone (Woodbridge, 2008), 68. See also ibid., xlix-l.

to frustrate or reverse the inroads made by the dissenters. The resilience of Anglicanism allowed the clergy to perform significant pastoral and social roles in their communities.

The structure of the Church of England thus afforded the clergy a startling degree of agency. But this was easy to forget amid the highly polarised political debates of the period, in which anticlerical sentiment assumed prominence. By the early 1830s, it had become a commonplace that ominous clouds hung over the Church. Hence Phillpotts, in his first charge as Bishop of Exeter, complained of 'the gloom and darkness which hang over every institution which we have been wont to regard with pride, with affection, or with reverence; above all, over … the Church … That such *is* the general character of the present times needs, unhappily, no proof; nor shall I abuse your patience by attempting to prove it.' However, further inspection convinced him that this judgement was incorrect:

> Such was the impression under which I commenced my Visitation – but such … was not the impression under which I closed it. … I am bound to state that, so far as the feeling of the PEOPLE can be collected, from its manifestations in these two great counties [Devon and Cornwall], the Church has nothing to fear, and everything to hope, from the influence of that feeling, if fairly represented in Parliament … I am far from meaning to imply, that in the laity among us there is … blindness or indifference to any anomalies or imperfections in our existing institutions. All that I affirm is, that there is a strong and increasing attachment to the institutions themselves.[174]

This was a notable climb down on Phillpotts's part. His apparent discovery was that the Church retained vast reserves of popularity which would preserve it from danger if manifested in Parliament. The extent to which such hopes were justified, as well as the Church's role in political life more generally, will be explored in the next two chapters.

[174] Phillpotts, *Charge*, 5-6.

Chapter 2: The Bishops and High Politics

In March 1832, King William IV remarked to Lord Holland that Edward Harcourt, Archbishop of York, was 'an agreeable man to talk to and a "Statesman"'.[1] This royal compliment suggests that Harcourt was sufficiently versatile to meet the political demands of his office. As the last chapter has shown, the Church of England had an activist ethos, a popular following and an extensive social role. Additionally, during the early nineteenth century, bishops were increasingly called upon to play the part of the 'statesman' as much as that of the diocesan administrator. By virtue of their appointments, the 26 bishops of English and Welsh sees were lords spiritual with permanent seats in the House of Lords and full rights to speak and vote on legislation. Four benches to the right of the throne in the House of Lords were set aside for these bishops (together with four Irish bishops sitting in rotation), who were known collectively as 'the Bench'.[2] As such, the established church had strong representation in Parliament and a significant potential to influence the course of political debate, both publicly and privately. This remained the case despite the extraordinary growth of the House of Lords from 238 peers in 1783 to 433 in 1837.[3] As the volume of legislation touching upon Anglican interests substantially increased over the first decades of the nineteenth century, so too did the prominence of the bishops in the Parliament.[4]

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[1] Diary of Lord Holland, 15 March 1832, in A. D. Kriegel (ed.), *The Holland House Diaries 1831-1840* (London, 1977), 155.

[2] [J. Grant], *Random Recollections of the House of Lords, from the Year 1830 to 1836 including Personal Sketches of the Leading Members* (London, 1836), 5, 146, 292, 387, 393, 401, 403.

[3] A. S. Turberville, *The House of Lords in the Age of Reform 1784-1837* (London, 1958), 42-3.

[4] On the increase in specifically ecclesiastical legislation, see R. A. Burns, 'English "Church Reform" Revisited, 1780-1840' in idem. and J. Innes (eds.), *Rethinking the Age of Reform: Britain, 1780-1850* (Cambridge, 2003), 136-62; J. Innes, 'Parliament and Church Reform: Off and On the Agenda' in G. Pentland and M. T. Davis (eds.), *Liberty, Property and Popular Politics: England and Scotland, 1688-1815* (Edinburgh, 2016), 39-57. When this is coupled with the numerous debates concerning the position of dissenters and Roman Catholics which occurred during the early nineteenth century, it is clear that legislation

Since the 1950s, the basic framework within which most assessments of the early nineteenth-century Church of England's political position have been made has been the 'constitutional revolution' thesis originally posited by Geoffrey Best.[5] In its various permutations, the 'constitutional revolution' thesis relies on three basic assumptions: firstly, that prior to 1828 Parliament was essentially a homogenously Anglican body; secondly, that the legislation of 1828-32 removed the legal underpinnings of the Church of England's political dominance; and, thirdly, that the effect of these laws was to diminish the Church's political role. In historiographical terms, the effect of such assumptions has been the formation of a resilient image of a beleaguered church unable to exercise agency over high political life. As this chapter will suggest, this image is highly misleading.

In line with the 'constitutional revolution' thesis, historians have long adopted a dismissive or reductionist attitude to prelates' parliamentary contributions. In 1914, J. R. M. Butler wrote of the bench of 1831, 'That the bishops were Tory is hardly surprising, seeing there had been only one year of Whig government since 1783; the pity was, for their own sakes, that they mostly represented the reactionary or Eldonian type of Toryism, with an instinctive dread of any change, especially in the popular direction.'[6] Arthur Turberville did little to alter this judgement, characterising the bishops as 'an almost solid conservative block' motivated principally by 'fear of the influence of the French Revolution, fear that the Establishment was being undermined by those who preached reform and toleration.' The bench lacked 'persons of outstanding personality', while those like Bishop Burgess who advocated '[t]he extreme of Toryism' were 'simple-minded'.[7] A similarly condescending tone was evident in Richard Soloway's 1969 assessment of the bishops: 'Conservative, sometimes utterly reactionary, innovation and reform

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affecting Anglican interests was far higher on the parliamentary agenda than it had been during much of the eighteenth century.

[5] See above, 7-8.

[6] J. R. M. Butler, *The Passing of the Great Reform Bill* (London, 1914), 251. Cf. J. Clayton, *The Bishops as Legislators* (London, 1906).

[7] Turberville, *House of Lords*, 299-300, 303-5.

were, for many of them, horrid concepts, and for others, at best, a necessity.' They 'took pride' in the Church's backwardness 'until they realized that their ideas and policies were perhaps the dangerous vanities of a bygone age.'[8]

However, secondary literature has been more notable for overlooking than excoriating the bishops in their capacity as legislators. In 1941, W. R. Brock wrote of how 'in the early nineteenth century the Church was receding from politics.'[9] Edward Norman, writing in 1976, labouredly denied that the clergy were political actors, contending that the bishops in the House of Lords confined themselves to 'debates which they considered affected the interests of religion.'[10] The most recent history of the House of Lords in this period states that the bishops 'constituted a large and remarkably united voting bloc', but does little to substantiate this generalisation.[11] Nevertheless, interest in episcopal statesmanship has not been absent. David Large broke new ground in 1963 with a suggestion that there was 'a considerable change' in bishops' 'political behaviour during this period' and that, by the 1830s, most bishops were 'independents as far as politics were concerned'. But this bold claim was not supported by detailed evidence, Large averring that 'no single generalization really fits the whole bench in regard to its political behaviour.'[12] Two important recent biographies, Varley's of Bishop Van Mildert and Garrard's of Archbishop Howley, offer thorough narratives of some of the important political episodes in which these prelates played a part.[13] Yet the value of these

[8] R. A. Soloway, *Prelates and People: Ecclesiastical Social Thought in England, 1783-1852* (London, 1969), 18. Cf. G. I. T. Machin, *Politics and the Churches in Great Britain, 1832 to 1868* (Oxford, 1977), 24.
[9] W. R. Brock, *Lord Liverpool and Liberal Toryism* (Cambridge, 1941), 92.
[10] E. R. Norman, *Church and Society in England 1770-1970: A Historical Study* (Oxford, 1976), 72-3.
[11] R. W. Davis, *A Political History of the House of Lords, 1811-1846: From the Regency to Corn Law Repeal* (Stanford, CA, 2008), 103.
[12] D. Large, 'The Decline of "the Party of the Crown" and the Rise of Parties in the House of Lords, 1783-1837', *English Historical Review*, 78 (1963), 682-5.
[13] E. A. Varley, *The Last of the Prince Bishops: William Van Mildert and the High Church Movement of the Early Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1992), 95-100, 123-48, 180-90; J. R. Garrard, *Archbishop Howley, 1828-1848* (Farnham, 2015), 40-48. See also G. C. B. Davies, *Henry Phillpotts, Bishop of Exeter, 1778-1869* (London, 1954); J. C. Hanekamp, *An*

narratives is limited by their understandable focus on Van Mildert or Howley's individual perspectives, as opposed to those of the bishops collectively, and by a lack of analysis. The need for a comprehensive discussion of bishops' role in the House of Lords from the beginning of the nineteenth century to 1837 is therefore clear.

This chapter is intended to fill the lacuna identified using Hansard reports of parliamentary proceedings, various collections of correspondence and private journals. It presents the bishops as a distinctive political unit in the House of Lords, while taking account of their frequent divergence of opinion and approach. In its consideration of both Whig and Tory bishops, it also probes the common notion that episcopal politics was essentially reactionary and static. This analysis is pursued through a consideration of the political role of the bishops with regard to the various parties, public opinion and parliamentary oratory. By tracing the changes in bishops' political behaviour and interactions with prominent statesmen during this period, a far more complex picture of the Church's influence in Parliament emerges than has been presented by previous accounts. Above all, the assumptions that the bishops in the House of Lords were a mere obstruction or irrelevance in political life, and that the Church's high political role diminished in this period, are called into question.

The Client-Bishops

In investigating the nature of episcopal politics at the outset of the nineteenth century, there are few more revealing sources than Lord Grenville's correspondence. Grenville considered himself 'a most eager & decided friend' to the Church, and his correspondence reveals a profoundly Anglican sensibility.[14] At the time that he

Appeal for Justice: The Life of Dr. Henry Bathurst, Lord Bishop of Norwich, 1744-1837 (Utrecht, 1992); T. Park, *The Reform Bishops 1828-1840: A Biographical Study* (St Bees, 2016), 99-139.

[14] Lord Grenville to Edward Venables Vernon, 5 November 1809, Bodl., MS. Eng. d. 3862, f. 188; Grenville to William Howley, 19 October 1818, LPL, MS 2184, ff. 193-4; Grenville to Thomas Burgess, 3 December 1831, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 135, ff. 121-2; Grenville to William Howley, 29 October 1832, LPL, MS 2185, f. 98.

became Prime Minister in February 1806, he had five supporters on the episcopal bench: Henry Bathurst (Norwich), William Cleaver (Bangor), George Pretyman-Tomline (Lincoln), John Randolph (Oxford) and Edward Venables Vernon (Carlisle). By the end of his premiership in March 1807, Grenville had succeeded in securing the appointment of another supporter, Charles Moss, to the bishopric of Oxford as well as promoting Cleaver to St Asaph and Randolph to Bangor.[15] Grenville's connection with these clergymen originated, in most cases, during his time as an undergraduate at Christ Church, Oxford, from 1776 to 1780. Moss and Vernon were Christ Church contemporaries; Bathurst, the brother of Grenville's close friend Earl Bathurst, was at New College in the same period. Randolph had been Grenville's tutor at Oxford, while Cleaver was the tutor of Grenville's elder brother the Marquess of Buckingham.[16] Pretyman-Tomline was the tutor at Pembroke College, Cambridge, of Grenville's cousin, William Pitt, whose supporters Pretyman-Tomline attempted to bring into an alliance with Grenville following the deaths of Pitt and Charles James Fox.[17] Between Grenville and these bishops a relationship of dependency subsisted. The implicit understanding was that in return for loyalty in Parliament, Grenville would secure preferment and other favours for his clients if in office. Hence these men may be termed 'client-bishops'.[18]

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[15] J. J. Sack, *The Grenvillites 1801-29: Party Politics and Factionalism in the Age of Pitt and Liverpool* (Urbana, IL, 1979), 104-5, 132; P. Jupp, *Lord Grenville 1759-1834* (Oxford, 1985), 415; W. T. Gibson, 'The Election of Lord Grenville as Chancellor of Oxford University in 1809', *Oxoniensia*, 61 (1996), 357.

[16] Jupp, *Grenville*, 11-15; N. Aston, 'Bathurst, Henry' in D. Cannadine (ed.), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (online resource, 2005, last updated 2018) [http://www.oxforddnb.com]; R. Garnett, rev. M. Cragoe, 'Cleaver, William', in ibid.; N. Aston, 'Harcourt, Edward' in ibid.

[17] G. M. Ditchfield, 'Tomline, Sir George Pretyman' in ibid.; George Pretyman-Tomline to George Rose, 6 August 1806, BL, Add MS 42773, f. 52; Pretyman-Tomline to Rose, 10 August 1806, ibid., ff. 58-9; Pretyman-Tomline to Rose, 4 October 1806, ibid., ff. 66-7.

[18] This term appears hitherto to have been exclusively used by historians of the medieval period and of the Roman Catholic Church, with the sole exception of R. W. Greaves, 'Introduction' to T. Secker, *The Autobiography of Thomas Secker, Archbishop of Canterbury*, ed. J. S. Macauley and R. W. Greaves (Lawrence, KS, 1988), xv.

Much of Lord Grenville's correspondence with bishops during his premiership revolved around the distribution of proxies for voting in the House of Lords. Although bishops were only permitted to give their proxies to fellow lords spiritual, the management of these proxies was often informally in the hands of lords temporal.[19] Consultation concerning proxies was an important opportunity for a display of political loyalty. Vernon, who had declared his support for Grenville the day after Pitt's death, wrote to the new Prime Minister in late February 1806 that he was entrusting his proxy to Randolph 'under the persuasion, that he will give his support to your Lordship's Administration.' But 'in the event of any question which may render my *personal attendance* desirable' he would 'obey any Commands' that Grenville saw fit to give.[20] Grenville replied that he was 'fully persuaded' that Randolph would act in Parliament according to the wishes of Vernon, who promptly arranged for Randolph to have his proxy for an imminent division.[21] In December of the same year, the same process was repeated when Vernon's proxy was given by Grenville to Bathurst, who assured the premier that 'the Bishop of Carlisle's proxy cannot be entered in the name of any person, who, both from public and private motives, will be more ready to make use of it, in support of an Administration, of which L[or]d Grenville is at the head.'[22]

Despite such obsequiousness, the bishops were not free from other personal obligations, leading to conflicts of allegiance. For Pretyman-Tomline, an overriding concern was to honour the memory of the recently departed William Pitt. Thus when he agreed to send his proxy to Grenville in May 1806, it was with the proviso that

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[19] Lord Lansdowne to Henry Bathurst, 31 January 1821, in T. Thistlethwayte, *Memoirs and Correspondence of Dr. H. Bathurst, Lord Bishop of Norwich* (London, 1853), 327.
[20] Sack, *Grenvillites*, 105; Vernon to Grenville, 22 February [1806], BL, Add MS 59003, f. 164.
[21] Lord Grenville to Edward Venables Vernon, 27 February 1806, ibid., f. 166; Edward Venables Vernon to Lord Grenville, 2 March [1806], ibid., f. 167.
[22] Edward Venables Vernon to Lord Grenville, 23 December [1806], ibid., f. 169; Lord Grenville to Edward Venables Vernon, 23 December 1806, ibid., f. 171; Lord Grenville to Henry Bathurst, 26 December 1806, BL, Add MS 59002, f. 67; Bathurst to Lord Grenville, [c. December 1806], ibid., f. 68.

'my Proxy should not be given for the Repeal of any of Mr Pitt's measures.'[23] Grenville gave Pretyman-Tomline's proxy to Randolph with the assurance that its use would be 'restricted as you desire.'[24] Bathurst was constrained by his brother, Earl Bathurst, who had been instrumental in gaining him the bishopric of Norwich and opposed Grenville's measures for Catholic emancipation. Although Bishop Bathurst was strongly in favour of Catholic emancipation, he had qualms about opposing his brother in Parliament. In January 1807, the bishop wrote to the earl to ask if he had any objection to his giving his proxy to Grenville, to which Earl Bathurst replied that he did not.[25] But three months later, with Grenville out of power and Earl Bathurst in the Duke of Portland's cabinet, the position was different. Earl Bathurst expressed displeasure that his brother's proxy remained with Grenville.[26] Consequently, Bishop Bathurst requested permission from Grenville to transfer his proxy to Earl Bathurst.[27] Grenville accepted this, telling the bishop that he was among those 'whose good opinion gratifies me much more than their votes could.'[28]

For other bishops, such conflicts were generated not by personal obligations but rather by a conscientious opposition to Grenville's efforts to secure Catholic emancipation. When Grenville's ministry fell in March 1807 in consequence of George III's intransigence on the Catholic question, Vernon declared that he would still support Grenville except on Catholic emancipation.[29] Lord Stafford, Vernon's brother-in-law, introduced a motion in the House of Lords regretting the change of ministry and the pledge that the King had demanded of Grenville not to raise the Catholic question. Vernon wrote to Randolph, who had his proxy, telling him that he

[23] Pretyman-Tomline to Lord Grenville, 6 May 1806, BL, Add MS 59003, f. 66.
[24] Lord Grenville to Pretyman-Tomline, 8 May 1806, BL, ibid., f. 68.
[25] Earl Bathurst to Henry Bathurst, 7 January 1807, in Thistlethwayte, *Memoirs*, 153; Henry Bathurst to Grace Bathurst, 13 January 1807, in ibid., 154-5.
[26] Henry Bathurst to James Bathurst, 3 June 1807, Norfolk RO, DCN/154/2/6; Henry Bathurst to James Bathurst, 5 September 1808, Norfolk RO, DCN/154/2/9.
[27] Henry Bathurst to Lord Grenville, 8 April 1807, BL, Add MS 59002, ff. 72-3.
[28] Lord Grenville to Henry Bathurst, 12 April 1807, ibid., f. 74.
[29] Sack, *Grenvillites*, 105.

could not bring himself to join Stafford 'in approving the Conduct of the late Ministry in the proceedings which led to their dismissal' but that as 'it would be so painful to my feelings to vote against a motion brought forward by [Stafford], & in support of L[or]d Grenville … I must request you not to give my proxy on the occasion.'[30] Grenville and Stafford disapproved of this course, but Vernon felt he had no other option. The bishop told his son, 'if an Honest & Conscientious Support of L[or]d Grenville in his general Politics … cannot be accepted, unless I shall also support him in Measures which would, in my opinion, prove injurious to that Establishment of which I have been constituted a Guardian, I have only to lament that he should so far have mistaken my Character, as to form such a View of our Connection.' From this point, Vernon transferred his support to Portland, who secured his appointment as Archbishop of York later the same year.[31]

Vernon was not alone in his reservations about Grenville's position on Catholic emancipation. Bishop Moss told Grenville in 1808 that he could not consider this issue 'purely political' and that he intended to 'give a vote, w[hi]ch you will I fear not approve'. He could not avoid being an adherent of 'the old ways of thinking w[hi]ch characterise the Order into w[hi]ch I was born, tho' it remained for you to give me a formal admission to it.'[32] Despite such strains, the Grenville connection remained strong enough for his client-bishops to offer useful support in the chancellorship election of the University of Oxford in 1809, in which Grenville defeated the anti-emancipation government candidate Lord Eldon.[33] But the rewards for such exertions proved scant. Despite Grenville and Pretyman-Tomline's support, Vernon failed in two bids to become a governor of Charterhouse in 1810 and 1811, succeeding only on his third attempt in 1812.[34] Grenville was poised to appoint

[30] Edward Venables Vernon to John Randolph, 6 April [1807], Bodl., MS. Eng. d. 3864, f. 104; *Hansard*, 1st Series, IX, 351-2 (13 April 1807).
[31] Sack, *Grenvillites*, 105; Edward Venables Vernon to George Vernon, [1807], Bodl., MS. Eng. d. 3864, ff. 100-3; Edward Venables Vernon to George Vernon, [1807], ibid., ff. 106-7.
[32] Charles Moss to Lord Grenville, 5 February [1808], BL, Add MS 59002, ff. 139-40.
[33] Gibson, 'Election of Lord Grenville', 359-61.
[34] Lord Grenville to Pretyman-Tomline, [June 1810], BL, Add MS 59003, ff. 108-9; Pretyman-Tomline to Lord Grenville, 11 June 1810, ibid., f. 110; Pretyman-Tomline to Lord

Vernon's son George to a government position had he come into power at the beginning of the regency in 1811, but was unable to do anything more than acquaint the archbishop of his intention.[35] Bathurst had hoped to gain positions for his sons by giving Grenville his proxy in 1807, but the change of ministry precluded this.[36] In January 1811, he wrote excitedly of how 'Lord Grey will, I believe, be first Lord of the Treasury, Lord Grenville Secretary of State' and of other bishops' refusal to 'worship the Rising Sun.'[37] Such hopes being dashed, the Grenville faction rapidly became extinct. By 1815, Moss, Randolph and Cleaver were dead. Bathurst became a dedicated supporter of the Whig opposition, while Vernon and Pretyman-Tomline inclined towards Lord Liverpool's government.[38]

Lord Grenville's relationship with his client-bishops exemplifies both the conventions of episcopal politics at the beginning of the nineteenth century and the main factor which led to a transition away from such conventions. Grenville's bishops were a group of clergymen appointed through personal connections, and with a high sense of obligation to their patron. Their parliamentary actions were mainly determined by the wishes of Grenville, and as such prelates had little independence of political judgement. Up to a point, they were willing to surrender their independence in the hope of gaining favours for themselves or family members.

Grenville, 17 June 1810, ibid., f. 111; Lord Grenville to Earl of Chatham, 14 June 1810, in F. B. Bickley (ed.), *Report on the Manuscripts of J. B. Fortescue, Esq., preserved at Dropmore. Vol. X* (London, 1927), 42-3; Edward Venables Vernon to Lord Grenville, [June 1811], Add MS 59003, ff. 179-80; Edward Venables Vernon to Lord Grenville, [June 1811], ibid., ff. 181-2; *The Annual Biography and Obituary for the Year 1828* (London, 1828), 151; W. H. Brown, *Charterhouse Past and Present* (Godalming, 1879), 203.

[35] Thomas Grenville to Edward Venables Vernon, 4 February 1811, Bodl., MS. Eng. d. 3862, ff. 177-8.

[36] Henry Bathurst to James Bathurst, 3 June 1807, Norfolk RO, DCN/154/2/6.

[37] Henry Bathurst to Phil Williams, 18 January 1811, Norfolk RO, DCN/154/5/5.

[38] Pretyman-Tomline to Rose, 20 January 1815, BL, Add MS 42773, ff. 101-2; Pretyman-Tomline to Lord Liverpool, BL, Add MS 38280, f. 261; Edward Venables Vernon to Liverpool, 23 December [1817], Bodl., MS. Eng. d. 3863, f. 132; Charles Manners-Sutton to Liverpool, 28 November 1819, BL, Add MS 38281, f. 139. However, as late as 1819, Pretyman-Tomline requested Grenville to manage his proxy: Pretyman-Tomline to Lord Grenville, 7 June 1819, BL, Add MS 59003, f. 157. On Bathurst's Whiggism, see below, 91-3.

But the issue of Catholic emancipation proved disruptive to this mode of political behaviour. The Catholic question was a matter of conscience which superseded personal considerations. In refusing to back Grenville on Catholic emancipation, Vernon and Moss in particular exercised their political agency and pushed the boundaries of the client-bishop's role.

The client-bishop phenomenon was far from being confined to the followers of Grenville. Michael McCahill, in his study of the House of Lords between 1783 and 1806, identified six bishops who owed their position to royal influence and 19 who were attached to noble patrons. Seven prelates were practically inactive in Parliament, while a further six were 'genuinely independent'. Thus at least half of bishops at this time were in a position of dependence. As McCahill states, 'the most remarkable political feature of these men was their loyalty to their patrons.'[39] A letter from Vernon to Henry Addington following the latter's appointment as Prime Minister in 1801 shows the lengths to which such loyalty could go: 'If my attendance in Parliament on any question in which Ministry may take a particular interest, would be considered as a proof either of my personal respect for yourself, or of my attachment to your Administration, I beg leave to assure you, that I should obey with pleasure (notwithstanding the great inconvenience of so long a journey) any summons you might think proper to honor me with for that purpose'.[40] In 1804, Lord Ellenborough considered which bishops' proxies were at Addington's disposal. He told Lord Auckland that the proxies of the bishops of Rochester, Ely and Lichfield could 'easily be got, and the attendance of the Bishop of London procured.' Lord Abercorn could obtain his cousin-in-law the Bishop of Hereford's

[39] M. W. McCahill, *Order and Equipoise: The Peerage and the House of Lords, 1783-1806* (London, 1978), 162. See also F. C. Mather, *High Church Prophet: Bishop Samuel Horsley (1733–1806) and the Caroline Tradition in the Later Georgian Church* (Oxford, 1992), 220-26.

[40] Edward Venables Vernon to Henry Addington, 21 October 1801, Devon Heritage Centre, 152M/C1801/OZ86.

proxy, while the Bishop of Peterborough's could be 'withdrawn' at the request of his brother-in-law, Lord Cornwallis.[41]

To a limited degree, the monarchy represented a further focus for personal political allegiance which could determine bishops' activities in Parliament. As Grayson Ditchfield has argued, George III displayed a devotion to Anglicanism and took a strong interest in his responsibilities as Supreme Governor of the Church. Though parity between Oxford and Cambridge and theological orthodoxy were perhaps the King's chief concerns in making appointments, he nevertheless on occasion appointed bishops 'with one eye on political support in the House of Lords.'[42] Such political appointments were essentially made at the behest of Pitt, who told Bishop Pretyman-Tomline that '[a] Bishop is always something gained.'[43]

The dependence of bishops on patrons and the monarch coincided with a general inactivity in Parliament. For much of the first decade of the nineteenth century, bishops' contributions to the proceedings of the House of Lords were infrequent and uncoordinated. Despite having many important discussions in private with Pitt and Grenville, Bishop Pretyman-Tomline hardly ever spoke in Parliament.[44] By contrast, Samuel Horsley, successively Bishop of Rochester and St Asaph, made frequent and forthright contributions to parliamentary debate from the mid-1790s until his death in 1806.[45] But Horsley was the exception, not the rule. Between 1800 and 1809, each volume of parliamentary proceedings records six remarks from bishops on average, with three of these volumes wholly devoid of bishops' speeches.[46]

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[41] Lord Ellenborough to Lord Auckland, 20 April 1804, in J. E. Eden (Baron Auckland) (ed.), *The Journal and Correspondence of William, Lord Auckland* (4 vols., London, 1862), IV, 193.
[42] G. M. Ditchfield, *George III: An Essay in Monarchy* (Basingstoke, 2002), 77-100.
[43] William Pitt to Pretyman-Tomline, [?1805], quoted in ibid., 90.
[44] G. M. Ditchfield, 'Sir George Pretyman-Tomline: Ecclesiastical Politician and Theological Polemicist' in W. T. Gibson and R. G. Ingram (eds.), *Religious Identities in Britain 1660-1832* (Aldershot, 2005), 297.
[45] Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 226-49. See S. Horsley, *The Speeches in Parliament of Samuel Horsley, LL.D F.R.S. F.A.S. Late Lord Bishop of St Asaph* (Dundee, 1813).
[46] *The Parliamentary History of England, from the Earliest Period to the Year 1803* (36 vols., London, 1806-20), XXXV-XXXVI; *Hansard*, 1st Series, I-XIV.

Bishop Randolph's letters to his brother-in-law Thomas Lambard shed much light on the little that did occur in Parliament. In around December 1803, Randolph reported that a bill concerning curates had 'just made its appearance, & there is scarcely a Bishop in town to watch over its progress.'[47] In March 1804, he stated, 'The Curate's bill is asleep, I think.' The bishops were again absent or 'inactive', due to the indolence of the Archbishop of Canterbury, John Moore. Randolph complained that 'in truth we are without an head.' Moore was 'well & chearful [sic] in common conversation, but for business as little of it as he can help is the order of the day. He is indeed I believe, quite unequal to it.'[48] Randolph's main priority in Parliament was to bring in a bill to repeal a statute which prohibited Oxford and Cambridge colleges from purchasing advowsons. He wrote to Lambard of being 'kept prisoner by this little bill' over the Easter of 1804. Randolph further stated: 'You flatter me, when you talk of my being an efficient member. We are sadly off at present, & in that dearth I am just better than nothing.'[49] Due to various delays, the bill was not properly discussed in the House of Lords until over a year later, when Randolph remarked on the spectacle of Lord Grenville 'detached from politicks & party' supporting him.[50] Eventually, in July 1805, Randolph was enabled to report that his bill had 'pass'd into an immortal law'.[51] In a similar vein, Brownlow North, Bishop of Winchester, wrote to the Earl of Malmesbury in 1809 of how he was 'very anxious to obtain a Committee in the House of Commons on a bill relating to my Episcopal Property at Gosport', asking Malmesbury to encourage 'our Hampshire Friends' to attend this committee.[52]

Yet, by this time, episcopal politics was beginning to encompass less parochial concerns under the influence of the new Archbishop of Canterbury, the royal favourite Charles Manners-Sutton. Translated from Norwich at George III's behest

[47] Randolph to Thomas Lambard, [c. December 1803], Bodl., MS. Top. Oxon. d. 355, f. 90.
[48] Randolph to Lambard, 1 March 1804, ibid., ff. 111-2.
[49] Randolph to Lambard, 25 March 1804, ibid., ff. 113-4.
[50] Randolph to Lambard, 3 May 1805, Bodl., MS. Top. Oxon. d. 356, f. 11.
[51] Randolph to Lambard, 15 July 1805, ibid., f. 15.
[52] Brownlow North to Earl of Malmesbury, 2 May 1809, Hampshire RO, 9M73/190/222.

upon Moore's death in 1805, Manners-Sutton was independent both of William Pitt (who had desired to promote Pretyman-Tomline) and Lord Grenville.[53] Unlike the client-bishops, Manners-Sutton was wary of holding proxies. He declined 'taking Proxies, at any time, unless when there is not a sufficient number of Bishops in town to take them.'[54] Manners-Sutton was also less reticent about speaking out in the House of Lords. He made a bold speech against Catholic emancipation, and was equally testy when, in the mutiny bill of 1807, Grenville proposed full toleration for Roman Catholics and dissenters within the Army.[55] The archbishop told Moss that he objected to 'extending the benefit of the new Clauses to the Dissenters, considering it as repealing so much of the Test Act as concerns the Army' and to 'tacking a measure of so much importance to the Mutiny Bill.'[56]

Manners-Sutton responded to such measures by attempting to coordinate and conciliate the bishops in Parliament. During the political crisis of March 1807, he toyed with the idea of convening an extraordinary bishops' meeting, telling Moss that 'his chief motive for calling it was to avoid giving offence to some of the Bishops, who w[oul]d wish to be consulted.' A summons was sent, but this was soon followed by 'notices … that circumstances made it unnecessary to trouble us at present.'[57] However, at the bishops' customary Easter Tuesday dinner at Lambeth in 1808, a bill concerning curates was, in Randolph's words, 'laid before us … & in some points much objected to & the Archb[isho]p & myself have since gone over the whole & sent out amendments to Mr Perceval'.[58] The Easter Tuesday dinner at Lambeth had been a tradition since at least the early eighteenth century, and had on occasion been used to discuss political matters, but under Manners-Sutton it became

[53] W. M. Jacob, 'Sutton, Charles Manners-' in Cannadine, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.
[54] Moss to Lord Grenville, 27 January 1807, BL, Add MS 59002, f. 117.
[55] *Hansard*, 1st Series, IV, 775-8 (13 May 1805).
[56] Moss to Lord Grenville, 2 March 1807, BL, Add MS 59002, f. 127.
[57] Moss to Lord Grenville, 14 March 1807, ibid., f. 129.
[58] Randolph to Lambard, 26 April 1808, Bodl., MS. Top. Oxon. d. 356, f. 90.

more consistently a forum for discussing the political tactics of the bench.[59] In 1821, the Cambridge fellow Miles Bland described it as 'the Conclave of Bishops'.[60]

In May 1808, a parliamentary debate on a petition for Catholic emancipation presented by Lord Grenville was the occasion for a display of episcopal resistance. Bishop Bathurst gave a lengthy maiden speech in support of the petition, during which the opponents of Emancipation considered how to respond. Randolph told Lambard, 'when Bathurst got up with his nonsense & candour Lord H[awkesbury] ask'd me whether any B[isho]p would answer him.' Randolph concurred with Hawkesbury 'that it would not be right that the only speaker from the bench should be on the wrong side, &, as I did not foresee that any one else was likely, offer'd my services'. However, '[m]ean time from the other end of the bench the Archb[isho]p of C[anterbury] for the same reason had persuaded his brother Archb[isho]p to put himself forward.' Vernon therefore spoke in opposition to Bathurst, before Randolph reviewed 'the tenets of the Catholics as to confession, absolution, excommunication, foreign jurisdiction, &c. and maintained, that … their notions on these points were still highly exceptionable', quoting 'some passages from publications of their own to prove this'. Randolph's speech was 'well receiv'd by all but the violent on the other side.' Over tea afterwards, Manners-Sutton congratulated Randolph for having 'gone to the bottom of the question' and thereby 'completely whack'd my adversary heel over head.'[61] The combative response of these bishops to Grenville's petition was all the more remarkable as both Vernon and Randolph had been among his most regular supporters. But, with impetus from Manners-Sutton and Lord Liverpool (as Hawkesbury was known after 1808), bishops' participation in Parliament was

[59] A. C. Ducarel, *The History and Antiquities of the Archiepiscopal Palace of Lambeth from its Foundation to the Present Time* (London, 1785), Appendix, 72; J. Gregory, *Restoration, Reformation and Reform, 1660-1828: Archbishops of Canterbury and their Diocese* (Oxford, 2000), 34.
[60] Miles Bland to John William Whittaker, 24 April 1821, WP(C), 6/11.
[61] Randolph to Lambard, 29 May 1808, Bodl., MS. Top. Oxon. d. 356, ff. 91-2; *Hansard*, 1st Series, XI, 675-82 (27 May 1808).

entering a new and more independent phase. The contours of this new mode of politics, as it obtained until 1837, will be discussed in the remainder of this chapter.

Bishops and Party until 1832

During the period from the appointment of Spencer Perceval as Prime Minister in 1809 to the Reform Act of 1832, the majority of bishops displayed broadly Tory sympathies in Parliament. But this Tory majority on the bench did not consider themselves to be party operators, and were ready at any moment to dissent from the policies of Tory administrations when they considered these to be against the interests of the established church. Additionally, there was a small minority of bishops who aligned themselves with the Whig party. After 1809, successive administrations had to contend with a bench that was more active in the House of Lords, more willing to scrutinise legislation and more independent in its voting. In this section, the implications of such developments prior to the Reform Act are considered; a discussion of changes which occurred after the shift of 1832 follows.

It must again be recalled that the ultimate legislative authority in church and state lay with the monarch. Kings remained significant political actors with a constitutionally prescribed duty to uphold the Church's interests in the political arena. George III, George IV and William IV were all pious Anglicans who took their duties under the coronation oath very seriously, and proved obstructive when legislation appeared to violate that oath. This had the effect of delaying Catholic emancipation and hindering Whig ecclesiastical reforms.[62] The Anglican piety of George III was appreciated even by Bishop Bathurst, whose position on the Catholic question barred him from royal favour. In 1806, he wrote to his son of how the King had made a declaration of thankfulness to Providence 'which I believe you will agree with me in thinking more truly eloquent, and affecting, than most things you have

[62] Ditchfield, *George III*, 78-89, 102-3; N. A. Dixon, 'Church and Monarchy in England, 1811-1837' (unpublished MPhil thesis, University of Cambridge, 2015), 34-47, 63-77.

ever read.'[63] However, George IV was much less impressive to Bathurst, who believed that on Catholic emancipation, Lady Conyngham had 'made a Convert of Him; but He has not manliness enough, to speak fairly out.'[64] This supposition proved incorrect, and to Bishop Burgess, George IV represented a significant hope for the defeat of Catholic emancipation. Writing to the Duke of Wellington, Burgess predicted, again incorrectly, that if emancipation passed, the King would veto it 'when he recollects his august father's sentiments and example and bears in mind his own coronation oath and his entire concurrence with his father's principles'.[65]

Despite usually accepting the advice of their Prime Ministers, monarchs also retained a significant influence over episcopal appointments. Opposition to Catholic emancipation, adherence to 'Orthodox' Anglicanism and personal qualities were principal desiderata for George IV when sanctioning the appointment of bishops.[66] Among these criteria, personal qualities were increasingly prioritised on account of the new approach to episcopal appointments employed by Spencer Perceval and Liverpool. As Edward Hicks and William Gibson have shown, these premiers increasingly dispensed preferment on the basis of learning and merit as opposed to family or party considerations.[67] Typical of this new generation of bishops was William Howley, a vicar's son from Hampshire who was promoted from Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford to Bishop of London in 1813. The previous year, Howley had told his friend Lord Aberdeen that, while on board a ship, he was consoled by 'the reflection that whatever may happen I am in no way answerable for it: a consideration which has some influence on my political feelings, and makes me look on Majorities and Minorities with a degree of philosophical calmness, which I certainly should not possess if I had any share in managing the concerns of the state.'

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[63] Henry Bathurst to James Bathurst, 16 January 1806, Norfolk RO, DCN/154/2/1.
[64] Henry Bathurst to James Bathurst, 20 March 1821, Norfolk RO, DCN/154/2/70.
[65] Burgess to Wellington, 16 March 1829, in DCM, V, 529.
[66] Dixon, 'Church and Monarchy', 63-8.
[67] W. T. Gibson, 'The Tories and Church Patronage: 1812-1830', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 41 (1990), 266-74; E. Hicks, '"Christianity Personified": Perceval and Pittism' (unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2018), 71-92.

He also expressed a hope that any 'disturbances' would be 'quelled by a combination of all respectable persons, whatever their party may be.'[68] Howley's promotion to the bench did not alter his fundamentally detached attitude to politics. In 1831, as Archbishop of Canterbury at the height of the Reform crisis, he wrote of his 'dislike of politics' and desire for 'an union of men of all parties' to frame a moderate measure of parliamentary reform.[69]

Yet if Howley did not relish party politics for its own sake, he was an integral part of a bench that was becoming better attuned to the ways in which Parliament could be used as a positive agent of the clergy's interests than the client-bishops. Shortly after his appointment, Howley wrote to William Jackson, Moss's successor as Bishop of Oxford, regarding his hopes for a bill to indemnify clergy who had inadvertently become liable for penalties attaching to non-residence. Howley related that Bishop Law of Chester had 'mentioned the subject in my opinion rather prematurely to L[or]d Liverpool … at Carlton House.' Howley then explained the matter to Liverpool, 'who had no doubt about the propriety of extending relief, where the substance of the Act [against non-residence] had been complied with, and the parties were liable to penalties only from inattention to forms.'[70] Manners-Sutton took the matter in hand, writing to Sidmouth that clergy in three dioceses were 'in great jeopardy' from the risk of prosecution and proposing to bring an indemnity bill forward in the House of Lords 'under [the] sanction of Government'.[71] This the archbishop did successfully in November 1813.[72] Anticipating an expiration of the indemnity in February 1814, Manners-Sutton told Jackson that he was 'full of difficulty as to [the] indemnity bill', a sketch of which was to be submitted 'to [the]

[68] William Howley to Lord Aberdeen, 5 May 1812, BL, Add MS 43195, ff. 15-16.
[69] William Howley to Aberdeen, 22 November 1831, ibid., f. 75; *Hansard*, 3rd Series, VIII, 303 (7 October 1831).
[70] William Howley to William Jackson, 6 November 1813, Oxfordshire History Centre, MS. Oxf. Dioc. Papers c. 661, ff. 25-6.
[71] Manners-Sutton to Lord Sidmouth, 7 November 1813, Devon Heritage Centre, 152M/C1813/OE.
[72] *Hansard*, 1st Series, XXVII, 173 (22 November 1813), 193-4 (24 November 1813), 198-9 (26 November 1813); 54 Geo. 3, c. 6.

consideration of the Bishops'.[73] Nevertheless, two further indemnity bills passed, affording additional reprieves to non-resident clergy.[74]

In 1815, Manners-Sutton told Liverpool that '[t]he Bishops are strongly impressed with an opinion that it would be highly useful to embody & consolidate in one Statute, [the] various provisions' regarding clerical discipline. A committee was being formed for this, and he was 'desired by [the] Bishops to request your Lordship's authority to apply to Mr Harrison for assistance in framing [the] Bill, when we shall have agreed upon [the] substance of it.'[75] This initiative, again supported by Liverpool's administration, resulted in the Clergy Residence Act of 1817.[76] A close alliance between the bishops and the Prime Minister had been established, in which the legislative initiative now often came from the Church. Accordingly, parliamentary division lists from the Regency period display an alignment between the Tory majority of bishops and Liverpool. This was especially noticeable with regard to Catholic emancipation, which Liverpool opposed although this was an 'open question' in his cabinet.[77] A clear majority of bishops (26-2 in 1817) voted against Catholic emancipation proposals alongside Liverpool.[78]

The high point of this alliance was the act granting a million pounds for the building of new churches.[79] In March 1818, Manners-Sutton wrote to the premier that he would consult the bishops concerning this legislation, and that '[t]he Church & Country' were 'indebted' to him for the measure, returning his 'sincerest thanks'.[80] Such was the closeness of bench and government that Liverpool exercised

[73] Manners-Sutton to Jackson, 9 February 1814, Oxfordshire History Centre, MS. Oxf. Dioc. Papers c. 661, f. 100.
[74] 54 Geo. 3, c. 44, 54.
[75] Manners-Sutton to Liverpool, 11 February 1815, BL, Add MS 38261, f. 65.
[76] *Hansard*, 1st Series, XXXVI, 1277 (1 July 1817); 57 Geo. 3, c. 99.
[77] Davis, *House of Lords*, 49-50.
[78] *Hansard*, 1st Series, XVIII, 747-8 (4 January 1811), 1027-9 (25 January 1811); XXIII, 868-71 (1 July 1812); XXV, 526-7 (2 April 1813); XXXVI, 678-80 (16 May 1817); XL, 448-50 (17 May 1819).
[79] On the passage of this act, see M. H. Port, *600 New Churches: The Church Building Commission 1818-1856* (2nd edn, Reading, 2006), 37-43.
[80] Manners-Sutton to Liverpool, 20 March 1818, BL, Add MS 61818, f. 70.

some oversight of bishops' proxies by this time. In November 1819, Manners-Sutton was suffering from a cold, and wrote to Liverpool that he hoped 'to prevail upon [the] Bishop of London to take my proxy.' He further stated: 'The A[rch]Bishop of York's, I fear, must be suspended, untill [sic] you can place it in more efficient hands than mine.'[81] The following year, Liverpool asked Bishop Pelham to send his proxy for a vote during the 'trial' of Queen Caroline after Pelham told him that he was unable to attend.[82] However, the subservience of Pelham, a regular diner at the Brighton Pavilion and continual office-seeker, was atypical.[83] As a whole, the Queen Caroline Affair represented a major breach between the bishops and Liverpool's administration.

This rupture, which undermined the alliance of equals that had existed between bench and government during the previous decade, resulted from episcopal scruples about the rectitude of George IV's proposed divorce from Queen Caroline.[84] In Howley's view, sitting in judgement on the Queen was 'a duty as painful in every respect as ever was imposed on Parliament.'[85] Bishop Bathurst absented himself and was of the opinion that the rest of the bench should do likewise: 'The attendance of the Bishops, would have been dispensed with, had they requested it; and when they saw, what turn the examination was likely to take, they might easily have pleaded their professional duties, in their respective Dioceses, as a reason for wishing to be in the Country.'[86] But 13 bishops decided not to have recourse to such excuses. Among

[81] Manners-Sutton to Liverpool, 28 November 1819, BL, Add MS 38281, f. 139.
[82] Liverpool to George Pelham, 7 November 1820, BL, Add MS 38323, f. 104.
[83] Joseph Jekyll to Lady Stanley, 13 January 1818, in A. Bourke (ed.), *Correspondence of Mr. Joseph Jekyll with his sister-in-law Lady Gertrude Sloane Stanley, 1818-1838* (London, 1894), 67; George Pelham to Liverpool, 29 July 1813, BL, Add MS 38253, f. 342; Pelham to George IV, 9 May 1825, BL, Add MS 38300, f. 60; Pelham to Liverpool, 9 May 1825, ibid., f. 61; Liverpool to Pelham, 10 May 1825, ibid., f. 63; Pelham to Liverpool, 10 May 1825, ibid., ff. 64-5; Pelham to George IV, 6 March 1826, BL, Add MS 38301, f. 108; Liverpool to Pelham, 13 March 1826, ibid., f. 116.
[84] On the Queen Caroline Affair, see R. Fulford, *The Trial of Queen Caroline* (London, 1967); T. W. Laqueur, 'The Queen Caroline Affair: Politics as Art in the Reign of George IV', *Journal of Modern History*, 54 (1982), 417-66; Dixon, 'Church and Monarchy', 49-52.
[85] William Howley to Thomas Grenville, 16 August 1820, BL, Add MS 41859, f. 9.
[86] Henry Bathurst to James Bathurst, 22 October 1820, Norfolk RO, DCN/154/2/69

them was Bowyer Sparke, Bishop of Ely, who considered himself 'under the necessity' of holding an ordination at his London townhouse '[i]n consequence of the proceedings in the House of Lords'.[87]

The bishops assumed prominence at the 'trial' when the divorce clause of the bill depriving Caroline of her rights as queen was discussed. Bishops Vernon, Law, Cornewall, Marsh and Ryder all expressed strong moral and religious objections to this clause. By contrast, Manners-Sutton, Howley and Bishop Van Mildert of Llandaff all defended the clause on the basis that proof of adultery was a reasonable ground for divorce in Christian teaching. But ten bishops voted against the clause.[88] In a pattern often repeated throughout the 1820s and 1830s, the bishops' votes became erratic and unpredictable. As Holland noted, '[w]ith the exception of the Archbishop of York they all voted for the second reading of a bill which contained a clause that four of them professed afterwards to consider as inconsistent with the doctrines of religion, & of those who expressed these strong scruples one deprived Her Majesty of the benefit of them by walking away & the other overcame them so entirely as to vote for the third reading of the bill.'[89] Nine bishops voted for the third reading of the bill, while three voted against.[90]

The upshot of the Queen Caroline Affair was that the bishops were now an unknown political quantity. Ministers could no longer depend on the bench to do their bidding or refrain from criticism. Bishops' adherence to a rigid view of marriage continued to be a sticking point throughout the early 1820s. In 1822, proposals were brought forward in the House of Lords to amend Hardwick's Marriage Act of 1754 so that marriages between minors where parental consent had not been given could be annulled. Both archbishops initially resisted this on the basis

[87] Bowyer Sparke to Whittaker, 8 November 1820, WP(C), 14/9.
[88] *Hansard*, 2nd Series, III, 1709-11 (7 November 1820), 1719, 1726 (8 November 1820), 1743 (10 November 1820).
[89] Holland to Henry Bathurst, 11 November [1820], Norfolk RO, DCN/154/11/5. It was Bishop Law of Chester who abstained: *Hansard*, 2nd Series, III, 1741-2 (10 November 1820). Van Mildert, Marsh and Cornewall were the bishops who voted for the third reading despite expressing opposition to the divorce clause: ibid., 1744 (10 November 1820).
[90] *Hansard*, 2nd Series, III, 1744-6 (10 November 1820).

that marriages once solemnised were indissoluble.[91] But by 1823, Manners-Sutton had come to accept a clause stipulating that marriages between minors could be annulled within a year of being solemnised. However, Vernon and Law maintained a strong opposition to the clause, which did not pass.[92] The project of amending the Marriage Act raised the question of the extent to which separate arrangements should exist in law for dissenters. Lord Liverpool suggested that, in the case of dissenters marrying in an Anglican church, 'a certain portion of the service might be omitted, if the church did not object to it.' This excited in Manners-Sutton 'considerable alarm' and a forthright response: 'It was, he believed, the first proposition ever made in that House to alter the liturgy of the established church. And for what purpose? For the purpose of accommodating those who were not of the Church of England – to accommodate sects who founded their faith and religious belief on private and unlearned interpretations of the Scriptures.'[93]

However, bishops could just as readily throw their weight behind moderate Tory reforms. The sacramental tests for office-holding imposed in the seventeenth century did not satisfy the majority of Anglicans, who had come to consider this a profanation of the Anglican communion service.[94] Hence when Home Secretary Robert Peel, a noted 'friend' to the Church, proposed replacing sacramental tests with a positive declaration that an office-holder would not harm Anglican interests in 1828, the bishops were receptive. Peel's closest confidante on the bench was his former college tutor, Charles Lloyd, Bishop of Oxford, who, in placing his vote at Peel's disposal, remarked, 'For public Life, excepted as connected with *you*, I do not

[91] *Hansard*, 2nd Series, VII, 1143-4 (19 June 1822).
[92] *Hansard*, 2nd Series, IX, 540-42 (27 May 1823), 651-3, 658, 664 (3 June 1823).
[93] Ibid., 969-71 (12 June 1823).
[94] Charles Lloyd to Robert Peel, 2 March 1828, BL, Add MS 40343, f. 189; Lloyd to Peel, 23 March 1828, ibid., f. 247. The Corporation Act of 1661 stipulated that members of English corporations had to receive Anglican communion, while the Test Act of 1673 imposed the same requirement on holders of civil and military offices under the Crown: 13 Cha. 2, c. 1; 25 Cha. 2, c. 2. However, sporadically from 1726 and annually from 1757, Parliament passed indemnity acts which abrogated the sacramental tests of both acts: K. R. M. Short, 'The English Indemnity Acts 1726-1867', *Church History*, 42 (1973), 366-76.

care a farthing'.[95] When it came to the bench at large, Lloyd was clear that the government could not compel bishops as a bloc to vote in a particular way: 'In what way can they make a notification to the Bishops that they wish them either to vote for the Repeal or not to vote at all? And suppose such a notification made to the B[isho]ps, w[oul]d it not be dishonorable in the Bishops to accede to the proposal?'[96] Hence Peel made efforts to ascertain the views of seven prelates, before meeting with six at Lambeth Palace, where, as he reported to Lloyd, '[w]e settled a declaration'.[97] In contrast to the Easter Tuesday dinners, this was, in Bishop Copleston's words, 'a small meeting by the archbishop's invitation', and several days later it was followed by a '[f]ull meeting of Bishops on the Sacramental Test.'[98] According to Bishop Blomfield, the resulting Sacramental Test Act was 'strictly and literally a measure of the Bishops.'[99]

The support of the bishops for repeal antagonised ultra-Tories such as Lord Eldon and the Duke of Newcastle, who had hitherto allied themselves with the bishops on many questions. According to Lloyd, Van Mildert was 'manifestly alarmed lest the Bishops should be accused of truckling' as 'two or three members of the H[ouse] of L[ords] had said to him "So I hear you have deserted us" & had added "I am sorry you should have left us to fight the battle without you."'[100] Blomfield attracted the ire of Eldon by accusing him of inconsistency in proposing to exempt certain dissenters from the declaration. Eldon stated that he 'would recommend the right rev. prelate to attend to his own consistency rather than to be talking about that of

[95] Lloyd to Peel, 6 January 1828, BL, Add MS 40343, f. 108.
[96] Lloyd to Peel, 2 March 1828, ibid., f. 190.
[97] Peel to Lloyd, 15 March 1828, ibid., f. 212.
[98] Diary of Edward Copleston, 15 March 1828, 21 March 1828, in W. J. Copleston, *Memoir of Edward Copleston, D.D. Bishop of Llandaff, with Selections from his Diary and Correspondence, etc.* (London, 1851), 123.
[99] Charles James Blomfield to James Henry Monk, 22 April 1828, in A. Blomfield (ed.), *A Memoir of Charles James Blomfield, D.D., Bishop of London, with Selections from his Correspondence* (2 vols., London, 1863), I, 138. On the bishops' role in the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, see R. A. Gaunt, 'Peel's Other Repeal: The Test and Corporation Acts, 1828', *Parliamentary History*, 33 (2014), 253-7.
[100] Lloyd to Peel, 21 March 1828, BL, Add MS 40343, f. 240.

others'. Blomfield responded by advising Eldon 'to found his reasonings upon something more tangible and more to the purpose' than a hypothetical question he had posed. Eldon had the last word, expressing his hope that 'the reverend prelate would abstain from thus gratuitously tendering his advice'.[101] This stormy encounter confirmed the bench's independence from the ultras.[102]

The events of 1829 sealed episcopal independence from the government in Parliament. Wellington and Peel's pragmatic advocacy of a bill to repeal the Test Act of 1678, which excluded Catholics from Parliament, alienated over half of the bishops, who had expended much effort in obstructing such proposals since the beginning of the century. Like Peel, Wellington had acquired a reputation as a defender of the Church, and told Phillpotts that he should 'infinitely prefer to maintain all the foundations on which the Church of England was originally placed'.[103] Anticipating episcopal opposition, Wellington held private meetings with Bishop Sumner of Winchester, Lloyd and Howley (now Archbishop of Canterbury).[104] According to the diarist Charles Greville, this was 'enough to prove that he is negotiating with the Church'.[105] As the opening of parliament in February 1829 approached, Wellington wrote to four bishops who had formerly supported the government requesting their attendance or proxies.[106] But such interaction left

[101] Hansard, 2nd Series, XVIII, 1589-90 (21 April 1828).
[102] Diary of John Cam Hobhouse, 24 April 1828, in J. C. Hobhouse, *Recollections of a Long Life by Lord Broughton (John Cam Hobhouse) with Additional Extracts from his Private Diaries*, ed. C. Carleton (Lady Dorchester) (4 vols., London, 1909-11), III, 258. See also ibid., 100-1.
[103] Wellington to Phillpotts, 18 October 1828, in DCM, V, 146.
[104] Duke of Wellington to Charles Richard Sumner, 24 November 1828, HL, WP1/969/23; G. H. Sumner, *Life of Charles Richard Sumner, D.D. Bishop of Winchester, and Prelate of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, during a Forty Years' Episcopate* (London, 1876), 162; Peel to Lloyd, 24 November 1828, BL, Add MS 40343, ff. 323-4; Lloyd to Peel, 27 November 1828, ibid., f. 325; William Howley to Wellington, 29 November 1828, HL, WP1/967/29. John Bird Sumner, Bishop of Chester, was also consulted: John Bird Sumner to Wellington, 22 December 1828, in DCM, V, 350-51.
[105] Diary of Charles Greville, 20 December 1828, in C. C. F. Greville, *The Greville Memoirs 1814-1860*, ed. L. Strachey and R. Fulford (8 vols., London, 1938), I, 226.
[106] Robert Gray to Wellington, 20 January 1829, HL, WP1/990/13; George Isaac Huntingford to Wellington, 20 January 1829, HL, WP1/990/14; George Henry Law to

Wellington none the wiser as to the bishops' intentions. Shortly after Parliament was opened, the duke confessed to Greville that he 'knew nothing' of the way the bishops would vote.[107] Once more, bishops took matters into their own hands. In March, Howley held a meeting of nine bishops at Lambeth to discuss Catholic emancipation. His aim, as Lloyd told Greville, was to 'see if there was any chance of their acting with unanimity.' But upon '[f]inding this was not possible, they resolved that each should take his own line'. The death of Manners-Sutton had evidently created something of a leadership vacuum on the bench which Howley struggled to fill. Although Lloyd was not present, Howley 'despatched him to the Duke with an account of their proceedings.'[108] In the event, nine bishops voted for the third reading of the Roman Catholic Relief Bill and 18 against it.[109]

When Wellington's government fell late in 1830, the bishops were largely compelled to adopt a posture of opposition to the new Whig administration, which they suspected of wishing to introduce revolutionary reforms to church and state. One of the causes of Wellington's failure to retain power had been his last episcopal appointment, Henry Phillpotts, Bishop of Exeter. Phillpotts was a well-known controversialist, described by Bishop Bathurst as 'a man of some abilities; but coarse; presumptuous; conceited; and worldly minded, beyond any thing you can conceive.' [110] In 1829, he had changed his position on Catholic emancipation from outright opposition to guarded support for Wellington's measure. This 'ratting' was widely frowned upon in the Church. It was initially proposed that Phillpotts should, in addition to the see of Exeter, retain *in commendam* the lucrative living of Stanhope in the Diocese of Durham.[111] But such favours were unpalatable now that client-bishops had ceased to be conventional. A motion deprecating Phillpotts's

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Wellington, 23 January 1829, HL, WP1/991/5; George Murray to Edward Drummond, 23 January 1829, HL, WP1/991/2.

[107] Diary of Greville, 9 February 1829, I, 252.

[108] Diary of Greville, 21 March 1829, I, 277.

[109] *Hansard*, 2nd Series, XXI, 694-7 (10 April 1829).

[110] Henry Bathurst to Earl Grey, 25 July 1819, DUL, GRE/B42/13/2/1.

[111] Davies, *Henry Phillpotts*, 89-94.

appointment was tabled by Sir James Graham in the Commons, while Lord Valletort and Lord Ashley resigned from Wellington's government in protest.[112] Both Wellington and Phillpotts denied that the preferment was political.[113] Ultimately, the incoming administration of Earl Grey came to an arrangement whereby Phillpotts exchanged Stanhope for a Durham canonry, while being elevated to Exeter.[114] But Phillpotts, who became a forceful parliamentary orator, never shook off the reputation of being a 'political bishop'.[115]

Following the advent of Grey's government, Howley wished to avoid any imputation that the bench had become an opposition faction. When the new Lord Chancellor Henry Brougham stated that he would accept episcopal recommendations for Crown livings, the archbishop wrote to Phillpotts, 'I need not observe … how much we are indebted to the Chancellor for this instance of his considerate regard to the interests of our Church Establishment, and how desirable it is that we should meet his Lordship's intention'.[116] Yet, on the question of the Reform Bill, Howley was anything but compliant. Early in September 1831, James Monk, Bishop of Gloucester, told Lord Ellenborough that he believed Howley, Blomfield and Bishop Kaye of Lincoln would vote for the Reform Bill.[117] Ellenborough passed on this information to Wellington, who was leading the opposition to the bill in the House of Lords, but Wellington quickly disabused Ellenborough of Monk's supposition.[118] Several days later Archbishop Harcourt (as Vernon was now named), who favoured

[112] Lord Valletort to Wellington, 11 November 1830, HL, WP1/1150/20; Lord Ashley to Wellington, 11 November 1830, HL, WP1/1150/23.
[113] Henry Phillpotts to Wellington, 30 July 1830, HL, WP1/1129/18; Memorandum of Wellington, 17 November 1830, in DCM, VII, 362.
[114] Davies, *Henry Phillpotts*, 94-8.
[115] See e.g. George Wharton Marriott to Burgess, 23 April 1832, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 137, f. 145; Phillpotts to John Wilson Croker, [1836], Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 353, f. 150; *Liverpool Mercury*, 10 March 1837, 3.
[116] William Howley to Phillpotts, 5 February 1831, ECA, ED11/32/1.
[117] Diary of Lord Ellenborough, 12 September 1831, in A. Aspinall (ed.), *Three Early Nineteenth Century Diaries* (London, 1952), 127.
[118] Wellington to Ellenborough, 14 September 1831, in DCM, VII, 519-20.

the bill, took his proxy away from Howley, indicating that the latter was resolved to oppose the measure.[119]

Meanwhile, Wellington was concerned with using bishops' proxies to his advantage. He already had that of Hugh Percy, Bishop of Carlisle, but hoped to gain Van Mildert's and that of William Carey, Bishop of St Asaph.[120] Van Mildert informed Wellington that his proxy was with Richard Bagot, Lloyd's successor as Bishop of Oxford, 'in whose hands I have no doubt it will be used to your Grace's satisfaction & to mine.'[121] In the event, 21 bishops including Howley, Van Mildert and Phillpotts voted against the second reading of the Reform Bill, exciting popular uproar.[122] A little later, Phillpotts placed his proxy at Wellington's disposal.[123] When a new measure of reform was in contemplation, Howley was summoned to Brighton, where King William IV attempted unsuccessfully to secure his vote for the bill.[124] Greville mused, 'Curious that a Dr. Howley, the other day Canon of Christ Church, a very ordinary man, should have in his hands the virtual decision of one of the most momentous matters that ever occupied public attention.'[125] As in 1829, Howley failed to co-ordinate the bishops, telling Lord Aberdeen in November 1831 that he had 'had no communication with the Bishops on the course which they will pursue, since the rejection of the bill', though he anticipated that 'the Archb[isho]p of York and Bishop of London would vote for the old bill if brought forward again.'[126] While Howley remained steadfast in opposition, Blomfield (now Bishop of London) and

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[119] Diary of Ellenborough, 19 September 1831, 129.
[120] Wellington to Phillpotts, 23 September 1831, in DCM, VII, 533.
[121] Van Mildert to Wellington, 28 September 1831, HL, WP1/1196/22.
[122] *Hansard*, 3rd Series, VIII, 340-4 (7 October 1831). On the popular uproar, see below, 117-8.
[123] Phillpotts to Wellington, 30 November 1831, HL, WP1/1202/40.
[124] Herbert Taylor to Earl Grey, 9 December 1831, in H. Grey (Earl Grey) (ed.), *The Reform Act, 1832: The Correspondence of the late Earl Grey with His Majesty King William IV. and with Sir Herbert Taylor from Nov. 1830 to June 1832* (2 vols., London, 1867), II, 18-9; Grey to Taylor, 9 December 1831, in ibid., 19-20; Taylor to Grey, 10 December 1831, in ibid., 20-21; Taylor to Grey, 16 December 1831, in ibid., 33-5; Taylor to Grey, 17 December 1831, in ibid., 37-8.
[125] Diary of Greville, 23 February 1832, II, 264.
[126] William Howley to Aberdeen, 22 November 1831, BL, Add MS 43195, ff. 75-6.

Harcourt were instrumental in persuading 12 bishops to vote in favour of a revised Reform Bill of 1832 on pragmatic grounds. Yet 10 still voted with Howley, the attitude of the bishops *en masse* to Grey's ministry being ambivalent at best.[127]

However, alongside the Tory majority of bishops, there was a small minority of prelates who sided with the Whigs in both opposition and government in the period prior to 1832. In the main, these bishops maintained client relationships with various Whig politicians, so that their degree of political independence was lower than that of their Tory counterparts. The Whig bishops present an interesting counterpoint to the mainstream of episcopal politics, and in many respects are the exception that proves the rule. In remaining largely immune from contemporary developments in bishops' parliamentary involvement, they maintained the eighteenth-century tradition of the client-bishop into the 1830s.

To Charles James Fox, Henry Bathurst was 'the only tolerant bishop'; to prominent layman George Marriott, he was 'a very strong example of the celebrated definition of liberality, "an unnatural Child of Christianity, who would smother its parent."'[128] As discussed above, Bathurst came to ally himself with Lord Grenville, especially when the Catholic question was debated. His fervent and single-minded advocacy of Catholic emancipation placed him firmly on the side of the Whigs, even if he initially rejected party labels.[129] By his own account, the origin of Bathurst's sympathy for the Catholic cause lay not in party politics, but rather in his reading of such older authorities as Hoadly, Locke, Taylor, Stillingfleet, Hooker and Grotius as well as the correspondence between Archbishop Wake and Dupin.[130] The writings of these authors, whom he cited in lengthy parliamentary speeches, formed an erudite

[127] Blomfield to Monk, 24 November 1831, in Blomfield, *Memoir*, I, 170-71; Diary of Holland, 26 November 1831, 84; 16 February 1832, 132; Blomfield to Monk, [February 1832], in Blomfield, *Memoir*, I, 171-2; *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XII, 454-60 (13 April 1832).
[128] Charles James Fox to Duke of Bedford, [1806], in Thistlethwayte, *Memoirs*, 382; Marriott to Burgess, 10 February 1830, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 137, f. 122.
[129] Henry Bathurst to Lady Bathurst, 23 May 1807, in Thistlethwayte, *Memoirs*, 173.
[130] Henry Bathurst to Williams, 20 January 1809, Norfolk RO, DCN/154/5/2/1.

basis for his arguments.[131] But Bathurst soon aligned himself more definitely with the Whig opposition to Liverpool's administration following Grenville's failure to gain power. In 1812, he was considering entrusting Earl Grey with his proxy, which went to the 4th Earl Fitzwilliam, a prominent Whig.[132] Six years later, he was hopeful of a new Whig ministry, 'both on public, and on private grounds: for the Ministers have been *very* inattentive to my *family*'.[133] In 1819, Bathurst inveighed against the actions of the magistrates at Peterloo and the Six Acts.[134]

On the bench Bathurst was an uncomfortably isolated figure. He wrote in 1814, 'In *favour* of Lord Grenville's Motion I was the only Bishop who voted; and not being fond of singularity had it been upon any other Question … I would not have done it: but as a Minister of that Gospel, which tells us to do as we would be done by, I could not avoid it, and I do not love nice distinctions.'[135] In 1827, he told Thomas Coke that he did not have 'confidence enough' in any of bishops to entrust his proxy to them.[136] Thomas Burgess, Bishop of Salisbury, published in 1830 an open reproof to Bathurst's view of the Catholic question, in which he asserted that advocating emancipation was sinful.[137] Howley told Burgess that he was glad that Bathurst's 'indiscretion has not passed without notice', complimenting Burgess on a production 'drawn up with so much ability, and such kind consideration for the feelings of our aged Brother.'[138] Bathurst's only allies on the bench while in opposition were two successive bishops of Rochester: Walker King, whose proxy Bathurst took in 1819, and George Murray, who took Bathurst's proxy in 1828.[139]

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[131] *Hansard*, 1st Series, XX, 665-71 (18 June 1811); XXXVI, 620-25, 637-8, 677-8 (16 May 1817); 2nd Series, XXI, 656-7 (10 April 1829).
[132] Henry Bathurst to Lord Grenville, 28 June 1812, Add MS 59002, f. 77.
[133] Henry Bathurst to James Bathurst, 26 June 1818, Norfolk RO, DCN/154/2/59.
[134] Henry Bathurst to Thomas William Coke, 8 October 1819, in Thistlethwayte, *Memoirs*, 240-42; Henry Bathurst to Coke, 30 December 1819, in ibid., 242.
[135] Henry Bathurst to James Bathurst, 3 July 1814, Norfolk RO, DCN/154/2/35.
[136] Henry Bathurst to Coke, 24 May 1827, in Thistlethwayte, *Memoirs*, 314.
[137] T. Burgess, *A Letter to the Bishop of Norwich* (Salisbury, 1830), 19.
[138] William Howley to Burgess, 1 March 1830, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 136, f. 54.
[139] Henry Bathurst to James Bathurst, 13 November 1819, in Thistlethwayte, *Memoirs*, 240; Henry Bathurst to James Bathurst, 20 March 1821, Norfolk RO, DCN/154/2/70; Henry Bathurst to Lady Bathurst, 25 May 1828, in Thistlethwayte, *Memoirs*, 328.

Murray was notionally 'in Lord Lansdowne's interest', but his cooperation with Bathurst did not extend beyond support for Catholic emancipation.[140] In 1831, Murray opposed the Reform Bill, while Bathurst, believing that 'Reform or ruin is the alternative before us', voted for it.[141]

The advent of a Whig ministry in 1830 gave some limited opportunities to redress the political balance of the bench. Grey was certainly no anti-clerical statesman. He professed himself 'a devoted and zealous supporter of the Church', while Copleston stated that he 'never believed that Lord Grey had a notion of altering the constitution of our Church, or of proposing any change in its Liturgy, or Articles, or polity – or in short, of interfering at all in spiritual matters.'[142] Grey's first appointment was Edward Maltby, whose Whig sympathies dated back to his schooldays as a pupil of the noted Whig clergyman and author Samuel Parr.[143] Maltby's primary function following his appointment in September 1831 was to vote for the Reform Bill, which superseded all other considerations.[144] In December, he cancelled an ordination, before entering the fray by allowing the publication of a letter which he had written in response to an address of the 'Independent Association' of Rye, Sussex, thanking him for his vote in favour of the Reform Bill. In this letter, Maltby stated that he would 'not anticipate the possibility of defeat', but was reassured by the knowledge 'that the constitution places in the hands of the Sovereign, a safe and easy remedy for ignorant or factious opposition.'[145] This disdainful reference to the opponents of the bill made Maltby himself appear 'factious', and attracted comment among the Tories. Ellenborough wrote that Maltby's was a 'foolish letter', while Lord Eldon

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[140] Duke of Buckingham to Wellington, 27 September 1831, in DCM, VII, 538.
[141] *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XII, 400-3 (13 April 1832); Henry Bathurst to Coke, 21 November 1831, in Thistlethwayte, *Memoirs*, 391.
[142] *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XXI, 30 (4 February 1834); Copleston to Bruce Knight, 28 January 1834, in R. L. Brown (ed.), *The Letters of Edward Copleston, Bishop of Llandaff, 1828-1849* (Cardiff, 2003), 152. See also *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XV, 123 (5 February 1833); XXXII, 133-4 (10 March 1836).
[143] E. A. Varley, 'Maltby, Edward', in Cannadine, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.
[144] Dixon, 'Church and Monarchy', 57.
[145] *The Times*, 13 January 1832, 3.

condemned it in Parliament as 'an inexcusable libel'.[146] Maltby attempted to explain what he had written, but admitted that 'he wrote the letter in a hurry' and that '[h]ad he taken more time to write it, he should, probably, have guarded against' Eldon's 'misconception'.[147] Yet Maltby continued to attack the opposition. In a debate on Irish education, he accused Phillpotts of taking 'a hasty and partial view of the question'.[148] According to Ellenborough, Maltby 'spoke very ill' on this occasion, and seemed 'like a man over a Combination Room table'.[149] In contrast to Bathurst's gentler tactics, Maltby's vocal reformism significantly disrupted the existing mould of episcopal politics, which underwent further changes during the period which followed the Reform Act.

Bishops and Party after 1832

The passage of the Reform Act in June 1832 marked a watershed in parliamentary politics and excited new fears of wholesale ecclesiastical reform among the bishops. A strong perception existed that the Church of England now inhabited a fundamentally different political context characterised by an unremitting hostility to the Church which required careful management. Howley had, largely unsuccessfully, attempted to pre-empt the Whig government's Church reforms by introducing legislation concerning tithes and pluralism in 1831.[150] In October 1832, he wrote of 'the existence of a very powerful party that seeks our destruction, and of another party, or rather description of persons belonging to different parties, who are

[146] Diary of Ellenborough, 27 February 1832, 203; *Hansard*, 3rd Series, X, 740 (27 February 1832). See also the criticisms of Maltby's statement by Lord Winchilsea and Lord Wynford: *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XI, 1078 (29 March 1832); XII, 335-6 (13 April 1832).
[147] *Hansard*, 3rd Series, X, 740-41 (27 February 1832).
[148] *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XI, 616 (22 March 1832).
[149] Diary of Ellenborough, 22 March 1832, 214. Denis Le Marchant records that 'Maltby … told me that Bishop Murray had boldly avowed to him that there were no abuses in the Church. "What do you say," says Maltby, "to the Bishop of Ely giving 5 large pieces of preferment to one of his sons? – That is no abuse, it is not contrary to the law."': Diary of Denis Le Marchant, February 1833, in Aspinall, *Diaries*, 303.
[150] Burns, 'English "Church Reform" Revisited', 142; Garrard, *Archbishop Howley*, 50-52.

forwarding the views of our enemies while their object is to obtain what they call reform.' Howley further stated, 'Our hope of overcoming our difficulties depends, humanly speaking, on our moderation and prudence.' Government policy would probably be 'determined by circumstances.'[151] In this section, the bishops' attempts to formulate an effective response to these changed conditions and the new political factors which emerged during the brief reign of King William IV will be discussed.

The position of the bishops in the early 1830s was complicated by the ambiguous position of the King regarding Church matters. As Duke of Clarence, the King had opposed the bishops in the Lords by supporting the repeal of laws enforcing church attendance and Catholic emancipation, as well as opposing the Adultery Prevention Bill of 1800. However, at his accession in 1830, the King had told the bishops that he would 'follow the example of George the Third' and support the Church 'with firmness, yet moderation', stating that toleration should not 'become licence'. Yet, in contrast to the majority of bishops, William IV lent support to Earl Grey's early Church reform measures, including the Irish Church Temporalities Bill of 1833.[152]

In December 1832, at the behest of Grey's government, a meeting of 16 bishops had been held at Lambeth to formulate a position on Church reforms proposed by the government for England. The majority agreed that church rates were 'indispensable' and 'sustained the principle of upholding *all the institutions* of the Church in their full integrity', while also expressing a readiness to consider limited reforms. Phillpotts was characteristically indiscreet about this meeting, instructing John Wilson Croker, editor of the *Quarterly Review*, to hold his press until he had an opportunity to pass on details of what transpired at it and also writing to the Duke of Wellington with a detailed account of the proceedings. Phillpotts mentioned that, with regard to deans and chapters, '[s]ome of our body, especially one who is supposed to be most in the confidence of the government [presumably Maltby],

[151] William Howley to James Ingram, 2 October 1832, Bodl., Dep. c. 734, f. 30.
[152] Dixon, 'Church and Monarchy', 72-3.

seemed disposed to go far in breaking in upon them.'[153] Wellington told Phillpotts that he highly approved of the approach of the episcopal majority, and an informal alliance between Wellington and a portion of the bench was soon evident.[154]

When Wellington proposed a motion censuring the government's policy towards Portugal in June 1833, seven bishops including Phillpotts voted for it.[155] Phillpotts was conscious that these prelates were engaged in a risky strategy, and told Ellenborough during the debate that 'he and the Bishops present … were desirous of voting with us, but doubted whether it would be expedient to do so upon an unpopular question after Lord Grey's speech.' Ellenborough assured Phillpotts that 'yesterday the Duke had wished them to vote, & I did not think what had passed would at all change him'.[156] William IV was 'exasperated with the Bishops' at their conduct, and took the unusual course of writing to Howley 'to lament and reprehend the Bench for voting against the government'.[157] For a short time, this admonition restrained the bishops in Parliament.[158] But when the Irish Church Temporalities Bill was voted upon, some bishops reverted to their antagonistic stance towards the government, with 15 voting against the third reading.[159]

As the bishops became more independent of parties and patrons, so too they became to a certain degree more independent of one another. A conspicuous case in point was the new Poor Law implemented by the Whig government in 1834. As a member of the commission for revising the poor laws appointed in 1832, Bishop Blomfield made a significant contribution to the future direction of social policy. According to Nassau Senior, the bishop attended all the meetings of the commission and 'brought to them great knowledge both of principles and of details, unwearied

[153] Phillpotts to John Wilson Croker, 6 December 1832, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 353, f. 12; Phillpotts to Wellington, 19 December 1832, in DCM, VIII, 488-9.
[154] Wellington to Phillpotts, 24 December 1832, in DCM, VIII, 491-2.
[155] *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XVIII, 298-9 (3 June 1833).
[156] Diary of Ellenborough, 3 June 1833, 335.
[157] Diary of Holland, 5 June 1833, 216. See Dixon, 'Church and Monarchy', 57-8.
[158] Edward Venables Vernon Harcourt to Grey, 1 June 1833, DUL, GRE/B60/11/9; Diary of Holland, 6 June 1833, 217; Diary of Greville, 12 July 1833, II, 392.
[159] *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XX, 126 (30 July 1833).

attention, and, what was equally important, undaunted courage.' In Senior's opinion, the law would not have been carried without the 'courage and authority' of Blomfield as well as the Bishop of Chester, John Bird Sumner.[160] In the face of significant criticism, Blomfield argued that 'if the main principles of the Bill were adopted by their Lordships, they would do that which was consistent with the best principles of humanity, and the truest and soundest principles of economy.'[161]

Blomfield's stance led to a remarkable collision between himself and Phillpotts over a clause of the Poor Law Amendment Bill which denied poor relief to mothers of illegitimate children except in emergencies. Phillpotts considered this clause to be 'pregnant with the rankest and foulest injustice' and 'contrary to the law of God', while Blomfield argued that the law as it stood was 'calculated to deteriorate the morality … of the lower orders' and that 'the law of God being silent on the subject, that enactment would be the most consistent with the law of God which placed the most effectual check on immorality.'[162] In Copleston's judgement, Blomfield 'had the best' of the argument, but ten bishops voted with Phillpotts against the clause.[163] In spite of this open disagreement, episcopal co-operation did not collapse. According to Greville, 'at one or two meetings at Lambeth the Bishops agreed' to 'throw out' the Irish Tithe Bill of 1834.[164]

As has been documented elsewhere, the establishment of an Ecclesiastical Commission during Peel's short-lived Conservative ministry of 1834-5 did much to allay episcopal fears about the consequences of Church reform. Peel told Phillpotts shortly after becoming Prime Minister, 'I will most willingly return to private Life, and make the *very small sacrifice* of office, rather than consent to any thing which I conscientiously believe to be prejudicial to the great and sacred objects for which the

[160] Blomfield, *Memoir*, I, 204.
[161] *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XXIV, 1073 (2 July 1834).
[162] *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XXV, 586-602, 610-12 (28 July 1834).
[163] Copleston to Knight, 31 July 1834, in Brown, *Letters of Edward Copleston*, 174; Hansard, 3rd Series, XXV, 1096-7 (8 August 1834).
[164] Diary of Greville, 12 August 1834, III, 67.

Church was established.'[165] Accordingly, Peel established a pattern of respectful consultation and negotiation with the episcopal bench in implementing reform which was approved by the King and followed by Melbourne.[166] Initially composed of five bishops and seven laymen, the Ecclesiastical Commission included all of the bishops and three deans from 1840.[167] Among the Commission's first recommendations were the creation of new English dioceses and the regularisation of bishops' incomes, provided for in the Established Church Act of 1836.[168] Phillpotts was critical of aspects of this measure, and brought forward unsuccessful amendments to prevent the Commission being made a corporation as well as the appropriation of episcopal land to augment small livings.[169]

A further important development was the more favourable attitude to the bishops which William IV came to adopt as he grew increasingly concerned about the extent of Whig Church reforms. In February 1834, Howley reported that the bench were 'in great favour at court', and in June the King signalled his adherence to anti-reforming principles with a declaration to the bishops, possibly written by Phillpotts.[170] Rather than responding with 'the common formal answer' to an episcopal birthday address, William maintained that the clergy had 'a right to require of me to be resolute in the defence of the church', referred to 'unhappy circumstances which have forced themselves upon the observation of all' and spoke of how '[t]he threats of those, who are enemies of the church, make it the more necessary for those who feel their duty to that church to speak out.' William IV's dissatisfaction with Whig ecclesiastical policy and in particular the views expressed in the Commons by Lord John Russell

[165] Peel to Phillpotts, 22 December 1834, ECA, ED11/49/4.
[166] O. J. Brose, *Church and Parliament: The Reshaping of the Church of England 1828-1860* (Stanford, CA, 1959), 120-56; G. F. A. Best, *Temporal Pillars: Queen Anne's Bounty, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and the Church of England* (Cambridge, 1964), 296-347; Dixon, 'Church and Monarchy', 74.
[167] Best, *Temporal Pillars*, 316-7.
[168] Burns, 'English "Church Reform" Revisited', 142.
[169] Davies, *Henry Phillpotts*, 328-9.
[170] William Howley to Kaye, 24 February 1834, Lincolnshire Arch., DIOC/COR/B/5/5/2/3/6; Diary of Greville, 1 June 1834, III, 43; 29 August 1835, III, 247.

regarding the appropriation of the revenues of the Church in Ireland for secular purposes led to the dismissal of Lord Melbourne as Prime Minister that year, and persisted until his death, as the King repeatedly invoked his coronation oath.[171] In 1836, the King was heard to instruct Charles Longley when he came to do homage upon his elevation to the new see of Ripon, 'Bishop of Ripon, I charge you, as you shall answer before Almighty God, that you never by word or deed give encouragement to those d–d Whigs who would upset the Church of England.'[172]

Despite this backing from the throne, more fissures became apparent in bishops' approach to reform, weakening the Church's grip on its internal affairs. The issue of clerical discipline was a prime example of this. Lord Chancellor Cottenham's proposals for clerical juries to adjudicate in clergy discipline cases met with the half-hearted backing of Howley and Blomfield, while Phillpotts, who was notable by his absence from an episcopal meeting to discuss Cottenham's measure, vehemently opposed it. A sustained clerical opposition to Cottenham's bills of 1836, 1838 and 1839 met with success, and the Clergy Discipline Act which eventually passed in 1840 was a much less sweeping reform in consequence.[173] The debate on this issue reverted to stasis thereafter, with no new clergy discipline measures being passed until 1874.[174] Nor would open disagreement among the bench be exhibited again regarding this question.[175]

Conversely, in 1837, the majority of the bishops had united in resisting Whig reforms. According to Greville's account, 'the Bishops made a grand *flare-up* in the House of Lords' when a bill to abolish church rates was discussed. The bishops had agreed that Howley 'should make his declaration against the measure in the name of his brethren', but this tactic seemed inadequate when Melbourne 'replied with some

[171] Dixon, 'Church and Monarchy', 73-5, 99.
[172] Diary of Archibald Campbell Tait, 5 December 1856, in R. T. Davidson, *Life of Archibald Campbell Tait, Archbishop of Canterbury* (London, 1891), 206-7.
[173] R. A. Burns, 'The Costs and Benefits of Establishment: Clergy-Discipline Legislation in Parliament, *c*. 1830-*c*. 1870' in J. P. Parry and S. Taylor (eds.), *Parliament and the Church, 1529-1960* (Edinburgh, 2000), 91-4.
[174] Ibid., 85.
[175] Ibid., 94.

asperity'. Blomfield 'said to the Archbishop, "I must answer this," who replied, "Do."' The Bishop of London's riposte was 'very much admired'. Greville further stated that '[t]he Tories lauded and the Whigs abused the Bishops, both vehemently.'[176] In the face of such opposition, Melbourne's ministry abandoned their measure. The church rate debate encapsulates the position of the episcopal majority at the end of the period. In the process of opposing Tory and Whig governments alike, the bench had become an independent grouping in Parliament, with the strong support of Peel's Conservatives. No longer beholden to patrons or government, bishops' influence as political actors had substantially increased.

A further demonstration of the bishops' strength was the rejection of Lord John Russell's proposals for non-denominational state-funded education of 1839. Russell's scheme appeared to undermine the dominance of the Anglican National Society in the field of elementary education, and elicited a forthright response from the bench. Blomfield spoke against the proposals in May, while Howley presented a series of resolutions criticising them to the House of Lords in July, which passed by a considerable majority, resulting in an address from the Lords to Queen Victoria. Episcopal assertiveness and independence of government were evidently crucial factors in Russell's failure to challenge the Church's educational dominance.[177]

During the preceding decade, similar tendencies had been observable among bishops aligned to the Whig government, though Whig client relationships lingered on. By the mid-1830s, being a Whig client-bishop did not necessarily entail Maltby's

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[176] Diary of Greville, 18 March 1837, III, 357. For this debate, see *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XXXVII, 147-59 (9 March 1837). Howley had expressed fears to Peel that the Ecclesiastical Commission's measures would be 'defeated in the House of Commons, if they are not effectively supported by the Conservative party.' He also saw agitation against church rates as an effort towards disestablishment, stating that 'we ought to put ourselves on the defensive, and resist an encroachment, which must be considered as only the initiative of more decided meaning.': William Howley to Peel, 30 January 1837, BL, Add MS 40423, ff. 21-2.

[177] N. Gash, *Reaction and Reconstruction in English Politics 1832-1852: The Ford Lectures delivered in the University of Oxford in the Hilary Term 1964* (Oxford, 1965), 76-9; D. G. Paz, *The Politics of Working-Class Education in Britain, 1830-50* (Manchester, 1980), 79-87; I. D. C. Newbould, 'The Whigs, the Church, and Education, 1839', *Journal of British Studies*, 26 (1987), 332-46.

level of party feeling. In 1832, William IV 'insisted on making [Earl] Grey's brother Bishop of Hereford', citing the precedent of Lord North's brother, Brownlow North, who had been made a bishop in 1771. According to Lord Holland, the King 'would take no refusal', implying that the premier did not wish his brother, Edward Grey, to be thus elevated.[178] It seems probable that Grey's resistance was motivated by knowledge of his brother's political views, for Bishop Grey was far from being a loyal Whig. In July 1833, he voted for the second reading of the Irish Church Temporalities Bill, but in the most equivocal manner possible. He stated in the House of Lords that, while he 'believed his Majesty's Government to be sincere friends to the Established Church', some of the bill's provisions gave him 'uneasiness and distress'. He would only vote for it on the basis that 'much greater injury would befal [sic] the Church from a rejection of the Bill than by its adoption'.[179] But when the bill went into committee, Bishop Grey broke ranks, 'voting unexpectantly [sic] against' the government upon an amendment proposed by Archbishop Howley.[180] After this vote, Bishop Grey told his brother that he had 'never … in my life, felt more distressed', as he had not realised that the premier had staked the success of the bill on the rejection of the archbishop's amendment, nonetheless admitting that he 'never liked the bill, as you know'.[181] In Holland's acerbic words, following Earl Grey's retirement in 1834, Bishop Grey 'released from his allegiance to his brother, voted with those who are the natural associates of priestly prejudice and narrow principles in Church and State.'[182]

Under Lord Melbourne the client-bishop system was perpetuated, albeit in an increasingly half-hearted manner. Whig client relationships were evidently ill-fitted to the altered parliamentary politics of the post-Reform era. William IV allowed Melbourne freedom to make episcopal appointments, but for the most part this was

[178] Diary of Holland, 4 May 1832, 174.
[179] *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XIX, 975 (19 July 1833).
[180] Diary of Holland, 25 July 1833, 234; *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XIX, 1233 (25 July 1833).
[181] Edward Grey to Earl Grey, 25 July 1833, DUL, GRE/B32/10A/30.
[182] Diary of Holland, 22 June 1834, 263.

not exercised for political advantage.[183] Although 'he was not a believer in any orthodox sense', Melbourne held that '[a]n established Church appears to me to be necessary for the instruction of the People and for the maintenance of the rational purity of religious doctrine.'[184] During Melbourne's brief first ministry of 1834, Chancellor of the Exchequer Lord Althorp's former tutor Joseph Allen was appointed Bishop of Bristol.[185] The following year, Melbourne requested the nonagenarian Henry Bathurst to attend Parliament when he needed his proxy, Bathurst still hoping that this would benefit his family.[186] Despite Bathurst's age, Melbourne saw no immediate need to replenish the bench with Whig partisans. Like Lord Liverpool, his first concern was to promote clergymen of merit and ability.[187] In 1836, Melbourne appointed Longley to Ripon and Samuel Butler to Lichfield, despite his knowledge that neither supported his proposals for Irish Church reform. As he related to Archbishop Whately, this failure to take advantage of episcopal patronage was 'to the great discontent of my supporters', and resolved that his next appointment had to be 'a man who will go with us upon the Irish Church.'[188] William Otter, a moderate Whig with a reputation for 'firmness and liberality', was accordingly appointed to Chichester. However, as Lord Holland remarked in 1836,

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[183] Dixon, 'Church and Monarchy', 65.
[184] L. G. Mitchell, *Lord Melbourne, 1779-1848* (Oxford, 1997), 32-3.
[185] R. Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics: Whiggery, Religion and Reform, 1830-1841* (Oxford, 1987), 128.
[186] Henry Bathurst to James Bathurst, 31 July 1835, Norfolk RO, DCN/154/2/118; Thistlethwayte, *Memoirs*, 432-4. In 1832, Bathurst had unsuccessfully urged the claim of his son James for the governorship of the Isle of Man to Lord Melbourne: Henry Bathurst to James Bathurst, 5 November 1832, Norfolk RO, DCN/154/2/108; H. Bathurst, *An Easter Offering for the Whigs, from Archdeacon Bathurst, being a Supplement to the Memoirs of the late Bishop of Norwich, consisting of Letters hitherto suppressed, from and to the Leading Members of the late Whig Governments, including Lord Melbourne, the Marquis of Lansdowne, Lord Brougham, Earl Grey, Lord Monteagle, Lord Duncannon, the late Lord Holland, and Sir John Hobhouse, and Other Matters omitted before, illustrative of Personal and Political Conduct in the Above Individuals* (London, 1842), 23-5.
[187] Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*, 118-21; Mitchell, *Lord Melbourne*, 34-5.
[188] Melbourne to Richard Whately, 8 July 1836, in L. C. Sanders (ed.), *Lord Melbourne's Papers* (London, 1889), 505-6.

Melbourne avoided appointing 'the marked men on the side of Liberalism such as Thirlwall, Sedgewick, Arnold, and Sydney Smith', fearing a damaging backlash.[189]

With Melbourne's ambivalence about using episcopal appointments to advance partisan aims, the convention of the Whig client-bishop was effectively dying out. The extent to which it had already ceased to operate was revealed following the death of Bishop Bathurst at the age of 92 in April 1837. Bathurst had repeatedly stated that he wished for 'no Translation but to Heaven', but his son, Archdeacon Henry Bathurst, was of a different temperament.[190] Archdeacon Bathurst clung to the older notions of dependency, and believed that his father's loyalty to the Whigs gave his progeny an absolute entitlement to preferment. This opinion he expounded at length in two volumes of memoirs and correspondence, *Memoirs of the Late Dr. Henry Bathurst* (1837) and *An Easter Offering for the Whigs* (1842). The latter was a rambling denunciation of most of the prominent Whig statesmen of the time, relating the archdeacon's numerous requests for preferment and the manner in which these were continually rebuffed. Bathurst described the Whig cabinet as 'a scandal shop' and concluded, 'what reason I have to curse, the hour when my father left generous and kind friends, to whom he owed everything, and linked himself with those who have alike betrayed friends and principles, and ruined the cause of liberty'.[191]

Such statements were symptomatic of a general recognition that the position of the bishops in Parliament had changed significantly by the late 1830s. At all ends of the political spectrum, the ties which had bound the bishops to their patrons and even, on occasion, those which bound the bishops to one another were now broken.

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[189] Diary of Holland, September 1836, 344.
[190] Henry Bathurst to James Bathurst, 4 June 1811, Norfolk RO, DCN/154/2/24; Henry Bathurst to James Bathurst, 13 January 1819, in Thistlethwayte, *Memoirs*, 239; Henry Bathurst to Robert Bathurst, 24 November 1827, Norfolk RO, DCN/154/8/10; Henry Bathurst to Thistlethwayte, 5 November 1830, Norfolk RO, DCN/154/10/19. In 1831, the bishop wrote of his son, 'Henry begins to be *very impatient*; the object upon which he has fixed, is an *Irish Mitre*, and he may probably have the offer of one; every man being perhaps the best Judge of what promises to contribute most to his own happiness, I wish him success; but I do not entirely agree with him in opinion': Henry Bathurst to James Bathurst, 23 September 1831, Norfolk RO, DCN/154/2/111.
[191] Bathurst, *Easter Offering*, 102, 114.

As the foregoing section has shown, this transformation presented both challenges and opportunities for a bench which often appeared to vacillate between unity and division when presented with the reforming measures which were brought forward so frequently under Grey and Melbourne. But, above all, the significant political shifts of the years immediately following the Reform Act further impelled the bishops to become more effective political actors, deploying new and self-initiated methods of persuasion and manoeuvring. In the two sections which follow, the most prominent of these methods, oratory and invocation of public opinion, are examined.

Speaking in Parliament

The increasing independence of bishops from party coincided with a dramatic increase in the frequency of bishops' speeches in the House of Lords after 1820.[192] As discussed above, Manners-Sutton did much to encourage oratory as a strategy for defending Anglican interests in Parliament. Bathurst and Vernon were also regarded as noteworthy contributors to debate.[193] But it was Charles James Blomfield, Bishop of Chester from 1824, who raised episcopal oratory to an art. His first foray into parliamentary debate came in 1825, when Lord Holland condemned the clergy of Bath and Wells for framing an anti-Catholic petition containing 'absolute falsehoods' and devoid of 'christian humility'. This attack on the character of clergymen incensed Blomfield, who defended the petitioners and stated that he

[192] *Hansard* records 90 bishops' remarks in the House of Lords from 1800 to 1809 (average of six per volume), 51 from 1810 to 1819 (average of two per volume), 185 during George IV's reign (1820-1830, average of seven per volume) and 503 during William IV's reign (1830-1837, average of 13 per volume). Prelates frequently expressed an unwillingness to give a 'silent vote': *Hansard*, 1st Series, XXXI, 565 (1 June 1815); 2nd Series, V, 241 (16 April 1821); XVIII, 1482, 1508 (17 April 1828); XIX, 1234 (10 June 1828); XXI, 94 (2 April 1829); 3rd Series, XII, 408 (13 April 1832); XIX, 940 (19 July 1833); XXXV, 664 (29 July 1836).

[193] Duke of Bedford to Henry Bathurst, 10 November 1820, in Thistlethwayte, *Memoirs*, 245; Holland to Henry Bathurst, 11 November 1820, Norfolk RO, DCN/154/11/5; Copleston to Knight, 18 April 1828, in Brown, *Letters of Edward Copleston*, 62; Diary of Holland, May 1832, 184.

'could not sit silent while he heard the conduct of the petitioners arraigned, and motives imputed to them which they would disclaim.'[194] Afterwards, Blomfield wrote that his speech was made 'with good effect', and that the opposition's 'artillery will be pointed at me for the rest of the session – a compliment I could very well dispense with.'[195] Blomfield was translated to London in 1828, and gained plaudits for further reasoned defences of the Church against anticlerical peers. Upon hearing Blomfield give Lord Wharncliffe 'a prompt, a severe, & a dignified reproof' for 'his insolent invective against the body of the clergy', Copleston declared Blomfield to be 'decidedly the best speaker' in the Lords.[196] The American statesman Daniel Webster told an archdeacon visiting the United States that 'in dignity of manner and weight of opinion, no speaker in Great Britain was, in his opinion, equal to the Bishop of London', adding that 'such was also the opinion of M. Guizot.'[197]

However, Blomfield's speeches were somewhat overshadowed from 1830 by those of Henry Phillpotts. Unlike the urbane Blomfield, Phillpotts mounted sustained and aggressive attacks on the Whig ministry through his oratory. In October 1831, he made his first major contribution in response to an attack by Lord King on bishops' votes against the Reform Bill. Phillpotts criticised ministers for the opprobrium they had heaped upon the bishops, asking 'did the members of his Majesty's Government by these remarks intend to incite and encourage violence? He did not apologize for his warmth; for he should be ashamed of himself if he could be cool upon such a subject.' Earl Grey responded that this was 'the most intemperate, and the most unfounded insinuation that he had ever heard from any Member of that House.' Phillpotts maintained that '[t]he language of the noble Earl had an evident tendency

[194] *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XII, 713-6 (28 February 1828).
[195] Blomfield to Monk, 3 March 1825, in Blomfield, *Memoir*, I, 127.
[196] Copleston to Knight, 6 March 1829, in Brown, *Letters of Edward Copleston*, 68. For the speech which prompted this judgement, see *Hansard*, 2nd Series, XX, 717-8 (5 March 1829). Cf. Copleston to Knight, 18 April 1828, in Brown, *Letters of Edward Copleston*, 62-3, on Blomfield's speech for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in *Hansard*, 2nd Series, XVIII, 1508-17 (17 April 1828).
[197] Blomfield, *Memoir*, I, 124.

to implicate the Prelates with the people, and to make them be regarded by the people throughout all the country as their foes.'[198] In Ellenborough's view, Phillpotts 'showed pluck and debating talents' in this exchange.[199] The following March, Phillpotts made what Greville called 'a furious speech' on the subject of Irish education and, in Ellenborough's words, 'spoke with all the self-possession of a practised debater, & reasoned the matter well – ending by a peroration, a little too long, but admirably deliver'd & really eloquent.' This 'created great excitement amongst the Ministerial people' and made Grey 'very angry'.[200] Holland considered it 'a long, elaborate, virulent and eloquent speech', while deprecating its 'malevolence and hypocrisy'.[201]

In the debate on the amended Reform Bill, Phillpotts gave what Ellenborough considered 'a most extraordinary speech'. The bishop exhibited 'really wonderful powers – a degree of self-possession & readiness possessed by no man in either House, much eloquence, sarcasm, & unction.' Ministers were losing 'all self-command' in responding to Phillpotts, who 'only rises in consequence of it'.[202] Holland wrote that this speech was 'the leading feature of the three first days of our prolonged debate, and never did an oration more artfully or malignantly convey the bitterest Charges against his adversaries or excite more mischievously the angry passions of his own party.' Queen Adelaide praised this 'eloquent but factious speech' in conversation with the King, who exclaimed, 'It may be clever or eloquent, Madam, of that I am no judge; but though the *peers* may occasionally be factious, By God, the *Bishops* are in that house to defend my crown and not to follow vagaries of their own.'[203] In Greville's view, Phillpotts had 'adopted a tone and style

[198] *Hansard*, 3rd Series, VIII, 474-9 (11 October 1831).
[199] Diary of Ellenborough, 11 October 1831, 149.
[200] Diary of Greville, 26 March 1832, II, 273; Diary of Ellenborough, 22 March 1832, 213-4.
[201] Diary of Holland, 22 March 1832, 158-9. For Phillpotts's speech on Irish education, see *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XI, 594-615 (22 March 1832).
[202] Diary of Ellenborough, 11 April 1832, 230.
[203] Diary of Holland, April 1832, 169. Cf. Diary of Greville, 14 April 1832, II, 287. For Phillpotts's speech on the Reform Bill, see *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XII, 271-87 (11 April 1832).

inconsistent with his lawn sleeves, and unusual on the Episcopal Bench.' More than this, he was 'carried away by his ambition and his alarm, and horrifies his Brethren, who feel all the danger (in these times) of such a colleague.'[204] Briefly, Phillpotts was the centre of attention in the House of Lords.

Buoyed by a belief that he had achieved 'a complete triumph' over Grey and Brougham, Phillpotts led the charge against the Irish Church Temporalities Bill in 1833.[205] He did so with a verboseness that observers found tedious, delivering a speech of four hours that, according to Ellenborough, 'if he had omitted the last 1½ would have made a great speech, but he read too much, & what he did not read was not to the purpose.'[206] By contrast, Blomfield gave a speech in favour of the bill, in which (in Holland's words) he 'drew the distinction between expediency and principle, or rather reconciled the former, in cases like the present, to the latter with great talent and success'.[207] Thereafter Phillpotts continued to pour forth vitriol against the Whigs, especially in debates concerning Ireland, but with less success. In May 1835, he 'smarted under' a riposte from Brougham after what Holland called a 'disingenuous and uncharitable attack on two Commissioners for [the] Irish Church'.[208] Melbourne and Holland were able to repel similar assaults with relative ease.[209] Nevertheless, a seasoned observer of parliamentary proceedings wrote in 1836 that Phillpotts was 'undoubtedly the most talented man who sits on the Right Rev. Bench.' Despite the 'respectful manner' of his address, he gave 'abundant cause of soreness or mortification to the noble Lord to whom he replies by the

[204] Diary of Greville, 15 April 1832, II, 289.
[205] Phillpotts to T. Baker, 29 July 1832, ECA, ED11/3/3.
[206] Diary of Ellenborough, 21 July 1833, 350. Cf. Diary of Holland, July 1833, 231; Diary of Denis Le Merchant, July 1833, 363. For Phillpotts's speech on the Irish Church Temporalities Bill, see *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XIX, 809-55 (18 July 1833).
[207] Diary of Holland, July 1833, 232. Cf. Diary of Le Marchant, July 1833, 363. For Blomfield's speech on the Irish Church Temporalities Bill, see *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XIX, 924-34 (19 July 1833).
[208] Diary of Holland, 26 May 1835, 302. For this exchange, see *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XXVIII, 136-49 (26 May 1835).
[209] Diary of Holland, 16-17 July 1835, 321; September 1836, 342. See *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XXIX, 603-20 (16 July 1835); XXXV, 497-513 (25 July 1836).

masterly way in which he demolishes his positions.' There was 'not a man in either House who is listened to with greater attention than Dr. Phillpotts', who was 'the ablest man on either side of the House.'[210]

In Blomfield and Phillpotts, therefore, the Church had two highly competent advocates. These men compensated in some measure for the contributions of Archbishop Howley, who, according to Holland, was 'in anything like a debate … a most helpless man' and 'a Man whose words very often involuntarily imply the very opposite of that he means to express.'[211] He appeared to have little control over the rest of the bench and when Blomfield gave a speech in favour of ecclesiastical reform, Howley 'after writhing some time, exclaimed loud enough for his brother of London to hear, "These things should not be said without consultation".'[212] In August 1831, Howley made what Holland called 'a very heavy and unimpressive speech on his Pluralities Bill'.[213] Yet, when the Reform Bill was debated in October, there were some indications that Howley was not as ineffective a speaker as many supposed. The archbishop was the only bishop to speak against the bill and, according to Ellenborough, 'spoke for the Bench'.[214] In Phillpotts's view, Howley's 'speech went off well, and took well'.[215] When, in March 1832, Eldon attacked the bishops 'for abandoning and betraying the interests of the Church' in a debate concerning Irish tithes, Howley 'repelled with some spirit' the charge.[216] But Howley was still prone to weak and maladroit moments. Denis Le Marchant recorded that in 1833, Howley proposed an amendment to the Irish Church Temporalities Bill, but found himself unable to write it, attempting to do so for thirty

[210] [Grant], *Random Recollections*, 386-8.
[211] Diary of Holland, 21 July 1831, 11; 25 July 1833, 234.
[212] Diary of Holland, 29 July 1831, 19-20. For Blomfield's speech, see *Hansard*, 3rd Series, V, 518-9 (29 July 1831).
[213] Diary of Holland, 30 August 1831, 42. For Howley's speech on the Pluralities Bill, see *Hansard*, 3rd Series, VI, 854-60 (30 August 1831).
[214] Diary of Ellenborough, 8 October 1831, 144.
[215] Phillpotts to Ralph Barnes, 8 October 1831, in Davies, *Henry Phillpotts*, 113.
[216] Diary of Holland, 8 March 1832, 149. For this exchange, see *Hansard*, 3rd Series, X, 1298-1302 (8 March 1832).

minutes before Brougham assisted him, while Phillpotts 'whispered into his ear to persist'.[217]

Perhaps under Phillpotts's influence, Howley became bolder in his parliamentary contributions from 1834. In a debate on subscription in universities, Howley castigated the 5th Earl Fitzwilliam for his 'harsh and unjust' observations concerning Phillpotts and stated that 'he was a miserable creature if he did not come forward and add his word in a case in which the truth was in jeopardy.'[218] A second altercation with Fitzwilliam occurred in June 1835, when Fitzwilliam described the established church in Ireland as a 'sect'. Howley took exception to this, stating that 'he could not sit still' while such language was used and that '[i]t was the first time he had heard such a designation applied to the Established Church of the country'. Fitzwilliam interrupted and said that he would have to send Howley 'back to his Latin grammar and dictionary', asserting that 'the Church of England was just as much a sect as the Roman Catholics a sect, as the Baptists were a sect, Presbyterians of Scotland a sect, or the Unitarians a sect.' This caused some uproar, and Howley maintained that while 'every body of Christians was grammatically and etymologically a sect', the Church of England 'was not a sect, either in the sense of the law, or in the common acceptation of the term' given that 'it was the Established Church of the country'.[219]

The following month, Melbourne asked Howley in the House of Lords after an anti-Catholic speech by Phillpotts, 'whether he thinks that the speech which your Lordships have just heard, is a speech becoming a Bishop, even were the tone, temper, and spirit of it those which he is desirous of seeing adopted by any one of his suffragans?' To this Howley replied that Melbourne was doing 'a great injustice' to Phillpotts, who was using 'nothing bordering on incendiary language'. He proceeded to denounce 'the refusal, or at least the backwardness, of the Roman Catholic

[217] Diary of Le Marchant, July 1833, 365. Despite this, Howley's amendment was passed by a majority of two: *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XIX, 1231-3 (25 July 1833).
[218] *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XXIII, 1191-2 (22 May 1834).
[219] *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XXVIII, 353-8 (2 June 1835).

Bishops to bring their Priests into proper order' in Ireland.[220] In 1836, Howley was less obstreperous as he defended the recommendations of the Ecclesiastical Commission, but he made it clear that 'had he not been assured that this Commission was what [Melbourne] had declared it to be – formed on Conservative principles, he never would have been a member of it.'[221] The church rates debate of 1837 showed the extent to which Howley had gained confidence as an orator.[222] Greville observed that Howley opposed the bill abolishing church rates 'with as much venom as so mild a man can muster'.[223] But there was little mildness in Howley's rhetoric, which denounced 'the injustice of the scheme that was proposed, its degrading effects on the dignitaries of the church, and the danger with which it menaced the interests of the Church itself.'[224]

The Appeal to Public Opinion

In addition to oratory and independence of party, a crucial political resource for the bishops in Parliament was their use of public opinion. Historians' fixation on the Reform crisis in discussing the episcopal politics of this period has often given the misleading impression that bishops were implacably opposed to popular sentiment and sought to frustrate its political expression.[225] In fact, the opinions of the bishops on political matters were frequently in line with significant strains of public opinion, something which they were perfectly willing to advertise. This was especially the case with regard to Catholic emancipation, but on a variety of other issues such an alignment was also evident. Frequent allusions were made to popular opinion in bishops' speeches. However, the primary means they employed in harnessing public

[220] *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XXIX, 617, 623-5 (16 July 1835).
[221] *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XXXII, 135 (10 March 1836).
[222] Best, *Temporal Pillars*, 346.
[223] Diary of Greville, 18 March 1837, III, 357.
[224] *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XXXVII, 150 (9 March 1837).
[225] See e.g. Butler, *Passing of the Great Reform Bill*, 251; Soloway, *Prelates and People*, 246; R. A. Saunders, 'God and the Great Reform Act: Preaching against Reform, 1831-32', *Journal of British Studies*, 53 (2014), 392-3.

feeling was the presentation of petitions. The manner in which Anglican petitions originated will be considered in the next chapter; the focus here is on the ways in which these were used in the House of Lords.[226]

The discussion concerning Sidmouth's unsuccessful bill to regulate dissenting ministers of 1811 affords interesting insights into the attitudes of two bishops towards public opinion in the earlier part of the period.[227] Archbishop Manners-Sutton stated in Parliament that 'it was with extreme surprize that he saw the flood of petitions against it' from dissenters. Although he supported the bill, 'he considered it to be unwise and impolitic to press it against their inclination or consent, who, it must be allowed, were the best judges of what they considered to be for their own interests.'[228] By contrast, Bishop Huntingford questioned whether the petitions were a true reflection of dissenting opinion. He wrote to Sidmouth in 1812 of a debate in which Earl Grey had claimed that Sidmouth 'had proposed measures which united every class of dissenters in one common cause.'[229] Huntingford considered himself 'quite incapable of Speaking', but wrote that 'had I been present & could I have spoken, I would have told the House, "the Petitions were thus numerous & the Throng of Separatists was thus immense, through the mean arts and vile fabrications of Emissaries dispatched, even on the Sabbath, throughout the Kingdom".' He also criticised Grey for having pledged himself in favour of Catholic emancipation: 'I verily believe the People of England had never heard of any such assurance given to Irish or English Catholics, till Lord G[rey] divulged the secret on Thursday night.' He added that, following the debate, Grey's 'sentiments & character (as a Politician) cannot be mistaken by the People of England.' Huntingford further expressed a belief that Irish concerns were being privileged over those of England by Grey's party:

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[226] See below, 160-67.
[227] On this bill, see W. R. Ward, *Religion and Society in England 1790-1850* (London, 1972), 55-60; R. Hole, *Pulpits, Politics and Public Order in England, 1760-1832* (Cambridge, 1989), 195-7.
[228] *Hansard*, 1st Series, XX, 242-3 (21 May 1811).
[229] *Hansard*, 1st Series, XXII, 76 (19 March 1812).

> And pray, Why all this vast concern for Ireland, for Ireland, for Ireland? I love Ireland & have very close connexions with the Irish. But why is England never to be mentioned by those mock-Patriots? Why is the peace, the security, the Constitution of England to be laid prostrate at the feet of Ireland? Why is the order of Nature and of Society to be reversed, that the Greater should yield to the less?[230]

Huntingford's plea that English opinion should be heard chimed with the approach to the Catholic question now adopted by a number of bishops. It was well known that public opinion in England was decidedly adverse to Catholic emancipation, and soon numerous petitions were drawn up in confirmation of this.[231] In October 1812, Pretyman-Tomline wrote to Lord Liverpool to ask 'whether it would be expedient to encourage such Petitions, whether the Meeting of Parliament would be a proper time in any case to present them, or whether it would be better to defer them till the New Parliament had expressed some opinion on the subject.'[232] In the event, Archbishop Manners-Sutton led the way, presenting a petition from the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury early in the session.[233] When Parliament resumed in February 1813, Bishop Buckner of Chichester and Bishop Fisher of Salisbury began proceedings by presenting eight petitions from groups of clergy between them.[234] In a letter to Lord Sheffield, Buckner stated of one clerical petition, 'I wish, it had been, *Laic* too'.[235] Bishop Law had no such problems, presenting one from Bolton, 'which his lordship stated to be signed by 6,000 persons, amongst whom were several

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[230] Huntingford to Sidmouth, 22 March 1812, Devon Heritage Centre, 152M/C1812/OE. Grey had stated that 'a very general hope was entertained by the Catholics, that the Prince Regent was favourable to their claims, and that a new æra had now arrived', adding that 'the people of England were, as they had been at a former period, ready to support the measure of Catholic emancipation.': *Hansard*, 1st Series, XXII, 78-9 (19 March 1812).
[231] G. I. T. Machin, *The Catholic Question in English Politics, 1820 to 1830* (Oxford, 1964), 5-8. See e.g. Sidmouth to Lord Kenyon, 25 January 1813, Devon Heritage Centre, 152M/C1813/OE; John Bird Sumner to Charles Richard Sumner, [1828], in Sumner, *Life of Charles Richard Sumner*, 158.
[232] Pretyman-Tomline to Liverpool, 19 October 1812, BL, Add MS 38249, f. 348.
[233] *Hansard*, 1st Series, XXIV, 242 (9 December 1812).
[234] Ibid., 352-4 (3 February 1813).
[235] John Buckner to Lord Sheffield, 23 January 1813, East Sussex RO, SPK 1/113/3.

dissenting ministers'.[236] Huntingford also played his part, presenting six petitions.[237] Even Bishop Bathurst presented two anti-Catholic petitions from the clergy of his diocese 'ex-officio, but he felt himself called upon at the same time to state, that he dissented from their prayer, which he hoped would not be granted.'[238]

By the end of the session, the convention of bishops presenting anti-Catholic petitions had become well established, although the expedient was not repeated for a decade. In the meantime, the Queen Caroline Affair had a significant effect on the bishops' attitude to public opinion. The popular agitation in favour of the Queen led to an increased awareness on the bench of both the significance and the volatility of public feeling. Vernon expressed the view that the bill of pains and penalties 'tended most effectually to forward the views of a party whose object was to vilify the constituted authorities, and to bring into disgrace all that was most sacred and venerable in the laws and constitution of the country.'[239] Bathurst put it more bluntly after the 'trial' ended: 'All the Radicals in the United Kingdom, could not in half a century, have done so much injury to Religion, and Government, as has been done, within the last few weeks.'[240] Bishops keenly observed any indication of public opinion, and increasingly found that it was not as unfavourable to the status quo as had been supposed. Bishop Pelham wrote in August 1820 that he was 'highly gratifyed [sic] for it is most important, that the King at the last two reviews last Week was received with the strongest marks of attachment, so much as to visibly affect him.'[241] Huntingford reported to Sidmouth that at Winchester, a 'dutiful & loyal address to his Majesty was proposed; unanimously carried; and applauded with

[236] *Hansard*, 1st Series, XXIV, 394 (8 February 1813).
[237] Ibid., 511 (15 February 1813).
[238] Ibid., 553 (16 February 1813). Bathurst did the same in 1825, remarking that 'he continued to dissent from the opinions they expressed, but that their language was proper and temperate.': *Hansard*, 2nd Series, XII, 1361 (18 April 1825). For other anti-emancipation petitions presented by bishops in 1813, see *Hansard*, 1st Series, XXIV, 418 (10 February 1813), 498 (12 February 1813), 656 (22 February 1813), 690 (23 February 1813), 841 (26 February 1813).
[239] *Hansard*, 2nd Series, III, 1710 (7 November 1820).
[240] Henry Bathurst to William Howley, 1 December 1820, LPL, FP Howley 7, f. 71.
[241] Pelham to Sheffield, 7 August [1820], East Sussex RO, SPK 1/25/8.

loud demonstrations of joy.' He hoped that 'the same Anti-Radical Spirit may thus shew itself throughout the Kingdom.'[242] Howley, however, sounded a note of caution: 'The fermentation of the public mind I am told is beginning to subside, but I fear we shall find that the spirit at work is like a morbid humour in the body, which sometimes retires from the surface, & suddenly breaks out with more alarming virulence.'[243]

Thus attuned to the vagaries of public opinion, the bishops attempted to use it to their advantage when the Catholic claims were renewed. It was Bathurst's belief in 1820 that 'the Public mind has undergone a great alteration' in favour of Catholic emancipation.[244] Three years later, he asserted in Parliament that 'a very large majority of the members of the established church were decidedly in favour of Catholic Emancipation.'[245] But other bishops were able to expose this wishful thinking, and in 1825 Law and William Carey, Bishop of Exeter, as well as Blomfield were instrumental in bringing Anglican opinion to bear on the question. They began by presenting clerical petitions, which were censured by Whig peers, notably Lord King, who cast aspersions on the clergy's eagerness to 'meddle with politics'.[246] This elicited a forthright assertion of clergy's right to petition Parliament. Law argued that 'the petitioners acted up to the true spirit and letter of christian charity, when they came forward and endeavoured to maintain pure religion'. Blomfield adopted a somewhat threatening tone, asserting that the bishops 'belonged to a body of men whom their lordships would find out one day, as their ancestors had found before them, that they ought to treat with respect, and not with contumely'.[247] Carey proceeded to present four petitions, three of which 'which were not from the clergy, but were signed by dissenters of every denomination.' The

[242] Huntingford to Sidmouth, 24 November 1820, Devon Heritage Centre, 152M/C1820/OR20.
[243] William Howley to Thomas Grenville, 6 December 1820, BL, Add MS 41859, f. 29.
[244] Henry Bathurst to James Bathurst, 27 June 1820, Norfolk RO, DCN/154/2/67.
[245] *Hansard*, 2nd Series, IX, 1481 (9 July 1823).
[246] *Hansard*, 2nd Series, XII, 936-7 (7 March 1825).
[247] Ibid., 1270-75 (29 March 1825).

fourth petition, he remarked ironically, 'was from that proscribed body, the clergy', adding that '[t]he clergy were … determined to petition … and the laity, roused by its having been said they were indifferent to the subject, were also coming forward with numerous petitions.'[248] Blomfield presented another Bolton petition, 'signed by 8,000 persons'.[249] The next line of attack from the Whigs was that these petitions were, in Lord Holland's words, 'got up by the clergy stimulating the people', a charge that was vigorously denied.[250] Carey now appealed to the general state of public opinion, stating that 'the real cause of so many petitions being presented, was, that the people of the country were anxious that their sentiments on this question should not be misrepresented.'[251]

The bishops thus entered the final contest on the Catholic question in 1829 as the self-declared tribunes of the English public. Echoing Huntingford's earlier appeal, Law stated in presenting several anti-Catholic petitions that he 'hoped that ministers would pay equal attention to the petitions of the Protestants of England, with that which they had paid to the petitions of the Catholics of Ireland'.[252] A speech soon followed in which Law claimed to 'state what he knew to be the feelings of the people of England, at least of the large majority, towards the measure called Catholic emancipation.' In his view, 'the people of England were … strongly attached to the pure form of Christianity established in this country' and 'considered that, if the Catholics were admitted to a greater share than they at present possessed of the political power of the state, the Protestant religious establishments would be endangered, perhaps subverted, and Popery superinduced'. Such 'were the opinions … of a large majority of the people of England, with which, he begged leave to add, his own entirely concurred.'[253] Blomfield seconded Law's arguments when he baldly asserted, 'The public voice must be heard, whatever means were used to stifle it; and

[248] Ibid., 1326-7, 1333 (13 April 1825).
[249] Ibid., 1335 (13 April 1825).
[250] Ibid., 1362 (18 April 1825).
[251] *Hansard*, 2nd Series, XIII, 583 (13 May 1825).
[252] *Hansard*, 2nd Series, XX, 134 (9 February 1829).
[253] Ibid., 639-41 (2 March 1829).

the only effect of those means would be further exasperation of public sentiment.'[254] Law further castigated Whig peers for their inattention to public opinion: 'They had been in the habit of saying a great deal for themselves, and he now begged leave to say something for the people of England. Could they, he would ask, do other than feel deeply on a question which involved their religion?'[255] The culmination of Law's efforts was the presentation of anti-Catholic petition 'signed by between six and seven hundred of the under-graduates of the University of Cambridge.'[256]

The petitioning campaign against Catholic emancipation was unprecedented in scale, but it did not prevent the passing of the measure.[257] Huntingford despaired at what he considered a violation of the coronation oath 'in contempt, yes in contempt of the most anxious wishes loudly & unequivocally expressed by Nine Tenths of the very People, for whose security the Oath was framed & administer'd'.[258] Having convincingly invoked public opinion on their side in 1829, the bishops expressed disbelief when the question of the Reform Bill appeared to place most of them in opposition to popular feeling in 1831. Robert Gray, Bishop of Bristol, stated in the House of Lords, 'Though the petitions in behalf of that measure were very numerous, he knew enough of the modes by which such petitions were got up, to induce him to believe that they did not express the sentiments of the majority of the people.'[259] Bishop Murray, in opposing the bill, approached the issue by attempting to 'draw a distinction between popular clamour and public opinion'. His claim was that 'his Majesty's Government enjoyed the absolute benefit of popular clamour, while he firmly and conscientiously believed, that the majority of public opinion was

[254] Ibid., 718 (5 March 1829).
[255] Ibid., 1310 (18 March 1829).
[256] Ibid., 1413 (24 March 1829). For other petitions presented by bishops in 1829, see ibid., 169-71 (10 February 1829), 244-5 (12 February 1829), 297 (13 February 1829), 671 (3 March 1829), 802-4 (6 March 1829), 925-30 (10 March 1829), 1364 (20 March 1829), 1489 (27 March 1829). For further invocations of public opinion by bishops, see Dixon, 'Church and Monarchy', 94.
[257] On the petitioning campaign, see Machin, *Catholic Question*, 148-9; L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (3rd edn, New Haven, CT, 2009), 336-8.
[258] Huntingford to Burgess, 6 May 1829, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 136, f. 107.
[259] *Hansard*, 3rd Series, III, 1333 (14 April 1831).

on the side of the question of which he was an advocate.' He proceeded to question the legitimacy of the House of Commons, averring that its members had been elected 'by intimidation and mob law' and that 'popular clamour went hand in hand with that House, while the tide of rational public opinion was running in a strong current against them.'[260]

The violence directed against the bishops on account of their opposition to the Reform Bill is well documented.[261] As in 1820, prelates anxiously observed indications of popular opinion and sought to regain control of it. Harcourt was alarmed to learn in March 1832 that his palace at Bishopthorpe had been targeted by a mob 'under the mistaken notion that I was *opposed to Reform*'. He felt it necessary to declare his support for the bill in the House of Lords, but was sorry to find that his remarks were 'incorrectly given' in the newspapers. In response, he 'thought it desirable to obtain the insertion in the York Papers … of a *correct account*'.[262] Yet others took a more measured view of popular disaffection. When Howley's carriage was attacked at Canterbury the following August, he wrote to his wife that it was 'very disgraceful to the Town.'[263] But he also apprehended that there would be 'accounts in the paper, which may make more of this occurrence than it deserves.' He added with irony, 'I do not expect any more demonstrations of the use, which the patriotic Inhabitants of the Town are disposed to make of their liberty.'[264] Bishop Bagot, the Dean of Canterbury, was convinced that '[m]uch good will ensue from this disgraceful business.' The archbishop's treatment was, in his view, bringing

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[260] *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XII, 400-3 (13 April 1832). Bishop Monk of Gloucester concurred in this sentiment, stating that '[h]e felt confident that the Bill would not content the people of England. He did not think that the nation, or even a majority of the nation, called for it. He hoped their lordships would never be inattentive to the voice of the country, but there was a material difference between the voice of the country and the voice of the rabble.': ibid., 408 (13 April 1832).
[261] Davies, *Henry Phillpotts*, 109-10, 114, 139; O. Chadwick, *The Victorian Church: Part I* (3rd edn, London, 1971), 26-32; Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, 145-8; Garrard, *Archbishop Howley*, 47-8.
[262] Harcourt to [?], [May 1832], LPL, MS 3417, f. 38. For Harcourt's speech on the Reform Bill, see *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XII, 1043-5 (18 May 1832).
[263] William Howley to Mary Howley, 8 August 1832, LPL, MS 2185, f. 6.
[264] William Howley to Mary Howley, 7 August 1832, ibid., f. 5.

about a backlash: 'I never saw anything so strong as the desire of every respectable person in and about this place (however strong their political opinions on the subject of Reform) to mark their abhorrence of what occurred, and it has produced a separation in the *violent* party which will injure their cause materially.'[265]

The bishops' position in relation to public opinion in the aftermath of the Reform crisis was therefore not irretrievable. By 1834, they were once again able to invoke public feeling on their side in the House of Lords. Numerous addresses to Howley expressing attachment to the Church had been framed in the earlier part of that year, in consequence of which Howley told Bishop Kaye of Lincoln, 'We certainly stand much higher than we did'.[266] In May, Howley announced in Parliament that 'he had several petitions to present to their Lordships on the important subject of the habitual violation of the Lord's Day by the people of this country.' Like Law in 1829, he presented himself as a channel for popular sentiment:

> If it could be said, that in any matter the voice of the people was the voice of God, surely it was upon this question; and he thought the numerous petitions that had been sent up to Parliament from all parts of the country, and from all classes, ought not to be overlooked and treated with utter neglect.[267]

Blomfield adopted similar tactics on the issue of Sabbath observance, even presenting petitions from London newsvendors and publicans. He stated that such petitions were 'for the protection of the poorer classes in that well-regulated observance of the Sabbath, which was as necessary to their temporal comfort as to their spiritual wants' and regretted to observe a 'growing disinclination to yield even to the increasing importunity of the people any legislative protection for the better observance of the Lord's Day.'[268] Phillpotts, in his dispute with Blomfield regarding

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[265] Richard Bagot to Wellington, 15 August 1832, in DCM, VIII, 383.
[266] William Howley to John Kaye, 24 February 1834, Lincolnshire Arch., DIOC/COR/B/5/5/2/3/6.
[267] *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XXIII, 357 (1 May 1834).
[268] *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XVI, 1293 (1 April 1833); XVII, 1379-80 (20 May 1833); XVIII, 168 (31 May 1833); XXIII, 475 (5 May 1834); XXIV, 1063-5 (2 July 1834). See C. J.

the illegitimacy clause of the new poor law, also appealed to popular concerns. He reminded his hearers that 'every law, to be really efficient, must have the sanction of public opinion.' He declared that the denial of relief to single mothers 'never will, never can, have the sanction of the general opinion of the British people. It is impossible.' Every law that defied 'the best feelings of the people' tempted them 'to cast off their respect for all laws; and, I must not be afraid to add, for the Legislature which shall have ventured to make it.'[269] Copleston recoiled from such unabashed populism: 'I am provoked at any man, *nedum* a Bishop, taking up the popular part & speaking rhetorically *ad captandum*.'[270]

Although neither Blomfield's campaign for better Sabbath observance nor Phillpotts's protest against the poor law were ultimately successful, they demonstrated the potential of bishops to raise issues of genuine public concern. In 1837, the church rates debate showed that appeals to public opinion could produce concrete results. Howley presented 'a considerable number of petitions on the subject of Church-rates' and argued that this 'mass of petitions … strongly deprecating any improper interference with those rates' represented 'the general feeling throughout the country'.[271] Phillpotts followed in Howley's footsteps by presenting 100 petitions against the proposed abolition of church rates, in consequence of which '[t]he people were in a state of the greatest alarm'.[272] Of a further petition from Chorley in Devon he stated that 'the poor labourers residing in the parish unanimously approved of it.'[273] Such popular pressure was instrumental in the dropping of the church rates measure, and before long Phillpotts had moved on to presenting mass petitions against the poor law.[274] In the light of such activity, the

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Blomfield, *A Letter on the Present Neglect of the Lord's Day addressed to the Inhabitants of London and Westminster* (London, 1830).
[269] *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XXV, 1077-8 (8 August 1834).
[270] Copleston to Knight, 31 July 1834, in Brown, *Letters of Edward Copleston*, 174.
[271] *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XXXVII, 147-8 (9 March 1837).
[272] Ibid., 209 (10 March 1837).
[273] Ibid., 383 (14 March 1837).
[274] J. P. Ellens, 'Lord John Russell and the Church Rate Conflict: The Struggle for a Broad Church, 1834-1868', *Journal of British Studies*, 26 (1987), 240-42; *Hansard*, 3rd Series,

stand taken against public opinion by many bishops in 1831 appears anomalous. For most of the period between 1812 and 1837, the bishops appeared keen to bring popular sentiment to bear on many of the most important measures of the day. Far from obstructing parliamentary manifestations of public opinion, the bishops made a significant contribution to the widening of the parliamentary sphere.

Revolution or Adjustment?

It may be argued that, in the high political sphere, the Church was in a strong position by the 1830s. Bishops, Prime Ministers and monarchs concurred in seeking to defend it. In the final section of this chapter, the extent to which this had a legislative impact will be considered. As stated above, the general consensus among historians has been that the Church of England was a victim, as opposed to an agent, of political change in this period. The repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, Catholic emancipation and the Reform Act have consistently been represented as precipitating cumulatively nothing short of a 'constitutional revolution' in which the Church suffered a political displacement from which it never fully recovered.[275] One implication of this interpretation is that bishops were weak and ineffective custodians of Anglican interests in Parliament.[276] But did the constitution really collapse on their watch?

The despair of many Anglicans at the laws of 1828-32 was not so much conditioned by the legislation itself as by an unfounded fear that disestablishment or worse was imminent. As Thomas Rennell, Dean of Winchester, put it, 'What was begun in the repeal *of the test &* Corporation act [sic] continued in the Popish

XXXVII, 835-47 (7 April 1837); XXXVIII, 1138-43 (1 June 1837). On Anglican opposition to the new Poor Law of 1834, see K. A. Francis, 'Fundraising Theology? Anglican Charity Sermons and Nineteenth-century Social Causes' in M. D. Button and J. A. Sheetz-Nguyen (eds.), *Victorians and the Case for Charity: Essays on Responses to English Poverty by the State, the Church and the Literati* (Jefferson, NC, 2014), 99-103.

[275] See above, 7-8, 14-15.

[276] Hole, *Pulpits*, 238-47; J. C. D. Clark, *English Society, 1660-1832: Religion, Ideology and Politics during the Ancien Regime* (2nd edn, Cambridge, 2000), 544-7, 556-7.

Emancipation, will be consummated in the disfigurement & *exinanition* of our Liturgy & Articles.'[277] Huntingford commented, 'How is it possible for me not to dread the arrival of that period, when the Papist Legislators shall feel their strength & degrade the Protestant Church of Ireland? … I am convinced degradation of our own Church will soon follow the spoliation and decadence of the Irish Ecclesiastical Establishment.'[278] In the aftermath of the passing of the Reform Bill, Henry Handley Norris wrote to Howley that he saw 'an undercurrent of conspiracy ready to rise and sweep all before it, as soon as that which is now upon the surface has done its destruction'.[279]

By contrast, Bishop Bathurst wrote of the Church in 1832 that he did 'not think it in any danger at present'.[280] To a large extent, this lack of alarm is borne out by the details of the legislative changes of 1828-32. It is especially important to note that Parliament was not, in any sense, an exclusively Anglican 'lay synod' prior to 1828, as is frequently claimed.[281] Seventeenth-century test legislation effectively excluded Roman Catholics and Quakers from Parliament, but it did not place any such restriction on other dissenters.[282] Furthermore, following the Acts of Union of 1706-7, Scottish Presbyterian MPs and representative peers legislated for a bi-confessional United Kingdom.[283] Additionally, at least 39 English and Welsh dissenters sat in the Commons between 1690 and 1715; at least 28 between 1715 and 1754; and at least

[277] Rennell to Norris, 15 December 1829, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 789, f. 203.
[278] Huntingford to Burgess, 6 May 1829, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 136, f. 107.
[279] Norris to William Howley, 25 October 1832, LPL, MS 2185, f. 95.
[280] Henry Bathurst to James Bathurst, 18 June 1832, Norfolk RO, DCN/154/2/117. This was a modification of Bathurst's opinion, expressed the previous year, that '[w]e are told incessantly by the High Church party, that our Ecclesiastical Establishment is in danger, and so it certainly is; but this danger arises from a want of temper and moderation in too many of the clergy, and also from their selfish opposition to a Commutation of Tithes': Henry Bathurst to Coke, 10 September 1831, in Thistlethwayte, *Memoirs*, 384.
[281] See e.g. S. J. Brown, *Providence and Empire: Religion, Politics and Society in the United Kingdom 1815-1914* (Harlow, 2008), 178; F. Knight, *The Church in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 2008), 14-15; R. M. Andrews, 'High Church Anglicanism in the Nineteenth Century' in R. Strong (ed.), *The Oxford History of Anglicanism, Volume III: Partisan Anglicanism and its Global Expansion, 1829-c. 1914* (Oxford, 2017) 145-6.
[282] 13 Cha. 2, c. 1; 25 Cha. 2, c. 2; 30 Cha. 2, c. 1.
[283] 6 Anne, c. 11; 1707, c. 7.

19 between 1754 and 1790.[284] From 1790 to 1820, just under 60 MPs were not members of the established churches of England, Scotland or Ireland.[285] There were also MPs who converted from Roman Catholicism to take their seats and, in the case of Frederick North, 5th Earl of Guilford, a covertly Greek Orthodox MP and peer.[286] Before 1828, Parliament was a multi-confessional body dominated by Anglicans, and it would remain so after 1832.

The repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts had no bearing on the religious composition of Parliament and, as discussed above, was strongly supported by the bench. The inefficacy and inappropriateness of the existing sacramental test, rendered largely defunct by indemnity acts, was widely acknowledged. Peel's intention was to place the Church on securer foundations. The Sacramental Test Act of 1828 required officeholders to declare that they would 'never exercise any Power, Authority, or Influence … to injure or weaken the Protestant Church as it is by law established in *England*, or to disturb the said Church, or the Bishops and Clergy of the said Church, in the Possession of any Rights or Privileges to which such Church, or the said Bishops and Clergy, are or may be by Law entitled.'[287] Given that dissenters were already holding civil office in practice, Peel considered this requirement a more effective safeguard for Anglican interests than the previous test: 'The difference between a declaration and a Test like the present is certainly enormous, if you will bona fide act upon your Test, but 85 years' relaxation of it, and

[284] D. W. Hayton (ed.), *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1690-1715*, 5 vols (Cambridge, 2002), I, 311; R. Sedgwick (ed.), *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1715-1754*, 2 vols (London, 1970), I, 139; L. B. Namier and J. Brooke (eds.), *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1754-1790* (3 vols., London, 1964, repr. 1985), I, 115.
[285] HoP 1790-1820, I, 294.
[286] K. Ware, 'The Fifth Earl of Guilford and his Secret Conversion to the Orthodox Church' in P. M. Doll (ed.), *Anglicanism and Orthodoxy 300 Years after the 'Greek College' in Oxford* (Oxford, 2006), 290-326; A. Lock, *Catholicism, Identity and Politics in the Age of Enlightenment: The Life and Career of Sir Thomas Gascoigne, 1745-1810* (Woodbridge, 2016), 97-146.
[287] 9 Geo. 4, c. 17.

the notorious inability to enforce the Test without absolute confusion, change the nature of the difference, and in my opinion, all in favour of the declaration.'[288]

Much the same approach was adopted in the Roman Catholic Relief Act of 1829. Though the bishops were largely dissatisfied with this measure, they and Peel had effectively created a blueprint for it in 1828.[289] The act stipulated that Roman Catholics entering Parliament should take oaths of allegiance and declare that they did 'not believe that the Pope of *Rome*, or any other Foreign Prince, Prelate, Person, State or Potentate, hath or ought to have any Temporal or Civil Jurisdiction, Power, Superiority or Pre-eminence, directly or indirectly, within this Realm.' They were also to 'disclaim, disavow, and solemnly abjure any Intention to subvert the present Church Establishment as settled by law within this Realm'. The act further forbade Roman Catholics to hold such high offices as Lord Chancellor and specified provisions for the 'gradual Suppression and final Prohibition' of the Jesuit order in the United Kingdom.[290] It was therefore not quite the 'triumph of civil and religious liberty' that Bathurst's eulogy made it out to be.[291] Pope Pius VIII expressed his opinion that the act 'contained gross imputations against the Catholic religion and could not be sanctioned by a declaration from Rome.' Yet with the approval of the English Vicars Apostolic, a small number of Catholic peers and MPs did take the oath.[292] Four English Roman Catholic MPs entered the House of Commons in 1830, but by 1837 there were only two.[293] Among the 105 Irish seats in the Commons, Protestant members predominated until the 1880s.[294]

Hence Catholic emancipation did not result in the immediate collapse of Anglican political ascendancy in England. While the reforms to the Church of Ireland

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[288] Peel to Lloyd, 25 March 1828, BL, Add MS 40343, f. 252.
[289] See above, 85-6.
[290] 10 Geo. 4, c. 7.
[291] Henry Bathurst to Coke, 16 April 1829, in Thistlethwayte, *Memoirs*, 352.
[292] Chadwick, *Victorian Church*, 22-3.
[293] J. A. Stack, 'Catholic Members of Parliament who represented British Constituencies, 1829-1885: A Prosopographical Analysis', *Recusant History*, 24 (1999), 348.
[294] K. Cowell-Meyers, *Religion and Politics in the Nineteenth Century: The Party Faithful in Ireland and Germany* (Westport, CT, 2002), 80.

implemented in the 1830s were in parts drastic and wide-ranging, reforms to the Church of England were mostly limited and consensual. The most significant collision between bench and government occurred in 1831, not on church reform but on the issue of parliamentary reform. The bishops were divided as to the details of the Reform Bill but, as Ellenborough observed, 'all for Reform'.[295] Indeed, Phillpotts wished 'some specific measure were started' on their part.[296] The vote of half the bishops for the third Reform Bill was not therefore an enormous concession. Moreover, the extension of the franchise did not, as Wellington had simplistically supposed, result in a mass transferral of power from gentlemen 'professing the faith of the Church of England' to 'the shopkeepers, being dissenters from the Church, many of them Socinians, others atheists.'[297] Though the dissenting electorate may have increased as a result of the Reform Act, the number of English dissenting MPs did not, standing at eight in 1833.[298] In addition, as will be shown, it allowed the clergy to bolster their electoral influence through involvement in the nascent Conservative party. Thus repeal, emancipation and reform were what Peel professed to advocate in 1829: 'satisfactory & safe adjustment'.[299]

The 'constitutional revolution' thesis is further called into question when one considers the failure of Whig attempts to dismantle aspects of Anglican hegemony in Parliament during the remainder of the 1830s. The Whigs managed to reduce the number of Irish dioceses in 1833, increase dissenting participation in local government through the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 and commute tithe

[295] Diary of Ellenborough, 8 October 1831, 144.
[296] Phillpotts to Ralph Barnes, 8 October 1831, in Davies, *Henry Phillpotts*, 113.
[297] Wellington to Croker, 6 March 1833, in L. J. Jennings (ed.), *The Croker Papers: The Correspondence and Diaries of the late Right Honourable John Wilson Croker, L.L.D., F.R.S., Secretary to the Admiralty from 1809 to 1830* (2nd edn, 3 vols., London, 1885), II, 205-6.
[298] S. F. Woolley, 'The Personnel of the Parliament of 1833', *English Historical Review*, 53 (1938), 244; R. Anstey, 'Parliamentary Reform, Methodism and Anti-Slavery Politics, 1829-1833', *Slavery and Abolition*, 2 (1981), 220-22.
[299] Peel to Lloyd, 15 January 1829, BL, Add MS 40343, f. 330. Cf. Peel to Van Mildert, 23 February 1835, BL, Add MS 40415, f. 137.

payments in 1836-8.[300] But parliamentary opposition ensured that they failed in attempts to admit dissenters to full membership of the universities of Oxford and Cambridge in 1834, to abolish church rates in 1837 and to introduce a nondenominational system of state education in 1839.[301] In these three defeats the Tory majority of bishops played a conspicuous role.[302] The genuine 'constitutional revolution', if such there was, came in the period from 1854 to 1871, with the abolition of the declarations imposed on Catholics and dissenters in 1828-9, the excision of three services from the Prayer Book, the abolition of compulsory church rates, the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland and the abolition of religious tests for membership of the universities of Oxford, Cambridge and Durham.[303] Viewed in the light of such measures, the legislation of 1828 to 1832, in so far as it affected the Church, appears comparatively insignificant.

Conclusion

The overall effect of political changes during this period was not to revolutionise the constitution or remove Anglican civil and religious dominance. The legislative reforms of 1828-32 did not operate in the way that many Anglicans had feared. In no small part, this outcome must be attributed to changes in episcopal politics throughout the early nineteenth century. Among all bishops, there was an observable transition away from clientage towards independent agency. In the case of the Grenvillite bishops, this was occasioned by their opposition to Catholic

[300] 3 & 4 Will. 4, c. 37; 5 & 6 Will. 4, c.76; 6 & 7 Will. 4, c. 71; 1 & 2 Vict., c. 109.
[301] *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XXV, 886 (1 August 1834); Ellens, 'Church Rate Conflict', 238-42; Newbould, 'The Whigs, the Church, and Education'.
[302] *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XXII, 994-1003 (21 April 1834); XXIII, 1189-92 (22 May 1834); XXV, 871-85 (1 August 1834); XXXVII, 147-59 (9 March 1837), 209-11 (10 March 1837), 382-3 (14 March 1837), 554-7 (16 March 1837), 675-8 (21 March 1837); Garrard, *Archbishop Howley*, 89-91.
[303] 17 & 18 Vict., c. 81; 19 & 20 Vict., c. 88; 21 & 22 Vict., c. 48; 29 & 30 Vict., c. 22; *London Gazette*, 18 January 1859, 161; 31 & 32 Vict., c. 109; 32 & 33 Vict., c. 42; 34 & 35 Vict., c. 26.

emancipation. For the Tory majority of bishops who dominated the bench from 1812, a more advanced stage of independence was evident, initially manifested in an alliance between the bishops and Liverpool's ministry during the Regency, and then, once this alliance was fractured by the Queen Caroline Affair, in more untrammelled political activity culminating in the majority of the bishops' opposition to Catholic emancipation and Whig reforms. The Whig minority of bishops, on the other hand, was slowest to move away from the client relationship, perpetuating it in the 1830s until Lord Melbourne effectively terminated it. The result was an episcopal bench that was able and willing to assert itself to a greater degree than at the beginning of the period. Concurrently with legislative independence, there was an increase in the frequency and force of episcopal oratory as well as appeals to popular opinion.

Despite this process of episcopal politicisation, the effectiveness of the bench as a political unit was hampered by certain weaknesses. Though the Easter Tuesday dinner was an important occasion for political discussion among the bishops, the other meetings held at Lambeth sometimes created more confusion than clarity, especially following Manners-Sutton's death. Howley struggled to maintain the unity of the bench, Blomfield could side with the government over his fellow bishops and Phillpotts's contributions often proved counter-productive. Moreover, the passage of Catholic emancipation, the Reform Act and the various Church reforms which were opposed by the bench demonstrated the limits of its influence. Episcopal agency was frequently neutralised by competing political forces.

Notwithstanding such weaknesses, the bishops made a central and increasingly independent contribution to the proceedings of the House of Lords. Through their actions, longstanding patronage networks were fractured, strains of public opinion were brought more fully to bear on legislative questions and, on occasion, votes went the way which the majority of bishops considered to be in the Church's best interests. The episcopacy became a force in high politics which could not be taken for granted or ignored, as the workings of the Ecclesiastical Commission testified. By the 1830s, the bishops' speeches – and especially those of Blomfield, Phillpotts and Howley – were regarded very attentively, even if their purport was challenged.

Above all, there persisted little of the servility that is often assumed to characterise the Church prior to the revival of convocations in the 1850s. While a later generation of clergy pressed for the revival of convocations as a means of making the Church's voice heard, the bishops of the 1830s judged presciently that this would condemn the Church to political irrelevance. Howley wrote in 1832, 'With respect to Convocations, it should be remembered that they can only deliberate, and can effect nothing: and the probable result of their revival as deliberative bodies, would be to set the Church in array against the House of Commons, in which case we know what would be the consequence.'[304] For all the difficulties they encountered, Howley and his fellow bishops judged that exertions in the House of Lords as 'statesmen' were the most effective means of protecting the Church's interests. Their efforts met with a large measure of success. Late in 1837, Howley could report, 'I do not expect any measure directly hostile to the Church; unless on compulsion from the Dissenters and Radicals.'[305] In parliamentary terms, the bishops began the Victorian era from a position of relative strength. The varying political fortunes of their clerical subordinates will be assessed in the next chapter.

[304] William Howley to Ingram, 2 October 1832, Bodl., Dep. c. 734, f. 31. Cf. Blomfield to William Howley, 11 December 1832, in Blomfield, *Memoir*, I, 207.
[305] William Howley to Charles Richard Sumner, 29 November 1837, in Sumner, *Life of Charles Richard Sumner*, 256.

Chapter 3: The Clergy and Local Politics

Whereas the Church of England retained a formidable presence and significant influence in the early nineteenth-century House of Lords, the possibility that clergymen might also take part in the proceedings of the House of Commons was precluded in 1801, when Anglican and Scottish Presbyterian ministers were debarred from sitting as MPs.[1] The occasion of this constitutional change was the election of the radical clergyman John Horne Tooke for the pocket borough of Old Sarum. As recently as 1797, the deacon Edward Rushworth had represented Yarmouth in the Commons, but the presence of Tooke antagonised Pitt's government.[2] Earl Temple's motion to remove Tooke precipitated a lengthy debate concerning the precedents for excluding clergy.[3] Temple inveighed against clerical MPs thus:

> Every one knows the preponderating influence of the clergy in this country. […] The moment you give admission to that weight of influence in the House of Commons, half your members will be in holy orders … you will create in this House a party of power and influence, which, if taken advantage of, and worked upon by wicked and malicious hands, may lead … to the overturn of every thing that is valuable in our constitution.[4]

The debarring of 1801 was a pre-emptive move, designed to prevent the possibility of increased clerical involvement in Parliament. Yet, as this chapter will show, instead of inaugurating a new era of clerical disengagement from Parliament, the debarring was followed by a period of intensified involvement by the clergy in parliamentary politics.

In many respects, such involvement has been overshadowed by historians' focus on the Oxford Movement in studies of clerical activity during this period. As already

[1] 41 Geo. III c. 63.
[2] HoP 1790-1820, V, 60.
[3] Ibid., IV, 235-7.
[4] *The Parliamentary History of England, from the Earliest Period to the Year 1803* (36 vols., London, 1806-20), XXXV, 1367.

discussed, there has been a powerful tendency to present Tractarianism as a vital Anglican 'awakening' from a state of Tory and Erastian torpor.[5] Within this schema, the Tractarians assume centre stage as the boldest and most significant critics of the so-called 'constitutional revolution', the Irish Church Temporalities Bill and other measures believed to undermine the Church. Geoffrey Best wrote of the 'growth or revival of a feeling of clerical independence' in this era but did not relate this to politics, instead seeing clergymen's growing independence as culminating in the Oxford Movement and 'the apparent readiness of so many of the clergy' to support it.[6] Similarly, Peter Nockles views Tractarianism as 'a response' to 'the shipwreck of the old constitution in church and state' which 'heralded a new beginning'. Toryism 'ceased to be the secular domicile of church feeling, loyalty and patriotism that it had hitherto been', and it henceforth 'found a home' by being 'harnessed' and 'subsumed' by Tractarianism.[7]

Correspondingly, historians have denied or minimised the pre- and non-Tractarian lower clergy's political activities. Edward Norman wrote in 1976 of how, even though 'the fabric of the social and political order incorporated the clergy at many levels', 'the clergy were not "political"'. They did not, in general, associate the Church with political causes or act as political agents.' Instead, they 'attempted to apply a sort of ban on party politics.'[8] By contrast, in 1980 Anthony Russell wrote that '[t]he political activities of the clergy reached their zenith' in the 1820s and 1830s.[9] However, it was 'difficult to assess' the extent of their influence, and from 1828 'it befitted the clergy to withdraw from party politics'.[10] J. A. Phillips also

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[5] See above, 5-8.
[6] G. F. A. Best, *Temporal Pillars: Queen Anne's Bounty, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and the Church of England* (Cambridge, 1964), 259.
[7] P. B. Nockles, '"Church and King": Tractarian Politics Reappraised' in P. Vaiss (ed.), *From Oxford to the People: Reconsidering Newman & the Oxford Movement* (Leominster, 1996), 114.
[8] E. R. Norman, *Church and Society in England 1770-1970: A Historical Study* (Oxford, 1976), 72-3.
[9] A. J. Russell, *The Clerical Profession* (London, 1980), 220.
[10] Ibid., 218, 223.

acknowledged cursorily that 'many Anglican clergymen assumed an overtly political role', but suggested that their efforts were thwarted by anticlericalism and were impossible to evaluate because the definition of adherence to Anglicanism was 'too nebulous to be addressed behaviourally'.[11] More recently, W. M. Jacob has written that the clergy were 'often caricatured as political agents of their patrons, as effective canvassers in their patrons' interests, using their pulpits to support election candidates.'[12]

It is only in the realm of local studies that the plausibility of this caricature has been fully recognised. Diana McClatchey argued in her 1960 study of Oxfordshire clergy that '[d]espite the theoretical deference paid by the clergy at all periods to the undesirability of active participation in politics, there is no doubt that a number of them in Oxfordshire were in fact actively concerned with political issues and electoral contests in the county.'[13] This tendency has been found wherever historians have analysed the local role of the clergy in detail, and is typically stated to have manifested itself principally in a staunch Toryism.[14] On the other hand, Simon Harratt, in investigating the clergy's socio-political role in the Diocese of Lincoln, argues that electioneering was equally the preserve of Whig clergy as of the Tories, neutralising the possibility of a distinctively clerical influence over local politics, which was further precluded by the mass politicisation of the electorate along secular

[11] J. A. Phillips, *The Great Reform Bill in the Boroughs: English Electoral Behaviour, 1818-1841* (Oxford, 1992), 282-5.
[12] W. M. Jacob, *The Clerical Profession in the Long Eighteenth Century, 1680-1840* (Oxford, 2007), 82.
[13] D. McClatchey, *Oxfordshire Clergy, 1777-1869: A Study of the Established Church and of the Role of its Clergy in Local Society* (Oxford, 1960), 204.
[14] See e.g. J. Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey, 1825-1875* (Oxford, 1976), 121-2; R. Lee, *The Church of England and the Durham Coalfield, 1810-1926: Clergymen, Capitalists and Colliers* (Woodbridge, 2007), 121-5; K. Navickas, *Loyalism and Radicalism in Lancashire, 1798-1815* (Oxford, 2009), 79-130; M. R. Austin, '*A Time of Unhappy Commotion': The Church of England and the People in Central Nottinghamshire, 1820-1870* (Chesterfield, 2010), 117-8.

lines.[15] He also asserts that a comprehensive account of 'the clergy's involvement in various aspects of electoral politics' would be 'tedious and unnecessary'.[16] A different view is taken here.

Two more general studies have tangentially shed light on the extent of clerical engagement with parliamentary politics in this period. Eileen Groth Lyon's account of Christian radicalism discusses a number of Anglican clergymen of a radical persuasion who involved themselves heavily in local campaigns, such as Arthur Wade and George Bull. If such men were atypical of the contemporary church in their political opinions, their careers still demonstrate the variety of ways in which the clergy could contribute to public affairs.[17] Robert Saunders, in an article concerning sermons preached against the Reform Bill, suggests that Anglican preaching was 'one of the most pervasive forms of oratory and a crucial point of contact between "high" and "low" political culture.' Furthermore, he seeks to restore the Church 'to the center of political debate' to understand why supporters and opponents of the bill 'fought so hard over its passage and how they responded once it had passed into law.'[18]

This chapter extends such approaches by considering the contribution of Anglican clergy of all political persuasions to contemporary debate through a variety of means, most of which entailed activity outside church and pulpit. By reference to a significant number of case studies regarding election contests and political activity throughout England, it delineates the distinctive features of clerical politics in this period across the country. Though local particularities were evident, it is possible to discern common patterns in the clergy's participation in parliamentary elections, petitioning campaigns, political societies and the use of preaching for political

[15] S. R. C. Harratt, 'A Tory Anglican Hegemony Misrepresented: Clergy, Politics and the People in the Diocese of Lincoln, c. 1770-1830' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Lancaster, 1997), 47-60, 162-208.
[16] Ibid., 54.
[17] E. G. Lyon, *Politicians in the Pulpit: Christian Radicalism in Britain from the Fall of the Bastille to the Disintegration of Chartism* (Aldershot, 1999).
[18] R. A. Saunders, 'God and the Great Reform Act: Preaching against Reform, 1831-32', *Journal of British Studies*, 53 (2014), 379-80.

purposes. These patterns are evident from clerical correspondence, newspaper reports, poll books, election memorabilia, handbills, petitions, sermons and pamphlets. The involvement of the clergy in vestry and municipal politics, though also substantial, lies beyond the scope of this study, which seeks to trace the engagement of the Church with the national issues debated in Parliament as this was manifested at a local level. In contrast to previous studies, this chapter presents the political involvement of the clergy as something dynamic rather than static and unchanging, and the clergy as participants in a nationwide process of clerical politicisation over which they exercised considerable control. Furthermore, it seeks to challenge the conventional assumptions that clerical efforts were not efficacious and that Tractarianism was a vitally significant wellspring of clerical activism. By restoring the mainstream clergy to the centre of early nineteenth-century political life, the constant intersection of religion and politics evident during this era is better comprehended.

University Parliamentary Elections

The most obvious gauge of the clergy's political sentiments in this period was the elections for MPs to represent the universities of Oxford and Cambridge in the House of Commons. Oxford and Cambridge were, with few exceptions, exclusively Anglican universities in this period and thus a part of the fabric of the established church. The holders of doctorates and Master of Arts degrees at both institutions, around three quarters of whom were clergy and all of whom were obliged to subscribe to the 39 Articles, were entitled to vote in the parliamentary elections.[19] In the first decade of the nineteenth century, 79.9% of those ordained as deacons were

[19] A. Haig, *The Victorian Clergy* (London, 1984), 29-30; HoP 1790-1820, II, 32, 327; W. T. Gibson, *The Church of England, 1688-1832: Unity and Accord* (London, 2001), 137-8; J. S. Meisel, *Knowledge and Power: The Parliamentary Representation of Universities in Britain and the Empire* (Chichester, 2011), 16, 49.

university graduates, a figure which had risen to 89.5% by the 1830s.[20] Between 1780 and 1839, only 1.3% of such ordinands had degrees from Trinity College, Dublin, while 0.4% had degrees from Scottish universities.[21] Hence the vast majority of the clergy were entitled to vote in either the Oxford or the Cambridge elections. However, the extent to which they decided elections *en masse* was limited at the outset of the period. Both constituencies had become in some degree proprietary concerns during the eighteenth century, with Cambridge's largely dependent on the nomination of the Duke of Grafton (Chancellor, 1768-1811) and Oxford's restricted by the numerical superiority of Christ Church and its practice of voting with unanimity.[22]

Nevertheless, there were some indications around 1806 that this state of affairs was not permanent. In that year, the Foxite Henry Petty was elected in Cambridge following William Pitt's death, the first Whig to represent the university since Grafton had secured the defeat of two Whig members by his son Lord Euston and Pitt in 1784. However, Petty was ejected in 1807 on account of his support for Catholic emancipation.[23] At Oxford, the possibility that the sitting MP Sir William Scott would be ennobled led William Windham, another opposition candidate and advocate of emancipation, to canvass despite some enmity from Cyril Jackson, Dean of Christ Church.[24] Windham's supporter the Whig clergyman Samuel Parr wrote that 'Windham's danger is from Xt church … with the exception of Dr Hall, he will be most fiercely attacked, he hates the Dean, more than I do.'[25] Bishop North of Winchester told Windham that although he was opposed to emancipation he was 'far from thinking that a Man who voted for the Catholic Petition, is therefore necessarily an Enemy to the Church of England', and that '[i]f this Alliance should take place

[20] S. Slinn, *The Education of the Anglican Clergy, 1780-1839* (Woodbridge, 2017), 61-71.
[21] Ibid., 109.
[22] P. Searby, *A History of the University of Cambridge, Volume III: 1750-1870* (Cambridge, 1997), 402; HoP 1790-1820, II, 328.
[23] L. B. Namier and J. Brooke (eds.), *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1754-1790* (3 vols., London, 1964, repr. 1985), I, 220; HoP 1790-1820, II, 33-4.
[24] HoP 1790-1820, II, 328.
[25] Samuel Parr to Edward Willes, 6 July 1805, Warwickshire RO, CR4141/7/347/5.

between you, & the University, I shall think it a very honorable one to both parties'. However, North was only connected with colleges 'adverse' to Windham's candidacy and apprehended 'the difficulty of a B[isho]p of Winchester asking a favor at Oxford, without giving half a Dozen'.[26] Devoid of such support, Windham withdrew.[27] Charles Abbot and Robert Peel, both Tories and Christ Church nominees, were the next MPs elected for Oxford in 1806 and 1817.[28] The death of Grafton in 1811 and the consequent elevation of Euston to the House of Lords triggered a by-election at Cambridge in which the late duke's grandson John Smyth lost to Viscount Palmerston, but Smyth was elected unopposed in another by-election in 1812.[29]

Thus by the time of Lord Liverpool's premiership, the Christ Church and Grafton interests had held up, though not without challenges. It was Smyth's death in 1822 that precipitated the first significant deviation from proprietorial politics in the university seats. Liverpool attempted to gain control of the seat by putting forward his young nephew Lord Hervey, but the latter's pro-emancipation views proved a significant stumbling block. Although Liverpool and Lord Ellenborough secured for Hervey the support of the deans of Ely and Peterborough and Bishop Law of Chester, such clerical patronage was outweighed by the entry into the contest of Charles Manners-Sutton, son of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Speaker of the House of Commons and an opponent of emancipation.[30] Hastings Robinson, a St John's fellow, wrote to John William Whittaker, a former chaplain to the Archbishop, forwarding Manners-Sutton junior's election address and stating, 'I hope the A[rch]b[isho]p will have suff[icien]t influence with you to bring you up to vote for his relation, whom all the Johnians, saving the M[aste]r (engaged by L[or]d Liverpool for L[or]d Harvey before the Speaker had offered himself,) cordially

[26] Brownlow North to William Windham, 7 July 1805, BL, Add MS 37909, ff. 66-7.
[27] HoP 1790-1820, II, 329.
[28] Ibid., 330.
[29] Ibid., 35.
[30] HoP 1820-1832, II, 94-5; George Pearson to John William Whittaker, 31 October 1822, WP(C), 12/13.

support.'[31] However, Manners-Sutton withdrew when doubts were entertained as to whether he could continue as Speaker if he vacated his current seat during a parliamentary session.[32] Whittaker wrote to the Archbishop that this gave him 'very lively concern', but he was satisfied that '[t]he fact of 56, out of 62, fellows of St. John's having, during his so short canvass, pledged themselves in his favour … while [the] master's vote was otherwise engaged, may perhaps free our good old College from [the] imputation of blindly following [the] example of its superior.'[33]

In the event, another anti-Catholic candidate, William Bankes, appeared, promising to give 'the most steady and decided opposition to any measure tending to undermine or alter the established church'. Assisted by high turnout on the part of rural clergymen, he defeated Hervey by 138 votes.[34] St John's fellow Edward Bushby reported to Whittaker that the election divided the college, lamenting that 'Lady Margaret has been torn and shattered'. Bushby considered that 'Bankes' triumph is owing to three causes 1. and above all to the Anticatholic ground on which he rested 2. To the superior activity of himself and his Committee as Canvassers 3. To his superior merits …' He expressed a hope that the college would be 'restored' to its 'ancient unanimity and vigour' at the next general election.[35] But Cambridge elections would not be cosy collegiate affairs again. As Christopher Wordsworth, Master of Trinity College, told Henry Handley Norris before the result, '*Public Spirit*, and the *Anti-Romanist Spirit* have gained ground amongst us, exceedingly.'[36] Nevertheless, the shift towards politicisation was not obvious to all. To Shropshire curate John Blunt, writing to Whittaker, the 1822 by-election was still primarily a social affair:

> If there is one thing on earth better worth seeing than another it is a Cambridge Contested Election. The hurly-burly of the business, the stage-

[31] Hastings Robinson to Whittaker, c. 29 October 1822, WP(C), 13/8.
[32] HoP 1820-1832, II, 95.
[33] Whittaker to Charles Manners-Sutton, 12 November 1822, WP(B).
[34] HoP 1820-1832, II, 95-6.
[35] Edward Bushby to Whittaker, 28 November 1822, WP(C), 8/3.
[36] Christopher Wordsworth to Henry Handley Norris, 5 November 1822, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 789, f. 134.

> coaches, the carriages & four, the feasting […] But above all the endless greetings amongst old friends who had hardly expected even to meet again, all conspire to render it worth any man's while to go from the land's end to partake of.

As for the result of the election, that was to Blunt 'a matter of comparative indifference'.[37]

The increasing anti-Catholic sentiment among the Cambridge clergy made the position of Palmerston, who favoured emancipation, very precarious. The 1826 election pitted him against three fellow Tories who were all against emancipation, Bankes, John Copley and Henry Goulburn. The pro-emancipation minority in the University exerted themselves strongly on Palmerston's behalf. John Harrison, a Whig clergyman from Derbyshire, wrote to his friend John Kirby, 'I hope you will go up & give *Lord Palmerston a Plumper* for the University. I think I see you staring with all your Eyes at *my* canvassing for a Tory; but "telles choses sont"; of the Four Evils he is the *least*; & that is why *I* wish him Success.'[38] Palmerston retained his seat, gaining 142 'plumpers' (votes for one candidate where two votes could be cast) – more than all of his opponents – and benefiting from the splitting of the anti-Catholic vote.[39] A further by-election in 1827 saw anti-Catholics coalesce around Bankes again, but he was defeated by Nicholas Tyndal, who opposed emancipation but supported Canning. By this stage, the rural clergymen who descended upon Cambridge for these contests had become figures of ridicule among their Whig opponents, with the young Thomas Babington Macaulay writing a particularly biting satire, 'The Country Clergyman's Trip to Cambridge'.[40]

It was, however, at Oxford in 1829 that an influx of rural clergy caused the largest upset. Oxford elections of the 1820s had been largely uneventful, with Christ Church by and large maintaining its hold over the constituency. In the contested by-

[37] John James Blunt to Whittaker, 4 January 1823, WP(C), 6/18.
[38] John Harrison to John Kirby, 4 May 1826, East Sussex RO, KIR 28/59.
[39] HoP 1820-1832, II, 100.
[40] Ibid., 101; Harratt, 'Tory Anglican Hegemony', 62.

election of 1821, Richard Heber was elected to replace the ennobled Sir William Scott, supported by the Dean of Christ Church and almost two-thirds of its voters.[41] Peel's former tutor Charles Lloyd of Christ Church had told him in 1818, 'You may depend upon it that as long as you remain in the House of Commons, w[hi]ch I hope will be a long while, you will sit for the University without any opposition.'[42] The sequence of events whereby this prediction was proved false, with Peel being turned out in favour of Robert Inglis despite the backing of Christ Church following his volte-face on Catholic emancipation, has been so well documented elsewhere that it is unnecessary to recount it in detail here.[43] The words 'no peel', branded on a door below the dining hall in Christ Church and still to be seen there, evoke both the strength of anti-Peel feeling and the college's loss of control over the political passions of the University.

Historians have long interpreted the 1829 Oxford election primarily from the perspective of John Henry Newman, Peter Nockles going so far as to argue that it 'marks more accurately the origin of the [Oxford] Movement than Keble's 1833 Assize Sermon'.[44] However, Newman's vantage point in 1829 was atypical of the University's electorate as a whole. He was unconcerned with the prospect of Catholic emancipation, seeing the election as an opportunity to punish Peel for betraying 'a religious, straightforward, unpolitical body'.[45] In a letter to his friend Samuel Rickards, Newman openly mocked the Tory slogans employed by Inglis's other supporters.[46] But, for all Newman's disdain for electioneering politics, this was a case of clerical politicisation along anti-Catholic lines surpassing even the

[41] HoP 1820-1832, II, 842-3.
[42] Charles Lloyd to Robert Peel, 20 May 1818, BL, Add MS 40277, f. 126.
[43] N. Gash, 'Peel and the Oxford University Election of 1829', *Oxoniensia*, 4 (1939), 162-73; M. G. Brock, 'The Oxford of Peel and Gladstone, 1800-1833' in idem. and M. C. Curthoys (eds.), *The History of the University of Oxford, Volume VI: Nineteenth-Century Oxford, Part 1* (Oxford, 1997), 56-60; HoP 1820-1832, II, 846-9.
[44] P. B. Nockles, '"Lost Causes and … Impossible Loyalties': The Oxford Movement and the University' in Brock and Curthoys, *University of Oxford*, 202.
[45] John Henry Newman to Harriett Newman, 17 February 1829, in LDN, II, 122.
[46] John Henry Newman to Samuel Rickards, 15 February 1829, in ibid., 121.

Cambridge University by-election of 1822. As the *Morning Chronicle* noted, 'The struggle on a former occasion, between Mr. Heber and Sir J. Nicoll, was carried on with much personal interest for the respective candidates, but never before did a case arise involving so much of public principle as the present.'[47] Moreover, though Newman was on Inglis's 19-strong Oxford election committee and wrote over 100 letters in his favour, there is no evidence that he exercised any leadership in the Inglis campaign beyond the Oriel common room, which he, Froude and Keble tried to turn against its pro-Peel Provost, Edward Hawkins.[48] The true leaders of the anti-Peel movement were Martin Routh, President of Magdalen, who proposed Inglis, and Thomas Wintle, a fellow of St John's, who chaired the Oxford election committee.[49]

In the diarist Charles Greville's opinion, Inglis's election committees were 'composed of men not much better than old women, except Fynes Clinton', chairman of the London committee.[50] Collectively, they have been assigned a lesser role in Inglis's campaign than such proto-Tractarian Orielites as Newman.[51] But in reality it was the proto-Tractarians who were relatively ineffectual, only managing to convince 42% of Oriel to back Inglis, his third worst showing among the 19 colleges.[52] Of the seven voters identified by Newman as particular objects of his

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[47] *Morning Chronicle*, 27 February 1829, 3. Cf. C. Girdlestone, *Substance of a Speech for the Convocation House, Oxford, February 26, 1829* (Oxford, 1829), 8.
[48] R. D. Middleton, *Dr. Routh* (Oxford, 1938), 149; Diary of John Henry Newman, 13-14 February 1829, in LDN, II, 121; 21-2 February 1829, 124; John Henry Newman to Harriett Newman, 17 February 1829, in ibid., 122-3.
[49] J. R. Bloxham, *A Register of the Presidents, Fellows, Demies, Instructors in Grammar and in Music, Chaplains, Clerks, Choristers, and other Members of Saint Mary Magdalen College in the University of Oxford, from the Foundation of the College to the Present Time* (7 vols., Oxford, 1853-81), IV, 35; HoP 1820-1832, II, 848.
[50] Diary of Charles Greville, 22 February 1829, in C. C. F. Greville, *The Greville Memoirs 1814-1860*, ed. L. Strachey and R. Fulford (8 vols., London, 1938), I, 256.
[51] Brock, 'Oxford of Peel and Gladstone', 58; B. Martin, *John Henry Newman: His Life and Work* (London, 2000), 35; V. F. Blehl, *Pilgrim Journey: John Henry Newman 1801-1845* (London, 2001), 86; C. Podmore, *Aspects of Anglican Identity* (London, 2005), 18; J. Pereiro, 'The Oxford Movement and Anglo-Catholicism' in R. Strong (ed.), *The Oxford History of Anglicanism, Volume III: Partisan Anglicanism and Global Expansion, 1829-c. 1914* (Oxford, 2017), 190.
[52] HoP 1820-1832, II, 848.

canvassing in his diary, five did not even vote.[53] If, therefore, we are to understand why Inglis won, we must look beyond the confines of Oriel. Strikingly, at Wintle's college (St John's) 84% voted for Inglis, double the Oriel proportion.[54] Unlike Newman, for whom the election was 'the first public event I have been concerned in', Wintle was an experienced electoral operator.[55] Aged around 55 in 1829, he was described at his death as an adherent of 'the old Tory school of politics' who 'for many years took an active part in public matters at Oxford'.[56] At the 1821 by-election, Wintle had chaired Sir John Nicholl's election committee, which obtained promises of 740 votes, 519 of which materialised.[57] The revival of this tactic of obtaining promises by mass letter-writing on an even larger scale by Inglis's committees in 1829 strongly suggests the influence of Wintle. John Allen Giles, a Corpus Christi BA, recalled:

> [A] grand fight was prepared. Every body who was willing to help was called on ... I speedily put myself in communication with some of the Committees that were formed for securing the election of Sir Robert H. Inglis, and was deputed to write to every body I knew in the world who had a vote and would give it in favour of our candidate.[58]

In a circular to non-residents, it was 'particularly requested that … you will be so good as to state expressly whether you will vote for Sir R. H. Inglis.' As conveyed to Worcester rector Robert Clifton (a graduate of Worcester College), this was accompanied by an endorsement stating that 'The Provost, Dr Bourne *& all* the

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[53] Diary of John Henry Newman, 15 February 1829, in LDN, II, 121; 22 February 1829, 124; John Henry Newman to Rickards, 15 February 1829, in ibid., 121; *An Authentic Copy of the Poll for a Member to serve in the Present Parliament for the University of Oxford* (Oxford, 1829), 9-10. The two who voted were Samuel Rickards and William Roles, both of Oriel.
[54] HoP 1820-1832, II, 848.
[55] John Henry Newman to Jemima Newman, 1 March 1829, in LDN, II, 125.
[56] *Gentleman's Magazine*, March 1855, 326.
[57] HoP 1820-1832, VI, 491.
[58] J. A. Giles, *The Diary & Memoirs of John Allen Giles*, ed. D. Bromwich (Taunton, 2000), 81.

Residents vote for S[i]r R[obert] H[arry] I[nglis]. Be so good as to direct your answer to the Bursar of Wor[cester] Coll[ege].'[59] Clifton was one of the 87% of Worcester voters who backed Inglis.[60] At St Edmund Hall, Vice-Principal John Hill spent '[e]very spare moment … answering letters on the subject of the Election' and 'received 23 absolute promises for Sir. R. H. Inglis with 3 more who will come if they can'.[61] 86% of Edmund Hall electors voted for Inglis.[62]

A further masterstroke on the part of Wintle's committee was the decision to request Martin Routh to propose Inglis. The aged Routh was a distinguished scholar respected across the political spectrum, a fact that Charles Lloyd, Peel's most devoted supporter, could not deny.[63] Routh was 'very violent against S[i]r Robert Peel', and even penned a prayer that God would save the Church '[f]rom all the evil that she owes to Peel'.[64] 70% of Magdalen voters backed Inglis.[65] The long-term consequence of Routh and Wintle's efforts was that Christ Church managerialism was superseded by a deeply politicised Anglican Toryism in the University, which the Tractarians, though allied in 1829, would later attempt to dislodge. This was the very opposite of the apolitical ideal of the university which Newman mistakenly saw Inglis's victory as vindicating. By 1833, shortly before (to Newman's chagrin) Wintle and Routh were instrumental in securing the unopposed election of the Duke of Wellington to the chancellorship of the University, it was possible to write of Wintle as 'a leading man in Oxford' who had 'successfully exerted himself in re-uniting the Conservative Party in the University.'[66] In 1840, when the Duke's illness

[59] Circular by Thomas Wintle, 14 February 1829, Warwickshire RO, DR0362/131/1.
[60] *Authentic Copy of the Poll*, 37; HoP 1820-1832, II, 848.
[61] Diary of John Hill, quoted in W. J. Baker, *Beyond Port and Prejudice: Charles Lloyd of Oxford, 1784-1829* (Orono, ME, 1981), 186.
[62] HoP 1820-1832, II, 848.
[63] Lloyd to Peel, 13 February 1829, BL, Add MS 40343, f. 368; Baker, *Charles Lloyd*, 185.
[64] Middleton, *Routh*, 149.
[65] HoP 1820-1832, II, 848.
[66] John Henry Newman to Henry Wilberforce, 17 January 1834, in LDN, IV, 177-8; Middleton, *Routh*, 149; J. Brooke and J. Gandy (eds.), *The Prime Ministers' Papers: Wellington: Political Correspondence I: 1833-November 1834* (London, 1975), 367-70, 379, 429-30; F. B. Bickley (ed.), *Report on the Manuscripts of Earl Bathurst, preserved at Cirencester Park* (London, 1923), 663-5; Henry Hardinge to Duke of Wellington, 27

meant that another chancellorship election seemed imminent, Newman wrote disapprovingly of the dominance in Oxford of 'the Wintle party'.[67]

As was already evident in 1822, Cambridge too had its Wintles, but they were not able to emulate Oxford in the Cambridge election of June 1829. George Bankes, the brother of William Bankes, put himself forward as a candidate when Tindal was made Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, and was opposed by William Cavendish, cousin and heir to the Whig grandee the Duke of Devonshire. But with the Catholic question settled, Bankes's campaign lacked vigour, radical MP John Hobhouse observing that Bankes's London committee room was run by 'several gaunt looking parsons'. Supported strongly by Trinity scientists such as Charles Babbage and Adam Sedgwick, Cavendish won by 148 votes.[68]

In 1831, however, the determined opposition of Cambridge clergy to the Reform Bill resulted in both Palmerston and Cavendish being defeated, and the victory of the anti-reform candidates Henry Goulburn and William Yates Peel, brother of Sir Robert Peel. The correspondence of George Elwes Corrie, Tutor at Catharine Hall, reveals the urgency with which non-resident voters viewed this election, and contrasts with the leisurely attitude to Cambridge elections that had still been evident even in 1822. Evidently Corrie had sent out letters to all of his college friends urging them to vote against the reformers, Huddersfield curate John Gilderdale replying 'I quite agree with you in thinking it a *duty* to make a stand against the bold political innovations wh[ich] are following each other with such rapidity.'[69] James Harris, whose right to vote had been questioned in 1829, was eager to regain this right 'that I may be enabled to unite with those … who think our present representatives *unworthy* of the trust, by their support of that measure which must most inevitably

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November 1833, HL, WP4/5/3/21. Newman and the Tractarians had hoped for the election of Archbishop Howley as Chancellor, but, according to Newman, 'we could command no Common Room for him': John Henry Newman to John William Bowden, 30 January 1834, in LDN, IV, 183.

[67] John Henry Newman to Bowden, 21 February 1840, in LDN, VII, 241.

[68] HoP 1820-1832, II, 102-3.

[69] John Gilderdale to George Elwes Corrie, 25 April 1831, StC, T/3/1/5/50.

go to subvert the Constitution, & with it as a matter of course, all the *venerated establishments* of the Land.'[70] Horatio Montagu offered his 'cordial support', believing that 'the present urge for reform has its origins from a spirit which despises all wholesome restraints both human & divine: that its end & object is to "break their bonds", and as you express it ultimately to "overthrow the Institutions of our country".'[71] Buckinghamshire curate Edward Wilson wrote 'from the side of my wife's sick bed', but hoped that if his mother arrived in time to tend to his wife he could 'give my Vote & return, so as to be only one night', as he considered 'it a duty to give [a] hand to throw out such [a] man as Lord Palmerston, & oppose Mr. Cavendish'.[72]

Of the eight clergymen with whom Corrie is known to have corresponded concerning the election, all except Harris (who was presumably denied the right) voted (including Wilson), and all except one voted for Goulburn and Peel.[73] The single outlier was Lincolnshire vicar Godfrey Egremont, who had initially told Corrie that '[h]aving at [the] last election voted for Cavendish by [the] particular request of my friend & patron, I shall at [the] ensuing election remain quietly at home, as I should not like to oppose him.'[74] Egremont's lukewarm servility was uncharacteristic of St Catharine's as a whole, which recorded a 70% vote for the anti-reformers. While Trinity backed the reformers, it was the smaller houses like Catharine Hall, Queens', Sidney Sussex, Trinity Hall and Emmanuel which, together with 67% of St John's voters, carried the day.[75] As in Oxford, the political balance had tilted away from overarching aristocratic and collegiate interests towards hitherto obscure Tory clergymen, among whom Corrie became dominant. He

[70] James Harris to Corrie, c. 5 April 1831, StC, T/3/1/5/29.
[71] Horatio Montagu to Corrie, 8 April 1831, StC, T/3/1/5/34.
[72] Edward Wilson to Corrie, 26 April 1831, StC, T/3/1/5/49.
[73] H. Gunning, *The Poll for the Election of Two Representatives in Parliament for the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1831), 17-18.
[74] Godfrey Egremont to Corrie, 27 April 1831, StC, T/3/1/5/51.
[75] HoP 1820-1832, II, 104.

assumed in Cambridge much the same role as Wintle had in Oxford and, according to a contemporary, acquired 'very considerable' political influence in the University:

> He was always consulted and looked up to by the leaders of the Conservative party. His support was of very great value; his opposition was almost fatal to the success of a candidate for the representation of the University in Parliament. […] When he had spoken, a very large section of the Electors at once made up their minds and followed him with the utmost confidence.[76]

The events of 1829 and 1831 at the universities therefore amounted cumulatively to nothing short of a transformation in clerical politics. As Phillpotts said in anticipation of the Cambridge result, 'This will be almost as striking, though not in its operation so important, as Mr Peel's defeat at Oxford two years ago.'[77] At a reformist dinner in Birmingham, Whig clergyman William Leigh, contemplating both results, wondered at the audacity and implacability of his fellow clergy: 'These men shut their eyes and ears to conviction, and how, therefore, was it possible to change their opinions? They were impervious to all argument.'[78] And so it proved. There were no more contested elections for the English universities until 1847, when Gladstone broke the mould by being elected as a Peelite in Oxford.[79] Both seats had been wrested from the control of patrons and placed at the disposal of a clergy that was more engaged in party politics and more independent than ever.

County and Borough Parliamentary Elections: Votes and Attitudes

If the Cambridge and Oxford university seats followed the same basic political trajectory during this period, it is far more difficult to generalise about the nation at large. Each county and borough had its own distinctive dynamic, and it was often the

[76] M. Holroyd (ed.), *Memorials of the Life of George Elwes Corrie, D.D.* (Cambridge, 1890), 348.
[77] Henry Phillpotts to Ralph Barnes, 25 April 1831, in G. C. B. Davies, *Henry Phillpotts Bishop of Exeter, 1778-1869* (London, 1954), 103.
[78] *Morning Chronicle*, 28 May 1831, 3.
[79] HoP 1820-1832, II, 850.

case that local issues and interests predominated over national ones. However, taking account of this important caveat, it is possible to discern common trends in clerical electioneering outside of the universities. While many clergy were deeply ambivalent about the way in which elections were conducted and the extent to which they should participate in these contests, there was an increasing lack of reticence in the way in which a large number conducted themselves at elections. Furthermore, clergymen were involved at all stages of parliamentary elections and could exercise a significant influence over lay voters. In this section, the various facets of their involvement and impact will be considered.

It is first important to establish how the clergy voted. Where the clergy have been analysed as a distinct voting group in the poll books for county elections, a fairly consistent pattern emerges. Whereas for much of the eighteenth century clerical votes had been widely split between Whig and Tory, a decisive swing in favour of Tories was evident from the first decade of the nineteenth century.[80] In Norfolk in 1802, the clergy voted 'overwhelmingly' for the Tory candidate.[81] At the Yorkshire election of 1807, 70% of clergy supported Tory candidates alone, 21% supported the Whig candidate alone and 9% split their votes between Tories and Whigs.[82] In 1820, all but eight of West Sussex's 76 clerical electors cast both of their votes for Tories.[83] In 1826, the proportion of clergy voting for a Tory candidate could be still higher: 72% in Bedfordshire, 91% in Oxfordshire and in Huntingdonshire 'almost to a man' among resident clergy.[84] 1830s elections produced similar results: 78% in

[80] F. O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties: The Unreformed Electoral System of Hanoverian England 1734-1832* (Oxford, 1989), 363; W. T. Gibson, *The Achievement of the Anglican Church, 1689-1800: The Confessional State in Eighteenth Century England* (Lewiston, NY, 1995), 54-5; R. Hall and S. Richardson, *The Anglican Clergy and Yorkshire Politics in the Eighteenth Century* (York, 1998), 7-15.
[81] B. D. Hayes, 'Politics in Norfolk, 1750-1832' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 1957), 53.
[82] Hall and Richardson, *Yorkshire Politics*, 28.
[83] M. D. W. Jones, 'Uncovering the Enthusiasms and Prejudices of a 19th-century Country Parson: Maurice Smelt, Rector of Binstead (1815-63) and Slindon (1815-65)', *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, 155 (2017), 162.
[84] HoP 1820-1832, II, 9, 513; McClatchey, *Oxfordshire Clergy*, 210.

North Durham (1832), around 80% in Northamptonshire (1831) and North Nottinghamshire (1832), 84% in East Sussex (1832), 88% in Suffolk (1830) and 89% in Dorset (1831) and North Lincolnshire (1835).[85] However, in boroughs, voting appears to have been less solidly Tory. Six out of 11 Bridgnorth clergy voted for a Whig in 1826 (albeit all casting their other vote for a Tory), while six of Durham's 16 clergy did the same in 1832.[86] In the Nottinghamshire borough of East Retford in 1831, 15 of the 31 clergy voted for the pro-reform candidates.[87] Of the clergy and lay church officials in Exeter voting in 1831, 58% cast a vote for the Whig candidate.[88] Nevertheless, it was possible for as many as 84% of the clergy's votes in a borough to be for Tory candidates, as in Hereford in 1826.[89] Four years later in Shrewsbury, eight of the eleven clergy voted exclusively for the Tory candidates.[90] Overall, the picture was one of Tory dominance with pockets of Whig support.[91]

To what extent were these votes the consequence of patronage? Robert Lee's analysis of clerical voting behaviours in Norfolk sheds light on this question. In this county, 75% of all the clergy's votes were cast for Tory or Conservative candidates between 1802 and 1858. Yet on three estates where the landowner was a Whig, the picture was quite different, with majorities of 51% (Evans-Lombe), 62% (Astley) and 88% (Coke) being recorded for Whig candidates over the same period. However, on the Suffield estate, the switching of political allegiance on the part of the landowning family from Tory to Whig in 1821 had little or no discernible impact on clerical voting, with 81% of votes being cast for Tories until 1858. Meanwhile, on

[85] Figures derived from Lee, *Durham Coalfield*, 123; HoP 1820-1832, II, 310, 749; Austin, *Time of Unhappy Commotion*, 118; *Brighton Guardian*, 9 January 1833, 4; HoP 1820-1832, III, 34; Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society*, 121.
[86] HoP 1820-1832, II, 866; Lee, *Durham Coalfield*, 123.
[87] Harratt, 'Tory Anglican Hegemony', 176.
[88] HoP 1820-1832, II, 274.
[89] Ibid., 475.
[90] Ibid., 880.
[91] For further evidence of Tory inclinations among the clergy, see Phillips, *Great Reform Bill*, 279-82.

the Tory-leaning Walsingham estate, every single clerical vote of the period was for Tories. Lee suggests that 'clergymen were *either* being appointed on the strength of their political allegiances *or* … many clergymen regarded political unity with the local landowner as a matter of overriding social importance.'[92] The former possibility appears far more likely.[93] By and large, clergy responded to appeals from patrons or relatives on the basis of their own political inclinations. This can be seen clearly in the Whig clergy who supported Earl Grey. In 1807, Percival Stockdale, vicar of a parish adjoining Grey's estate, pledged his vote to Grey in the Northumberland election before he was canvassed, pre-empting a letter from Grey.[94] James Morton, Grey's chaplain, was summoned to Alnwick in 1826 to vote for Grey's son Lord Howick, but it is clear from Morton's diary and correspondence that he was a convinced supporter of Catholic emancipation, parliamentary reform and the abolition of slavery.[95]

Tory clergy displayed a similar propensity to ally themselves with patrons with political views congenial to their own. At Stamford in 1831, the anti-reform clergy were said to be 'in the interest of the marquess of Exeter', who owned most of the town's advowsons, but given the overwhelming hostility of the clergy to the Reform Bill across England, their decision to join forces with their patron was hardly an indication of subservience.[96] As the Duke of Wellington wrote in 1832 to John Bastard, of whose living Wellington was patron, 'if I was a Clergyman no power on Earth should induce me to vote for a Member who I should not believe would

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[92] R. Lee, *Rural Society and the Anglican Clergy, 1815-1914: Encountering and Managing the Poor* (Woodbridge, 2006), 160-62.
[93] For a discussion of patronage networks tending more towards the latter possibility, see Harratt, 'Tory Anglican Hegemony', 11-47, 191-4.
[94] Percival Stockdale to Earl Grey, 8 May 1807, DUL, GRE/B42/12/10; Earl Grey to Stockdale, 11 May 1807, DUL, GRE/B42/12/14A; Stockdale to Earl Grey, 13 May 1807, DUL, GRE/B42/12/29.
[95] Journal of James Morton, 20 October 1825, 26 May 1826, 26-7 June 1826, 26 November 1830, 18 February 1831, 15 June 1832, Lincolnshire Arch., MISC DEP 306/1/6; Morton to Earl Grey, 29 March 1829, DUL, GRE/B41/14/23.
[96] HoP 1820-1832, II, 659; A. Rogers, *The Making of Stamford* (Leicester, 1965), 97.

support and maintain the Establishments in Church and State.'[97] Bastard was only too happy to accept Wellington's voting directions, which concurred with his 'wishes and opinions on the subject'.[98] Where the views of patron and clergy diverged, the clergy had little compunction in maintaining personal inclinations. The Vicar of Banbury, John Lamb, excited opprobrium by helping the Banbury Corporation turn out Dudley North, the Foxite relative of his patron the Earl of Guilford, in 1806.[99] In Dorset in 1831, the Whig Lord Ilchester was displeased to find that his two clerical brothers-in-law had voted for the Tory candidates. One expressed regret, but the other responded that the election took 'a great deal too much the appearance of an attack upon the church, to justify any clergyman in being passive'.[100] This active independence was to become the defining feature of clerical electioneering during this period.

However, at the beginning of the century, a certain reluctance to participate in parliamentary elections beyond voting was evident among prominent clergy. Bishop Burgess told William Windham in 1805, 'I find myself bound by my situation, on many accounts, to detach myself from the remotest communication with parliamentary elections.'[101] The following year, Brownlow North assured the Earl of Carnarvon that he would give his son, a candidate in the Hampshire election, 'all the Countenance & support, which the proprieties requisite in my situation will allow.'[102] In 1807, however, North told the Earl of Malmesbury that he was 'as little as I can help it, a Politician, & have little part in the concerns of the County; in truth

[97] Duke of Wellington to John Bastard, 30 October 1832, HL, WP4/4/3/30. A similar attitude was evident in a clergyman's alleged retort to the complaint of a Whig canvasser in Sussex, '"I cannot conceive how it happens … that all the clergy are against my brother." – "Perhaps," said the clergyman, mildly, "perhaps it is *because your brother is against all the clergy*."': *Lincolnshire Chronicle*, 11 August 1837, 4.
[98] Bastard to Wellington, 3 November 1832, HL, WP4/4/3/31.
[99] HoP 1790-1820, II, 322. Despite this, John Lamb was presented to the living of Chipping Warden by the Earl of Guilford in 1815 as 'the boon of political service': *Gentleman's Magazine*, January 1832, 90.
[100] HoP 1820-1832, II, 312-3.
[101] Thomas Burgess to Windham, 25 July 1805, BL, Add MS 37909, f. 150.
[102] North to Earl of Carnarvon, 19 September 1806, Hampshire RO, 75M91/A20/16.

I think County politics a great deal too like the Game of Snap dragon, which I dislike, because it burns my fingers.'[103] By contrast, Bishop Pretyman-Tomline was willing to make modest interventions in elections at the request of politicians who had been connected to Pitt like George Rose and Lord Grenville.[104] In 1808, he explained to Rose that 'at the last General Election the little influence I had was chiefly given to the Friends of the present Ministers, & I refused very strong applications in favor of Candidates who had been hostile to Mr Pitt.'[105] At this stage, therefore, clergymen were clearly not a distinctive force in parliamentary elections, generally either keeping their distance from them or discreetly assisting certain candidates when they felt inclined to do so.

This state of affairs was perpetuated in some quarters by a distaste for the raucous manner in which elections were often conducted.[106] Thomas Dunham Whitaker, Vicar of Whalley, Lancashire, stated in 1817, 'as to annual elections, there are sober persons who presume to think that a recurrence of epidemical riot and phrenzy once in seven years is quite enough'.[107] Morton, a Scot, remarked to Earl Grey in 1827 that 'Scotland was happy in being free from the mobbing & riot of English Elections', and that he 'hoped men would, some time or other, devise a plan of Election which could be managed without mobs'.[108] Such riotousness served as a disincentive to clerical participation. In 1830, Canterbury canon John Hume Spry told Norris, 'We have nothing to do with the *neighbouring* City of Canterbury: and I

[103] North to Earl of Malmesbury, 26 August 1807, Hampshire RO, 9M73/190/220.
[104] George Pretyman-Tomline to George Rose, 4 October 1806, BL, Add MS 42773, f. 67; Pretyman-Tomline to Lord Grenville, 21 August 1811, BL, Add MS 59003, f. 119.
[105] Pretyman-Tomline to Rose, 14 November 1808, BL, Add MS 42773, f. 85.
[106] On disorder at elections, see O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties*, 255-9.
[107] T. D. Whitaker, *The Substance of a Speech delivered at a General Meeting of the Magistrates, Clergy, Gentry, and Other Inhabitants of the Hundred of Blackburn, in the County of Lancaster, convened at Blackburn, on Monday, February 10th, A. D. 1817, in order to enter into Certain Resolutions, tending to support the existing Laws and Constitution of England* (Lancaster, 1817), 11.
[108] Journal of Morton, 27 September 1827, Lincolnshire Arch., MISC DEP 306/1/4.

shall take good care that the quiet of our precincts is not desecrated by the election squabbles of that very Loyal and Wise Place.'[109]

But this detachment was not typical of the clergy as a whole by this time. Bishop Phillpotts wrote to John Wilson Croker when trying to persuade him to stand for Wells in 1832, 'It is in the House of Commons that the battle for the Church must be fought, and we need all our Champions.'[110] Such an attitude had become widely adopted by the clergy over the previous two decades in response to radical agitation, the Catholic question and the Reform Bill. Of the Norfolk election of 1817, it was said that the clergy were 'violent, virulent and absolutely ferocious against Coke', the Whig candidate, while Lord Althorp complained that in Northamptonshire in 1820, 'the clergy and highest Tories were very violent against me'.[111] Christopher Wordsworth, having helped to turn out Henry Brougham in the Westmorland election of 1820, stated, 'Considering the principles that have been embarked in this struggle, I cannot but rejoice, that I became a freeholder, and that I came down to exercise my franchise.'[112] At the 1831 election, clerical electioneering reached fever pitch. William Coldwell, Rector of Stafford, told Corrie that 'contrary to every determination of my Life, in consequence of pressing events, I am turned Election mad myself, & am using every effort to turn out one of our Reformers for the Hon[oura]ble Borough.'[113] There were also indications that the bench's attitude to elections were now closer to Phillpotts's than North's. Bishop Van Mildert offered Lord Londonderry 'discreet (but definite) support' in the Durham election of 1831,

[109] John Hume Spry to Norris, 7 July 1830, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 790, f. 11.
[110] Phillpotts to John Wilson Croker, 1 November 1832, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 353, f. 8. In 1829, Devon vicar John Gill went so far as to suggest to Wellington that, as 'an antidote to the evils that may arise from the admission of Papists', the Anglican clergy 'should be represented in the House of Commons; and this I conceive may be best effected by allowing the Priesthood of each Diocese to send two Members to that House.': John Gill to Wellington, 14 March 1829, HL, WP1/1003/7.
[111] HoP 1790-1820, II, 287; HoP 1820-1832, II, 744. See also HoP 1790-1820, II, 303; Phillips, *Great Reform Bill*, 283.
[112] Wordsworth to Norris, 28 March [1820], Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 789, f. 101.
[113] William Edward Coldwell to Corrie, 28 April 1831, StC, T/3/1/5/52.

while Bishop Law agreed to help Lord Ellenborough with elections in Cambridge and Lichfield, declining only to intervene in Wells (in his see).[114]

County and Borough Parliamentary Elections: Modes of Campaigning

The new attitude of the clergy to non-university elections was manifested in a variety of activities, which will now be discussed in turn. Clergymen were often early and active canvassers for their favoured candidate, and had the benefit of local knowledge and authority. This activity had become well established in the eighteenth century, and was extended and diversified in the early nineteenth century.[115] Clerical canvassers' first port of call was their immediate neighbourhood, usually their parish, where they would sometimes display more energy than candidates. In 1807, Robert Markham, Archdeacon of York, complained to Yorkshire candidate Henry Lascelles that '[n]ot a single person has canvassed for you in any place I have gone to – nor has a single paper ever been received by a freeholder from you, requesting them to give you their support ... I have already tired my horses, but am not tired myself – let us see some more vigour or we shall both be tired – if you lose your election it will be your own fault.'[116] In 1818, Lincolnshire rector William Cooper expressed his regret to Lord Brownlow that William Cust had decided not to stand for the county, as Cooper 'had canvassed the parishes with which I was connected, & had had the satisfaction of finding that such an offer would have been very acceptable to them.'[117] Such attempts at persuasion could involve entertaining

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[114] Lee, *Durham Coalfield*, 124; Diary of Lord Ellenborough, 25 March 1831, in A. Aspinall (ed.), *Three Early Nineteenth Century Diaries* (London, 1952), 73; 31 March 1831, 75. See Harratt, 'Tory Anglican Hegemony', 186.
[115] On clerical canvassing in the eighteenth century, see E. A. Smith, 'The Election Agent in English Politics, 1734-1832', *English Historical Review*, 84 (1969), 14; Russell, *Clerical Profession*, 216-8; Gibson, *Anglican Church*, 35-47; Jacob, *Clerical Profession*, 82.
[116] Robert Markham to Henry Lascelles, 22 October 1807, in E. A. Smith, 'The Yorkshire Elections of 1806 and 1807: A Study in Electoral Management', *Northern History*, 2 (1967), 71.
[117] William Cooper to Earl Brownlow, 4 March 1818, Lincolnshire Arch., BNLW/3/10/1/10/2.

electors. John Longe, Rector of Coddenham in Suffolk, noted that on the day of the Suffolk election of 1826 he 'gave a breakfast here as usual to the freeholders of Coddenham & the neighbouring ones whom I know', before setting off to the poll.[118]

Other clergy preferred to be more discreet in their canvassing, but were no less determined to influence elections. Northumberland vicar Joseph Cook wrote to Earl Grey in 1807, 'Though I have not ventured into any public Canvass, I have made repeated enquiries into the Inclinations of such Neighbours as I might be supposed to have any Influence over', appending 'two names who will vote decidedly on my account' to his letter.[119] Grey's clergyman brother Edward Grey wrote in respect of the Durham election of 1820, 'A personal canvass on my part I did not think might appear so seemly … I have however employed a very good agent; and, with letters, hope I have not been useless in a cause in which I am heartily interested.'[120] Such letters did, however, run the risk of entering the public domain. At the Berkshire election declaration of 1832, the Tory Thomas Duffield read out a canvassing letter from a Whig clergyman named Nicholson, who had written to a freeholder that should the Tory candidate be elected, 'we cannot expect the blessing of God upon our public measures.' Nicholson 'contended that he had acted with perfect propriety in writing the letter he had done.'[121] At the South Cheshire election of 1837, a handbill was circulated with a letter purporting to be from Tory canvasser Joshua King, Rector of Woodchurch, '[t]o show the artifices to which some of the partizans of the Tories have had recourse in their endeavours to delude the Friends of MR. WILBRAHAM', whom the letter denounced as a 'RADICAL REVOLUTIONIST' and 'INHUMAN MONSTER'.[122]

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[118] Diary of John Longe, 20 June 1826, in J. Longe, *The Diary of John Longe (1765-1834) Vicar of Coddenham*, ed. M. Stone (Woodbridge, 2008), 68-9. For further examples of clerical canvassing in this period, see Harratt, 'Tory Anglican Hegemony', 52-5.
[119] Joseph Cook to Earl Grey, 19 May 1807, DUL, GRE/B42/12/61.
[120] Edward Grey to Earl Grey, 1 March 1820, DUL, GRE/B32/10A/6.
[121] *Morning Post*, 7 June 1832, 3.
[122] Handbill entitled 'South Cheshire Election', 1837, Cheshire Arch., LRW/6. On King's campaigning, see also R. A. Burns, 'Introduction' to idem. (ed.), '"My Unfortunate Parish": Anglican Urban Ministry in Bethnal Green, 1809-c. 1850' in M. Barber, S. Taylor and G.

Many clergymen were increasingly unconcerned about such publicity, and began to employ more forceful methods of canvassing than had been hitherto prevalent. In counties like Essex and Suffolk where Tories were known as 'the Blues', the display of party colours attracted attention. Longe in 1826 'got a new blue calico flag with tassels, &c. this time', while in Maldon in 1837 a blue flag was flown from the tower of the parish church.[123] Conversely, 'reform colours' prompted clerical disfavour at the East Surrey election of 1835. One rector upon seeing a Mr Shearman 'with the colours of the reform candidates', snatched them violently from his breast and trampled them under his feet'. Another clergyman 'seeing one of his tradesmen of the name of Clark with the reform colours in his hat, told him to send in his bill, and he would never deal with him again for a single farthing's worth.'[124] The latter policy of boycotting tradesmen on partisan grounds appears to have become widespread. In 1817, a Devon clergyman was alleged to have told a tallow-chandler who expressed support for the Whig Lord Ebrington, 'I tell you what young man, other people in this town may sell candles as well as you.'[125] But it was only after 1832 that such tactics were complained of frequently. At Canterbury in 1835, it was alleged that 'the day after the Election a rev. Archdeacon discharged his butcher, because he voted according to his conscience; that another dignitary of the Church had paid off his grocer on the same ground; and that a rev. Canon had gone round through his tradesmen, and had carried the system of exclusive dealing to a frightful extent.'[126] Robert Peel's brother was among three clergymen who were seen 'at seven o'clock in the morning … tampering with a coach proprietor, and

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Sewell (eds.), *From the Reformation to the Permissive Society: A Miscellany in celebration of the 400th Anniversary of Lambeth Palace Library* (Woodbridge, 2010), 278-80.
[123] Diary of Longe, 20 June 1826, 69; *Chelmsford Chronicle*, 28 July 1837, 2.
[124] *The Examiner*, 25 January 1835, 51.
[125] R. Cullum, *The Addresses, Squibs, Songs, &c. which were circulated during the recent General Election of Members for the City of Exeter, and County of Devon, together with those published at the Contested Election in 1816 between Lord Viscount Ebrington and Mr. Bastard* (Exeter, 1818), 190.
[126] *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XXVII, 975-6 (8 April 1835).

endeavouring to get him to vote for the Government candidate.'[127] Around the same time, there were reports of a cheesemonger in Dartford and a Sunday school teacher in Somerset being disadvantaged for their non-Conservative votes.[128]

The production of printed election propaganda was another area in which the clergy assumed a greater prominence. In 1820, the Vicar of Grantham, William Potchett, addressed a small tract to the electors of his parish denouncing the Whig candidate Colonel Hughes, which began with the words, 'Having never subscribed to the new and liberal doctrine, that a Clergyman has nothing to do with the politics of his parishioners; I hold myself at liberty to state my sentiments on that subject to you, as often as either the general good of society, or the peace and well-being of my own particular parish, require that I should.'[129] Though couched in conservative terms, this represented a provocative challenge to conventional wisdom concerning clerical participation in elections, and elicited three ripostes and two defences.[130] One of Potchett's detractors stated, 'I know not where you find the new doctrine, that a Clergyman has nothing to do with politics', while another asserted, 'Believe me, sir, it is an old doctrine.'[131] A similar intervention by the Tory prebendary James Law, son of Bishop Law, at the Chester election of 1826 also caused consternation. In a handbill, Law exhorted the electors to resist the Whig influence of the Duke of

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[127] Ibid., 96 (23 March 1835).
[128] *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, 26 January 1835, 3; *Western Times*, 19 August 1837, 3. For further discussion of clerical boycotting, see Harratt, 'Tory Anglican Hegemony', 80-81; Searby, *University of Cambridge*, 479-80; H. Miller, 'Hereford' in P. Salmon and K. Rix (eds.), *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1832-1868* (forthcoming) [http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1832-1868/constituencies/hereford].
[129] R. Storr, *Storr's Impartial Narrative of the Proceedings at the Contested Election for the Borough of Grantham, the 8th, 9th, and 10th days of March, 1820; containing a Record of every Transaction worthy of Preservation; the Heads of the Speeches of the Candidates &c.; and a Chronological List of the Members of Parliament for Grantham, from the Year 1467 (7th Edward IV.)* (Grantham, 1820), 15. Simon Harratt claims that Potchett's intervention was a 'pulpit exhortation' and that Potchett was 'ostensibly shunning politics' while simply aiming to 'legitimize the hierarchical social order of Toryism.': Harratt, 'Tory Anglican Hegemony', 115. However, it is evident that Potchett was making an overtly political intervention through the medium of print, which insinuated that Hughes was a radical.
[130] Storr, *Impartial Narrative*, 10-11.
[131] Ibid., 19, 21.

Grosvenor, observe the Sunday preceding the election and then 'peaceably recommence the glorious struggle, determined never to desert the *Egertons* whilst there is a *Free Man* in Chester, and a vote to poll. *Church* and *King*, I say, *Egerton and Freedom of Election for ever!*' The handbill went through five editions and provoked two responses, both of which questioned whether Law had actually written it.[132] One chronicler of the election suggested that Law's intervention was improper and noted, 'Respect for the sacred character, and the common decencies of civilized life have operated so far in our country, as almost to exclude the respectable clergy, not indeed from exercising their legal franchise, but from appearing as active or violent partizans, and especially from participating in local party struggles, so far as to allow the influence of their name and property to be employed in the contest.'[133] But a second chronicler wrote, 'This production does equal honour to the writer's head and heart; whether we consider him as a free-born Briton … or whether he be regarded, with respect to his sacred calling as a *Christian Minister*'.[134]

In the 1830s, it was the latter attitude that predominated among the clergy. From Shaftesbury at the 1831 election, it was reported, 'Bills from London have been freely circulated for some days past, through the Rev. Mr. Downe, clergyman of St. James's parish.'[135] Charles Ogilvie, fellow of Balliol College, Oxford, wrote to Norris that '[i]t becomes every one to act firmly and strenuously within his own

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[132] *A Narrative of the Proceedings of the Memorable Contest for the Representation of Chester, in 1826; interspersed with the Anonymous Squibs, and Authorised Papers of both Parties, in the Order in which they Appeared* (Chester, 1826), 24-5, 27-9.
[133] [J. Hemingway], *Chester Election, 1826: The Complete Poll Book, containing not only the Names of the Freemen who voted at the Election for Members of Parliament, for the city of Chester ... but also a Collection of Papers, Squibs, &c. issued by the respective Candidates and their Friends* (Chester, 1826), 31.
[134] *Proceedings of the Memorable Contest*, 25.
[135] *Morning Advertiser*, 21 September 1831, 3. This report referred to the Shaftesbury curate Benjamin Donne, who in December 1830 requested from the SPCK 'a grant of some Copies of the Homily against Disobedience & Wilful Rebellion, and of Miller's Thoughts for the labouring Classes, for distribution among the labouring population of his own Parish, and some adjoining Parishes, in which great disturbances prevail.' He was given '200 Copies of each of these Tracts' and assured that 'a further supply would be granted, if required by the exigencies of the Times.': SPCK Standing Committee minute book, 6 December 1830, CUL, SPCK.MS A5/6, p. 142.

proper sphere, and thus, whatever the final event may be, we shall escape the reproaches of a self-condemning conscience.' He accordingly recommended a 'little Tract' entitled *Address to the Electors of the United Kingdom*, written by a friend of his and printed at his direction: 'When you have read it, you will, I think, be desirous of promoting its circulation; and sh[oul]d you wish to procure more copies, you shall be immediately supplied.'[136]

Newspapers offered a further outlet for the clergy to influence public opinion. Following the 1832 election, an anonymous curate wrote a letter to the *Staffordshire Advertiser*, stating that he had 'been told that I have completely blasted all hopes of preferment in my profession by supporting a tory … but I would rather live and die a poor curate, than bow my knee to the baal of Whiggism.'[137] Whig clergymen also used the press to promote partisan views. In an address printed in the *Northampton Mercury* in 1835, Henry Rolls, Rector of Aldwinckle All Saints, sought to justify Lord Melbourne's alliance with Daniel O'Connell, denying that this threatened the established church.[138] In 1837, two clergymen used open letters to announce a change of opinion. Norwich prebendary Charles Wodehouse gave a lengthy (and much reprinted) apologia for his defection from the Conservatives at the election, while William Lewis, the Vicar of Abbots Langley, Hertfordshire, castigated Whig MP Rowland Alston, whom he had formerly supported, for speaking in favour in the abolition of church rates.[139]

Besides canvassing and campaigning, clergy were prominent participants in the formal proceedings of an election. At the nomination of candidates, it was very common for clergy to propose candidates and make speeches.[140] The Rev. Edward Davison, proposing Arthur Trevor for the city of Durham in 1835, stated that he 'had

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[136] Charles Atmore Ogilvie to Norris, 8 May 1831, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 790, ff. 44-5.
[137] *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 29 December 1832, 4.
[138] *Northampton Mercury*, 28 November 1835, 2.
[139] *Bury and Norwich Post*, 6 September 1837, 4; *Bucks Herald*, 18 February 1837, 3. For further examples of the production of printed political propaganda by clergymen, see Phillips, *Great Reform Bill*, 282; Harratt, 'Tory Anglican Hegemony', 50-52.
[140] HoP 1790-1820, I, 16.

for 30 or 40 years nominated candidates for the representation of the city'.[141] While Davison dwelt upon Trevor's personal qualities, other clergymen used the nomination as a platform for agendas of their own. Henry Cresswell, a radical Somerset vicar, proposed Henry Hunt in 1826 and Hunt's friend Thomas Northmore in 1831, commenting that 'he was a Clergyman of the Church of England and was loyal to his King, but he hoped he should see the day when Tythes would be done away with altogether.'[142] The Rev. Joseph Harling, proposing George Bowles in Evesham in 1837, accused the Whigs of 'striking at the root' of Protestantism and told electors that '[t]he men of Evesham ought to be the first to stand forward in defence of the Protestant religion, as its principles had nearly their earliest beginning in that town. The second man who suffered martyrdom in their defence was a native of Evesham.'[143] In some cases, especially towards the end of the period, clerical electioneering persisted during the polling. At Bridlington in 1837, it was said of the clergy, 'There they stood all day long in the open street, accosting every voter as he proceeded to the booth, and using every description of threat, misrepresentation, and undue influence, in order to secure his vote.'[144]

The clergy also took a prominent part in celebrations which followed the victory of their favoured candidate. Most were not as exuberant as the curate of Ashton Keynes, Wiltshire, who in 1837 celebrated the victory of Francis Burdett in North Wiltshire by 'chairing him per substitute, through the village', waving a flag inscribed 'Burdett and Liberty' and encouraging his parishioners to chant, 'Down with the Poor Laws – Down with the Workhouses'.[145] But victory speeches by clergymen were often a feature of the poll declaration and dinners given in honour of successful candidates. At the Wolverhampton election declaration of 1832, local curate William Leigh gave a much-applauded speech praising the successful Whig

[141] *Durham County Advertiser*, 9 January 1835, 2.
[142] HoP 1820-1832, II, 892, 896; *Western Times*, 14 May 1831, 4.
[143] *Morning Post*, 6 February 1837, 3. For further examples of clergy proposing candidates, see McClatchey, *Oxfordshire Clergy*, 210-12; Lyon, *Politicians in the Pulpit*, 87, 106.
[144] *Hull Advertiser*, 17 July 1837, 4.
[145] *Wiltshire Independent*, 24 August 1837, 3.

candidate William Whitmore, of which a Mr Simkiss observed that 'he only regretted that they could not ungown Mr. L[eigh], and send him to Parliament instead of Mr. Whitmore.'[146] At post-election dinners, it was conventional for there to be a toast to the clergy, to which a clergyman would generally respond. Some clergymen preferred brevity, Exeter prebendary Richard Ellicombe simply stating, 'I trust that the Church will last much longer than my speech.'[147] Others, like Joshua King and Worcestershire clergyman Thomas Pearson, used such occasions as an opportunity to lambast political opponents.[148]

Having reviewed the various ways in which the clergy intervened in non-university elections, it is possible to consider the extent to which their activity had an impact. On this question, there was a clear consensus at all ends of the political spectrum not only that the clergy changed the course of elections, but that their influence increased during this period. At first, the ascendancy of Anglican interests in electoral contests was surprising to observers. In 1802, the *Morning Chronicle* wrote of the 'triumph of the Tory and High Church party' in Herefordshire as a 'matter of astonishment to every thinking mind'.[149] Four years later, Bishop Bathurst wrote to his son of a Tory victory in the Norwich election:

> The Church completely triumphant: The Dissenters are down in the mouth: In this revolutionary age there never was a more marked revolution than has taken place in Norwich; but three years since, a Clergyman could hardly walk the Streets, without being insulted; and now I am not quite clear that I could not get you returned to Parliament.[150]

[146] *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 22 December 1832, 3.
[147] *Western Times*, 12 August 1837, 3.
[148] *The Examiner*, 25 January 1835, 51; *Berrow's Worcester Journal*, 23 May 1833, 4. See also Russell, *Clerical Profession*, 221-2.
[149] *Morning Chronicle*, 27 July 1802, 3.
[150] Henry Bathurst to James Bathurst, 6 October 1806, Norfolk RO, DCN/154/2/4.

Such sentiments were repeated, but with greater asperity, by the Whigs in the 1830s, when clerical campaigners were very frequently ridiculed, censured and attacked.[151] Following the general election of 1837, *The Spectator* sounded a genuine note of concern in an article entitled 'Interference of the Clergy in the Elections, and its Consequences'. The Whig periodical argued that though Tory clerical electioneering had engendered popular hostility, '[s]uch has been the temporary success … of the clerical tactics, and so general the triumph of the Church party in England, that there is little hope of stopping the parsons in their unchristian career.' However, *The Spectator* reassured its readership that '[t]he clerical shout of triumph is but the prelude to a wail of distress and cry for mercy.'[152]

In the previous year, the Whig bishop Samuel Butler of Lichfield had felt the need to admonish his clergy that 'the Parochial Clergy cannot become active partizans in electioneering politics without loss of dignity to themselves, and without injury to the Church.'[153] But such appeals fell on deaf ears. For, as had already been evident in Grantham and Chester in the 1820s, the clergy and their supporters were willing to make the case for their actions. During the Lincoln election of 1835, the Rev. Humphrey Sibthorp, brother of the Tory candidate, put it simply when addressing a crowd from the veranda of an inn: 'The gallant Captain [Phipps, the Whig candidate] has affirmed that no Clergyman ought to meddle with politics: am I then to understand that when I became a Clergyman, from that moment I forfeited my rights as an Englishman?'[154] The 1837 election brought forth further such ripostes. The Tory publication *John Bull* asserted that the Whigs knew that 'the influence of the clergy will not be used in their favour, therefore they wish it may not

[151] Harratt, 'Tory Anglican Hegemony', 62-4, 173-6. See e.g. *Evening Mail*, 23 August 1830, 4; *Morning Chronicle*, 1 June 1831, 3; *Berkshire Chronicle*, 9 June 1832, 3; *The Examiner*, 1 July 1832, 426; 25 January 1835, 51; *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 22 November 1832, 1; *Berrow's Worcester Journal*, 10 January 1835, 4; *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, 28 November 1836, 4; *Northampton Mercury*, 19 August 1837, 2.
[152] *The Spectator*, 12 August 1837, 759. Cf. Diary of John Allen, 21 August 1837, in A. D. Kriegel (ed.), *The Holland House Diaries 1831-1840* (London, 1977), 373.
[153] *Bury and Norwich Post*, 23 November 1836, 2.
[154] *Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury*, 9 January 1835, 4.

be used at all'. Accordingly, it declared that 'it is a duty in the clergy to come forward at the ensuing election, and openly to denounce legislation without Christianity; fearlessly to declare that it is the language of the Bible: – "*Fear thou the Lord and the King, and meddle not with them that are given to change*."'[155]

Simon Harratt has dismissed the Whigs' complaints concerning clerical electioneering as 'little more than shrill outbursts of Whig prejudice: a smoke screen to explain away electoral defeat'.[156] However, such an argument is not borne out by the evidence brought forward here. The proposition that the clergy swayed votes was acknowledged by Tories as well as Whigs by the end of the period. William Coldwell, writing to Corrie regarding his canvassing for Major Hawkes in the Staffordshire election of 1831, boasted, 'I got 29 plumpers for him yesterday.'[157] In May 1835, Robert Peel wrote to Bishop Phillpotts, 'I congratulate you most sincerely on the result of the contest for Devon. I see that Exeter and its district have borne a most conspicuous part in the struggle.'[158] Phillpotts observed with satisfaction the following year, 'there are pretty strong indications of the return of something like common sense in this County, after the delirium of the reform fever'.[159] Following the victory of Thomas Bramston (Conservative) in the South Essex election of 1837, he fulsomely acknowledged 'the assistance we have received from the clergy of this district.'[160] By strenuous activity, the clergy had demonstrated that parliamentary reform did not, as Wellington had predicted in 1832, spell the end of Anglican electoral influence.[161] If anything, this influence was now augmented by Conservative associations, as will be discussed below.

[155] *John Bull*, 16 July 1837, 344.
[156] Harratt, 'Tory Anglican Hegemony', 63.
[157] Coldwell to Corrie, 28 April 1831, StC, T/3/1/5/52.
[158] Peel to Phillpotts, 8 May 1835, ECA, ED11/49/8.
[159] Phillpotts to Croker, 8 September 1836, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 353, f. 45.
[160] *Essex Standard*, 11 August 1837, 4.
[161] See above, 124.

Petitions and Addresses

Though elections were the prime means of mobilising the clergy in this period, the framing of petitions to Parliament and addresses to the throne also constituted a vital, and increasingly conspicuous, means of clerical intervention in political life.[162] As with other modes of clerical political activity, petitioning was rare at the beginning of the nineteenth century. When the Munity Bill was under discussion in 1807, Bishop Moss wrote to Grenville, 'I hear from one of the Bishops & some of the Clergy that you will have a number of Petitions ag[ain]st the Clauses'.[163] In the event, only the London clergy and the universities sent such a petition.[164] The following year, a number of clergy petitioned against a bill regarding curates.[165] But such tactics met with scepticism. In response to the outcry against the Convention of Cintra in 1809, Bishop Bathurst wrote, 'nothing can be more preposterous, and irrational, than for Coffee-House Politicians, and Gentlemen by the Fireside in their Studies, to put their sentiments in some petition with the decision of professional men, of experience, and local information.'[166]

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the presentation of petitions from clergymen against Catholic emancipation in 1812-3 represented a significant turning

[162] Simon Harratt argues that 'so deep rooted was the "native tradition of resistance to Catholicism" that the clergy's association with the "nationwide phenomenon" of anti-Catholic petitions (most notably in 1812-13, 1825, and 1829) must largely be discounted as evidence of their formative appeal to religious impulses.': Harratt, 'Tory Anglican Hegemony', 168. However, this dismissive view of clerical petitioning does not accord with the evidence of clerical initiative and leadership in petitioning campaigns presented here.
[163] Charles Moss to Lord Grenville, 2 March 1807, BL, Add MS 59002, f. 127.
[164] *Hansard*, 1st Series, IX, 141-2 (17 March 1807), 172 (23 March 1807), 283-4 (9 April 1807).
[165] *Hansard*, 1st Series, XI, 257-9 (13 May 1808), 834 (8 June 1808), 975 (22 June 1808); E. Hicks, '"Christianity Personified": Perceval and Pittism' (unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2018), 123.
[166] Henry Bathurst to James Bathurst, 5 January 1809, Norfolk RO, DCN/154/2/13. See also N. A. Dixon, 'Church and Monarchy in England, 1811-1837' (unpublished MPhil thesis, University of Cambridge, 2015), 59.

point, inaugurating an era of mass clerical petitioning.[167] The pressure for such petitions came from the lower clergy and the universities, who wished their superiors to represent their views to Parliament. Despite the opposition of the Chancellor (Lord Grenville) and the Vice-Chancellor (John Cole), the Convocation of the University of Oxford twice voted by a large majority to petition Parliament against the Catholic claims, on the second occasion compelling Grenville to present their petition.[168] Joseph Pott, Archdeacon of St Albans, told Bishop Randolph of London that he had received 'an intimation from my friend the Archd[eaco]n [of London, George Cambridge] that he was about to meet the request of some [of] the Clergy of his Archd[eaco]n[r]y in calling them together for the purpose of petition on the Catholic question' and that he had received 'two several applications from St Albans to the same effect and the encouragement by your Lordship to Mr Cambridge will enable me with more confidence to entertain the request of the Clergy of St Albans.'[169]

The minutes of a meeting of the clergy of the Archdeaconry of Lewes on 13 January 1813 to frame a petition afford a rare insight into the increasingly uncompromising stance which the lower clergy took on the Catholic question. The text of a petition was proposed by a Mr Raynes, who expressed the hope that their representation 'w[oul]d be *short* and *be moderate*'. Raynes's proposed petition stated that 'altho' we conceive many concessions may be granted to [the Roman Catholics], yet we trust that Parliament will continue to impose such restraints on them as may

[167] See above, 112-3. *Hansard* records somewhere in the region of 70 exclusively clerical petitions against Catholic emancipation during the entire period, along with many more petitions signed by both clergy and laity: J. Philippart (ed.), *General Index to the First and Second Series of Hansard's Parliamentary Debates* (London, 1834), 297-306, 448-54. Given the selectivity of *Hansard*, this is probably an underestimate of the total number of clerical petitions of this description.

[168] W. R. Ward, *Victorian Oxford* (London, 1965), 37-8. See Phineas Pett to William Jackson, [21 April 1812], Oxfordshire History Centre, MS. Oxf. Dioc. Papers c. 662, ff. 193-4; John Parsons to Henry Handley Norris, 22 April 1812, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 789, ff. 22-3.

[169] Joseph Holden Pott to John Randolph, 9 January 1813, LPL, FP Randolph 6, f. 228. Cf. George Pretyman-Tomline to Lord Liverpool, 19 October 1812, BL, Add MS 38249, f. 348.

seem to its wisdom necessary…' The Dean of Battle objected to the word 'many', which was withdrawn. Then the Rev. Mr Ellison delivered a speech 'with much animation', in which he compared the Catholic claims to 'the Hydra's head, no soon was one disposed of, but another grew instantly in its place … if all that the Catholics asked for, were granted them, he could but compare their power to the eruption of another fiery Vesuvius; already we heard its prophetic rumblings, and the Church of England would fall under its devouring flames, like another Herculaneum.' This speech was 'applauded', and the Rev. Mr Hodges 'moved as an amendment that the whole of the clause from "altho – to yet" sh[oul]d be omitted, as more decisive of the opinion of the meeting.' In this he was seconded by George Griffin Stonestreet, who contended that any ambiguity about the possibility of concessions 'w[oul]d have a tendency to mislead the public mind' as to the true opinions of the clergy. He proposed replacing the offending clause with the words 'we trust in Parliament for *continuing* such Restrictions'. The Rev. Mr Baker was alone in preferring 'the original address', and the stronger, amended version was carried and presented to the House of Commons on 12 February.[170]

If the events of 1812-3 established the convention of mass clerical petitioning, the tactic of addressing the throne became well established as a result of the Queen Caroline Affair. Following the 'trial' of Queen Caroline, 12 groups of clergy sent loyal addresses to King George IV: eight dioceses, two cathedral chapters and two archdeaconries.[171] Of these addresses, that framed by the Durham clergy caused the largest stir. Theirs was written to distance themselves from an address criticising the government agreed upon at a county meeting patronised by Earl Grey in December 1820. Led by Henry Phillpotts, the Durham clergy condemned in their address 'men

[170] George Griffin Stonestreet, 'Memoir of a meeting of the Clergy held at Lewes the 13 Jan[uar]y 1813 to consider the propriety of petitioning Parliament against the Catholick claims', 1813, East Sussex RO, ACC 10959/1/1/3; *Hansard*, 1st Series, XXIV, 501 (12 February 1813).

[171] *London Gazette*, 31 October 1820, 2402-3; 30 December 1820, 2446-7; 6 January 1821, 25, 28; 20 January 1821, 145-6; 27 January 1821, 210; 30 January 1821, 254; 6 February 1821, 318, 320; 8 February 1821, 348-9; 10 February 1821, 363; 3 March 1821, 523.

of exalted rank, and distinguished talents, fostering and stimulating the discontents of the multitude; availing themselves of delusions which they despise, and of vices which they reprobate, to forward the miserable objects of party-ambition.'[172] This was a clear allusion to Grey, who proceeded to denounce 'this most contemptible and abusive Address … as foolish as it is virulent'.[173] Clergy were also instrumental in initiating loyal addresses emanating from the laity. In Oxfordshire, many clergy signed a requisition to the county's High Sheriff for a meeting for this purpose, while in Suffolk, in lieu of a county meeting, Longe organised a private meeting to frame an address from 'the Loyal Party' in his hundred.[174]

The politicisation of the Church continued apace throughout the 1820s, as the issue of Catholic emancipation returned to the forefront of the political agenda. Bishop Blomfield, who presented many of the anti-Catholic petitions of 1825 and 1829, encapsulated the attitude of the clergy to petitioning by this point: 'Whatsoever measure threatens the Established Church with a diminution of its property, its privileges, and its security, is justly regarded *by us* as hostile to the interests of religion itself; and nothing, I think, can be more unjust or more unreasonable than to require of us that we should sit quietly, and contemplate the progress of such a measure without even a remonstration, or expression of opinion.'[175] Accordingly, the clergy were concerned to intensify their rhetoric further. Clitheroe curate Robert Heath argued that a petition from the Lancashire clergy in the vicinity of Stonyhurst 'should comprehend … something more than the common topics urged against the concession of what are called the Catholic claims', as they would be able to tell Parliament 'that from their local experience they are well acquainted with the spirit and the proceedings of the Catholics and therefore

[172] Ibid., 20 January 1821, 145.
[173] *The Times*, 15 January 1821, 3.
[174] McClatchey, *Oxfordshire Clergy*, 204; John Longe to various inhabitants of Bosmere and Claydon hundred, 6 January 1821, Suffolk RO, HA24/50/19/4.4 (6).
[175] Charles James Blomfield to William Henry Lyttleton, 22 June 1825, in A. Blomfield (ed.), *A Memoir of Charles James Blomfield, D.D. Bishop of London, with Selections from his Correspondence* (2 vols., London, 1863), I, 125.

have the greatest reason to view with apprehension the probability of their receiving any greater privileges than they already enjoy'.[176] The general James Affleck, transmitting a petition from the clergy and laity of 11 parishes in Suffolk and Norfolk, noted that 'the Petitioners have taken up a new ground, & instead of petitioning "*against* further Concessions to the *R[oman] C[atholics]*", they petition *for* the preservation of the *Constitution* as by law established'.[177] When the likelihood of Parliament passing the measure seemed high in 1829, Spry wrote to Norris suggesting an appeal to the throne.[178]

If such an approach was ineffectual in 1829, when the mass petitioning campaign against emancipation was ignored by the government and (reluctantly) by the King, clerical addresses and petitions were to have more of an impact in the 1830s. The Irish Church Temporalities Bill of 1833 mobilised not just the Tractarians but Anglican opinion at large. As with the Oxford University election of 1829, there emerged an uneasy alliance between mainstream Anglicans with concrete political aims and Tractarians whose true priorities lay elsewhere. Politically speaking, one of the most influential clergymen was William Palmer, identified with the Tractarians by some historians but in reality a normative Anglican with an antiquarian bent.[179] After Hugh James Rose mooted the idea of 'an Address to the Archbishop' from the clergy, Palmer and Newman collaborated in framing such an address, which expressed attachment to 'the Apostolical Doctrine and Polity of the Church' while deprecating 'that restless desire of change which would rashly innovate in spiritual matters'.[180] This was signed by around 7,000 clergymen and presented to

[176] Robert Heath to Richard Noble, 12 April 1825, WP(B).
[177] James Affleck to Stonestreet, 28 April 1828, East Sussex RO, ACC 10959/1/1/6.
[178] Spry to Norris, 15 February 1829, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 789, f. 182.
[179] On Palmer's divergence from the Tractarians, see P. B. Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context: Anglican High Churchmanship 1760-1857* (Cambridge, 1994), passim.
[180] 'Fragmentary Diary' of John Henry Newman, 6 December 1833, in LDN, IV, 11; W. Palmer, *A Narrative of Events connected with the Publication of the Tracts for the Times, with Reflections on Existing Tendencies to Romanism, and on the Present Duties and Prospects of Members of the Church* (Oxford, 1843), 10-11.

Archbishop Howley in February 1834.[181] The following May, a similar address signed by 230,000 lay heads of households was also presented to Howley.[182] While the impetus came from Oxford and London, the real strength of the enterprise lay in a pre-existing nationwide concern to maintain the Church's political position. This was acknowledged by Palmer is his 1843 account of the events of 1834:

> The result … was beyond what the warmest friends of the Church could have ventured to anticipate. […] Petitions in support of the Church began rapidly to pour into the House of Commons. It seemed as if feelings long pent up had acquired energy from restraint and compression; and the Church beheld with astonishment the power and substantial popularity of which it was possessed.[183]

In 1843, Palmer felt the need to assert his conviction that '[o]ur movement … had *no political object of any kind*.' But this was belied by his evident satisfaction that 'shortly after these events, King William availed himself of an opportunity to call the Conservative party to the head of affairs', as well as in 'the return of so great a body of Conservative members of parliament as instantly and permanently arrested the march of revolution, and raised the Conservative party in parliament nearly to an equality with that of its opponents.'[184]

Such an outcome may have been apprehended by Archbishop Harcourt, a friend to Earl Grey's administration, who wrote to Grey in January 1834 that while in Yorkshire he had 'felt it my duty, on all accounts, to discourage, as *much as possible*, all premature meetings of my Clergy for the purpose of getting up petitions, whether to the King, the Government, or the ArchB[isho]p of Canterbury, with reference to the plans, at present under the consideration of Ministers, affecting the Church Establishment.'[185] This was not Howley's attitude. He received the addresses

[181] Palmer, *Narrative*, 12-13.
[182] Ibid., 13-15.
[183] Ibid., 16-17.
[184] Ibid., 17-18.
[185] Edward Venables Vernon Harcourt to Earl Grey, 21 January 1834, DUL, GRE/B60/11/2.

cordially, and wrote to Bishop Kaye, 'On the whole the stir through the country excited by the circulation of the Address, and the declaration, has been productive of considerable good'.[186] Replying to a lay address from Doncaster, he stated that 'the expression of such sentiments as are contained in this document, is calculated to promote the interests of true Religion in the Country, to strengthen the Church Establishment, and to encourage the Clergy to fulfil their sacred duties with increased zeal and energy.'[187]

A second wave of activity in 1834 was precipitated by Whig proposals to admit dissenters to the universities. Corrie sent out a printed draft of a petition against this measure to his friends, whom he found responsive to such sentiments. Bedford clergyman Edward Swann reported that there appeared to be 'every disposition in the gentry of Bedford to sign a Petition such as you sent to me', adding, 'Of course you do not want the Canaille nor any who cannot write their names decently.'[188] From Stafford, Coldwell wrote that a similar petition had been signed by 61 'Gent[leme]n of various shades of political opinion, but all unanimous on this one point', only two people declining to sign it. He elaborated:

> We had a glorious Meeting at Rugeley, for that place & the adjoining Parishes on Thursday last on the same subject. The Archdeacon in the Chair. There were upwards of 200 Gentlemen present, Honble's [sic], Esqr's [sic], Gents, Lawyers, Doctors, Proctors, Yeomen &c &c. The petitions were unanimously adopted & signed on the spot. Lichfield is moving, Newcastle, the Potteries &c. &c. You shall find … that Staffordshire does not mean to take this matter quietly.[189]

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[186] Howley to John Kaye, 24 February 1834, Lincolnshire Arch., DIOC/COR/B/5/5/2/3/6. See also Newman to Bowden, 9 February 1834, in LDN, IV, 188-9; Edward Copleston to Bruce Knight, 10 February 1834, in R. L. Brown (ed.), *The Letters of Edward Copleston, Bishop of Llandaff, 1828-1849* (Cardiff, 2003), 156.
[187] Howley to William Sheardown (Mayor of Doncaster), 5 April 1834, Doncaster Arch., D2MD/586/2.
[188] Edward Swann to Corrie, 25 April 1834, StC, T/3/1/8/49.
[189] Coldwell to Corrie, 14 May 1834, StC, T/3/1/8/73. Cf. William Procter to Corrie, 28 April 1834, StC, T/3/1/8/56; Charles John Way to Lord Suffield, 10 May 1834, Norfolk RO, GTN/5/9/92/34.

The convention of clergy-led petitioning had now become well-established and widespread, much to the chagrin of those who stood to lose from such tactics. In 1837, a clerical proponent of the abolition of church rates wrote dejectedly of how the Church hierarchy's 'machinery ready prepared to their hands is set in motion' for petitions against the abolition to be 'got up' and '[i]n … nine tenths of the Parishes throughout England, there is forthwith up & acting, a person of very considerable influence, sadly alarmed at the very name of change'.[190]

If mass clerical petitions and addresses now resembled a ready-made machinery for political protest, individual clergymen also used petitioning to pursue a variety of other issues. The requests for presentation received by Lord Suffield, a Whig peer, demonstrate that Catholic emancipation and Church reform were far from being the sole concerns of the clergy. In 1831, William Gray, Perpetual Curate of Haslingden, Lancashire, sent Suffield a petition for the Reform Bill, which, he stated, 'although not very numerously signed, expresses the general feeling of this Town and Neighbourhood.'[191] The following year, the Rev. James Browne of North Walsham, Norfolk, sent a petition in favour of a bill to improve factory conditions, mentioning having previously sent Suffield 'some petitions against the system of Colonial Slavery'.[192] The clergy were now a channel of political representation for communities both large and small. From the village of Field Dalling, Norfolk, came a petition conveyed by the vicar 'for the better observance of the Sabbath Day; and for some alteration in the Laws which will correct the evils of the Beer Houses', with the hope that Suffield would 'have the goodness to support its Prayer with your Powerful Influence'.[193] Field Dalling's petition was presented by Suffield on 23 May 1834.[194]

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[190] 'A Clergyman of the Establishment', 'Church in danger! How to secure her', [1837], Hampshire RO, 94M72/F35.
[191] William Gray to Suffield, 8 October 1831, Norfolk RO, GTN/5/9/58; *Hansard*, 3rd Series, VIII, 376 (10 October 1831).
[192] James Browne to Suffield, 9 March 1832, Norfolk RO, GTN/5/9/10/16.
[193] William Upjohn to Suffield, 6 May 1834, Norfolk RO, GTN/5/9/92/1.
[194] *Hansard*, 3rd Series, XXIII, 1250 (23 May 1834).

Political Societies

As demonstrated above, the clergy showed a high level of independent agency in parliamentary politics during this period, both through participation in elections and the framing of petitions and addresses. However, their political participation was far from being confined to attempts to influence Parliament. One of the most important legacies of the British response to the French Revolution in the 1790s had been the formation of political associations on an extended scale, and in this development the clergy played a prominent part.[195] As with other aspects of Anglican political activity, loyalist Toryism tended to be the dominant manifestation of such behaviours, but this was not exclusively the case. In this section, the extent and effect of clerical membership of political societies is examined.

For much of the period, a clear regional divergence was evident with regard to political societies. Until at least the mid-1830s, northern clergy (and especially those ministering in Lancashire and Cheshire) took the lead in furthering the efforts of local political organisers. In Manchester and Bolton, the defeat of Fox's bill to repeal the Test and Corporation Acts in 1790 had stimulated the foundation of the first 'Church and King' clubs promoting monarchism and Anglican exclusivity.[196] Though the leadership of these societies mostly rested with the laity, the clergy came to assume greater prominence within them. In 1817, the Cheshire Church and King Club appointed a committee consisting of two clergymen and one layman to select and circulate loyalist tracts.[197] In 1828 and 1829, the Bolton Church and King Club was addressed by the local vicar James Slade, who railed against the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts and Catholic emancipation.[198] A further vehicle for

[195] Russell, *Clerical Profession*, 219-20; D. Eastwood, 'Patriotism and the English State in the 1790s' in M. Philp (ed.), *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics* (Cambridge, 1991), 152-3.
[196] B. Lewis, *The Middlemost and the Milltowns: Bourgeois Culture and Politics in Early Industrial England* (Stanford, CA, 2001), 17, 271, 273.
[197] *Chester Courant*, 18 March 1817, 2.
[198] *Morning Chronicle*, 12 March 1828, 3; Lewis, *Middlemost and the Milltowns*, 202-3.

clerical activism in the north was the lodges of the Orange Institution, which, as Katrina Navickas has shown, attracted clerical support (in the form of commemorative sermons and attendance at dinners) in Stockport, Manchester, Oldham, Mottram and Bolton.[199] Where 'Church and King' clubs tended to be more concerned with marginalising dissent, the Orange lodges were engaged in intimidating Irish Catholic immigrants.[200]

Such divisiveness did not go unchallenged. Henry Phillpotts, while a canon at Durham, attempted to block the formation of an Orange lodge there in his capacity as a magistrate.[201] Staffordshire clergyman John Blunt expressed strong reservations to Whittaker about the formation of 'a Constitutional Society' in 1821:

> A Constitutional Society will be almost sure to produce an Anti-Constitutional one, & the Kingdom will be decided into factions as distinct as those of the King & the Parliament in the Civil Wars, or the Guelfs [sic] & Ghibellines in the Republics of Italy, & one will do it's [sic] best to crush the other though the destruction of both be the consequence.[202]

John Kaye, Bishop of Lincoln, made much the same argument when one of his clergy, William Fancourt, proposed the establishment of an association for the preservation of the Church in 1833.[203] This proposal Kaye considered 'questionable' on the grounds that it would 'divide the Clergy into two distinct classes, Associates and Non-Associates.'[204]

That the idea for the projected association had come from 'Mr. Norris' in London was indicative of a shift in the regional dynamics of clerical political activity. By this point, northern tactics had become widespread as the Queen Caroline Affair

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[199] Navickas, *Loyalism and Radicalism*, 120-21.
[200] Ibid., 82, 128-9; F. Neal, *Sectarian Violence: The Liverpool Experience, 1819-1914: An Aspect of Anglo-Irish History* (Manchester, 1988), 17-32, 39-43.
[201] Phillpotts to Sidmouth, 23 September 1813, Devon Heritage Centre, 152M/C1813/OE.
[202] Blunt to Whittaker, 4 June 1821, WP(C), 6/16.
[203] William Lowfield Fancourt to Kaye, c. November 1833, Lincolnshire Arch., DIOC/COR/B/5/5/2/3/4.
[204] Kaye to Fancourt, 18 November 1833, Lincolnshire Arch., DIOC/COR/B/5/5/2/3/2.

inaugurated a divisive associational culture throughout England. From his vicarage in rural Suffolk, Longe set about forming a Pitt Club as 'a means of Cementing & Strengthening the good old Cause' in July 1820.[205] Two dinners of around 400 people resulted before the club folded in 1823.[206] Stonestreet, a chaplain to the Duke of York living on the Isle of Wight, gathered subscribers for a 'Constitutional Association' to suppress radical publications in 1821. On the printed subscription list, he proudly marked the 12 names which were his 'collections'.[207]

There is also evidence of an intensifying of clerical involvement in the northern heartlands of loyalist societies. In 1817, a 'King and Constitution' club had been founded at Chester. Whereas no clergymen were on its first membership list, a list of attendees at its annual dinner of 1821 included 11 clergymen.[208] Among those present was Whittaker's friend George Pearson, chaplain to Bishop Law, who reported, 'we sat down between 140 and 150, and it was uncommonly pleasant indeed, and the loyal feeling that prevailed would have done your heart good.'[209] This club lasted until 1824.[210] The appointment of Canning as Prime Minister in April 1827 and consequent fears of Catholic emancipation led to a revival of such activity. The following month, two clergymen addressed the dinner of the Leeds Pitt Club (one assuring diners that Pitt 'did not clearly know' his own views on emancipation), while the Rev. Peter Legh presided over the dinner of the Warrington Pitt Club.[211] In Hereford, the Rev. Arthur Matthews was among the leaders of the local Pitt Club, which framed an address supporting Wellington and Peel's secession

[205] Longe to Charles Broke, 6 July 1820, Suffolk RO, HA24/50/19/4.4 (8).
[206] Longe, *Diary*, xlv.
[207] Paper entitled 'Constitutional Association for opposing the Progress of Disloyal and Seditious Principles', 1821, in album of Stonestreet, East Sussex RO, ACC 10959/1/1/1, p. 71.
[208] J. B. Lewis, 'Chester King and Constitutional Club 1817-circa 1824', *Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society*, new series, 80 (2005), 163-4, 168.
[209] Pearson to Whittaker, 7 February 1821, WP(C), 12/9.
[210] Lewis, 'Chester King and Constitutional Club', 170.
[211] *The Anniversary Meeting of the Leeds Pitt Club, May 28, 1827 from a Revised Report of the Proceedings, published in the Leeds Intelligencer of May 31* (Leeds, 1827), 26; HoP 1820-1832, II, 109.

from the Canning ministry.[212] Late in 1828 Brunswick Clubs were established with similar aims. Shrewsbury vicar James Compson was the secretary of the Shropshire club (in which the local clergy were 'well represented'), while in Norwich 'leading anti-Catholic clergy' served as vice-presidents of the club.[213]

In their agitation against Catholic emancipation, the clergy accepted unruly modes of popular protest. At the mass anti-Catholic meeting at Penenden Heath, Kent, organised in part by the local Brunswick Club, it was observed that 'the whole body of the Kent Clergy was marshalled for the occasion' and that '[t]he clergy at the meeting were so numerous, that the Protestant side had much more a clerical than an agricultural aspect.'[214] Phillpotts 'hoped that the proceedings at Pennenden [sic] Heath would shame the Protestant leaders in other Counties into more spirited conduct'.[215] At Bristol, it was complained that anti-Catholic placards were being displayed on the walls of the cathedral.[216]

In such a climate, eccentric clergy with strong political views now came into their own. Cambridgeshire curate Frederick Maberley, who attracted attention for distributing virulently anti-Catholic handbills in London in 1812, tried to impeach the Duke of Wellington at the bar of the House of Lords.[217] He also circulated a handbill announcing that he would take the opinion of Cambridgeshire on the Catholic question at a public execution, a course from which he was eventually dissuaded.[218] In the 1830s, Maberley led protests against the new Poor Law.[219] In Kidderminster, curate Humphrey Price wrote ballads to support striking weavers and, following a year's imprisonment, re-emerged as a champion of parliamentary

[212] HoP 1820-1832, II, 476.
[213] Ibid., 737, 856, 878.
[214] *New Monthly Magazine*, 1828, pt. 2, 473-4.
[215] Phillpotts to [?], 11 November 1828, ECA, ED11/72/4.
[216] *The Times*, 5 March 1829, 5.
[217] *Morning Chronicle*, 28 November 1812, 2; Lyon, *Politicians in the Pulpit*, 166.
[218] C. H. Cooper and J. W. Cooper, *Annals of Cambridge* (5 vols., Cambridge, 1842-1908), IV, 560-61.
[219] Lyon, *Politicians in the Pulpit*, 166-7.

reform.[220] Arthur Savage Wade, a Warwick vicar, convened meetings in favour of the Reform Bill and became the 'most radical member' of the Birmingham Political Union.[221] None of these clergymen were typical, but their provocative activism coincided with the politicisation of their brethren at large along less radical lines.

As Newman wrote of his temporary 'high-and-dry' allies of 1833, 'their *beau idéal* in ecclesiastical action was a board of safe, sound, sensible men.' Consequently Palmer, in addition to framing the addresses, 'wished for a Committee, an Association, with rules and meetings, to protect the interests of the Church in its existing peril.'[222] Opposed by the Tractarians in this course of action, they nevertheless circulated suggestions for such an association, branches of which were set up in Bath, Bristol, Ripon, Cheltenham and Winchester.[223] The Tractarians, meanwhile, focused on publishing their *Tracts for the Times*, which influenced Anglican opinion to a limited degree but had little practical political import.[224] In fact, the most significant development in clerical activity in this decade was not the publication of these tracts but the foundation of an organised Conservative party. 'Conservatism' already had considerable currency in Anglican circles in 1831, when Wells prebendary William Whitehead wrote of the clergy:

> Their's [sic] is a *conservative* position, and, under God, a *conservative* responsibility … They know well that the interests of a pure Church are essentially opposed to the continuance of *any* public abuses, ecclesiastical or civil. […] [T]hey only fear, lest a hasty, and too deep an excision of the *unsound* parts of the Constitution, may injure the *sound* parts, and

[220] Ibid., 100-5.
[221] Ibid., 107-8.
[222] J. H. Newman, *Apologia pro vita sua* (London, 1893), 40.
[223] 'Fragmentary Diary' of John Henry Newman, 6 December 1833, in LDN, IV, 10-11; Palmer, *Narrative*, 10.
[224] See e.g. the effective political quiescence advocated by John William Bowden in Tract 58, addressed 'Ad Populum': [J. W. Bowden], 'On the Church as viewed by Faith and by the World', in *Tracts for the Times by Members of the University of Oxford* (6 vols., London, 1840), II. On Tractarian disengagement from practical politics, see S. A. Skinner, *Tractarians and the 'Condition of England': The Social and Political Thought of the Oxford Movement* (Oxford, 2004), 122-33.

> mischievously affect the general health and stamina of the whole body politic, both in Church and State.[225]

The emergence of a 'Conservative' party appealed to the clergy because it combined a realistic attachment to the Church as a national institution, social respectability and the capacity to influence the post-1832 electorate.

Philip Salmon has documented how 'the lesser Anglican clergy became the unseen backbone of the numerous parochial subcommittees of many Conservative associations.'[226] The clergy adapted well to the post-1832 requirement for an annual registration of those eligible to vote, often closely supervising this process to ensure extensive registration of Conservative voters.[227] Their approach was explained by Warwickshire curate Ernest Waller in April 1834:

> There is a general meeting of conservatives at Warwick on the 8th of next month, & local associations are also being formed to cooperate with it, & I hope they may do some good, in enabling us to know our strength at any future election. Many votes on our side are lost for want of being properly registered: & this will do something, a great deal I hope, in as much as the magistrates on their side are so very small.[228]

Additionally, the clergy frequently made speeches at Conservative dinners and negotiated with potential candidates.[229] In 1835, Cambridge Conservatives dispatched the Rev. W. Wright to speak to Edward Knight and Sir Edward Sugden in

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[225] W. B. Whitehead, *The Dangers of the Church, as connected with the Prevalence of an Excessive Spirit of Reform: A Sermon, preached in the Parish Church of Crewkerne, Somerset, on Wednesday, May 25, 1831, at the Triennial Visitation of the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Bath and Wells* (Bath, 1831), 28.
[226] P. Salmon, *Electoral Reform at Work: Local Politics and National Parties 1832-1841* (Woodbridge, 2002), 70.
[227] Ibid., 69-71.
[228] Ernest Adolphus Waller to Thomas Wathen Waller, 29 April 1835, Warwickshire RO, CR0341/327/36.
[229] See e.g. *Report of Speeches delivered at the First Anniversary of the County of Durham Conservative Association, held at the Waterloo Inn, Durham, January 13, 1834* (Newcastle, 1834), 19-27; *Morning Post*, 2 October 1835, 2; 14 April 1836, 5; *Bucks Herald*, 5 March 1836, 1; *Blackburn Standard*, 19 July 1837, 2; *Kentish Gazette*, 7 November 1837, 3.

London about the prospect of standing for the constituency.[230] By contrast, the minority of Whig clergy continued to canvass immediately prior to elections, but played little role in the efforts of Liberal associations between elections.[231] Adverting to the irritation which the clergy's support for Conservative associations aroused in the Whigs, the *Suffolk Herald* stated in 1836, 'we now infer the strongest necessity for their appearance, and would almost venture to accuse them of betraying a cause which it is in their power to save, unless they show their attachment to "Church and State," and their scorn of their hypocritical censors, by boldly heading every Conservative association.'[232] In Conservative associations, the clerical factor in English associational politics assumed a more permanent and effectual form than at any time during the past four decades.

Partisan Preaching

Given the willingness of clergy to intervene in elections, frame petitions and addresses and join political societies, one might expect that they also used the pulpit for partisan political purposes. Some historians, while underplaying the varieties of clerical activity discussed above, have gone to great lengths to assert the primacy of preaching as a means of clerical intervention in politics. Yet for most of the period the pulpit was not, as Frank O'Gorman claims, 'a prime instrument of propaganda', nor were the clergy ever seen, as Robert Saunders claims, preaching 'at the hustings'.[233] The general attitude of the broadly Tory majority of clergy was that they should not profane sacred space with partisan pronouncements, a line that only came under significant pressure in the mid-1830s. Beilby Porteus, Bishop of

[230] R. M. Fawcett to W. Wright, 4 June 1835, StC, T/3/1/9/72. Cf. John Merewether to Herbert Taylor, 13 January 1835, BL, Add MS 40302, ff. 230-31.
[231] Harratt, 'Tory Anglican Hegemony', 55; Salmon, *Electoral Reform*, 71, 99-100.
[232] Quoted in *Essex Standard*, 11 November 1836, 4. Cf. *Suffolk Chronicle*, 22 October 1836, 4.
[233] O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties*, 359; Saunders, 'God and the Great Reform Act', 381.

London, was horrified to learn in 1806 that a sermon he had preached 'upon the general Sub[ject] of censuring our Neighbours rashly & uncharitably', written 24 years earlier, had been widely interpreted as a commentary on the impeachment of Lord Melville.[234] The clergy frequently and explicitly disclaimed any intention to provoke political feeling in the pulpit. As Phillpotts put it in a sermon of 1817, 'Let party-politics be, as they ought to be, forbidden to mingle with the more appropriate meditations of this holy place.'[235]

This was no mere 'theoretical deference' or 'lip service', as previous historians have claimed.[236] References to political matters in sermons which went beyond a generalised discourse on the duties of monarch, government and subject were very largely absent from Anglican preaching. Lancashire curate Giles Chippindall's precis of a sermon preached after the peace of 1814 was representative of the non-partisan tenor of political preaching: 'an excellent serm[o]n which ought to be published, as no doubt it would do good, by informing the people of their duty to support the Church & the Throne and warning them, by the example of France and our own Country also, of the danger to both Church & Throne, incurred by the want of popular Support.'[237]

However, there was a small section of the clergy who flouted the convention of keeping party politics out of the pulpit, namely certain Whigs, principally when advocating Catholic emancipation. In private Lord Holland expressed the view that '[w]here we have any friendly clergymen, they should be pressed to preach for toleration and if their sermons are decently good to publish. A sermon on the subject is worth two pamphlets.'[238] Sydney Smith had led the way in this regard in 1807, preaching and publishing a 'Sermon on Toleration' that was expressly directed

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[234] Beilby Porteus to Lord Auckland, 29 March 1806, BL, Add MS 34456, f. 500.
[235] H. Phillpotts, *Two Sermons, preached at the Cathedral, and at the Church of St. Margaret's, Durham on occasion of the late Harvest, and of the Attack on the Prince Regent, when passing from the Parliament House, 28th January 1817* (Durham, 1817), 20.
[236] McClatchey, *Oxfordshire Clergy*, 204; Saunders, 'God and the Great Reform Act', 383.
[237] Journal of Giles Chippindall, 7 July 1814, Cheshire Arch., D 8503/1. On sermons concerning monarchy and civil obedience, see Dixon, 'Church and Monarchy', 22-33.
[238] Lord Holland to Grenville, 12 December 1812, in Smith, 'The Election Agent', 13.

against the 'clamour … against the Catholics' raised 'for political purposes' during the general election.[239] Smith justified this intervention thus: 'It is no part of the duty of a clergyman to preach upon subjects purely political, but it is not therefore his duty to avoid religious subjects which have been distorted into political subjects, especially when the consequence of that distortion is general state of error and of passion.'[240] This performance was repeated in sensational fashion in 1828 when Smith was invited to preach the 5 November sermon before the staunchly anti-Catholic Mayor and Corporation of Bristol. Smith condemned the laws against Catholics as 'mistakes of troubled times and half-barbarous ages.' In a letter to Lord Holland, he copied this passage 'to show that I am still as honest a man as when he first thought me a proper object for his patronage.'[241]

Smith was not alone in pursuing this means of political argument in the 1820s. In 1825, Yorkshire rector Christopher Bird preached a sermon in favour of Catholic emancipation at the Appleby Assizes.[242] This was lauded by *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register* and castigated in the Tory *Westmorland Gazette*.[243] In June 1829, the Archdeacon of Canterbury, James Croft, reacted strongly against the activity of his clergy in signing an anti-Catholic address to the King. According to the curate Alexander Power, 'he gave all that thought differently from himself a most lashing charge; he did not positively call us *fools*, although his observations went far to prove that such were his Sentiments'.[244] On the anti-Catholic side, bishops George Huntingford, George Pretyman-Tomline and Thomas Burgess challenged the

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[239] S. Smith, *Two Volumes of Sermons* (2 vols., London, 1809), II, 91.
[240] S. Holland (Lady Holland), *A Memoir of the Reverend Sydney Smith*, ed. S. Austin (4th edn, 2 vols., London, 1855), I, 141.
[241] Sydney Smith to Holland, 5 November 1828, in ibid., II, 289. Smith's political preaching attracted critiques from Tory-leaning periodicals. See *The Quarterly Review*, May 1809, 343; *The Christian Remembrancer*, December 1828, 725-32.
[242] C. Bird, *A Sermon, preached at Appleby, on Friday, August 12th, 1825, before Sir John Bailey, and Sir John Hullock, His Majesty's Judges of Assize, on the Northern Circuit* (London, 1825).
[243] *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register*, 11 February 1826, 425-6; *Westmorland Gazette*, 25 February 1826, 2.
[244] Alexander Power to Corrie, [?] June 1829, StC, T/3/1/3/19.

Catholic claims in diocesan charges.[245] But the preaching of explicitly anti-emancipation sermons was a rare phenomenon. Twice in the House of Lords it was claimed by Whigs that clergymen had done this, but on both occasions closer inspection somewhat exonerated the clergy in question, one of whom had not mentioned the Catholic question and the other of whom had advertised an anti-Catholic petition in his church but not in the course of preaching.[246]

The Queen Caroline Affair elicited a brief flurry of partisan preaching in 1820, but this was short-lived. The attempt of Queen Caroline's supporters to have the Whig Archdeacon of Norwich, Henry Bathurst, preach when she went in state to St Paul's Cathedral was forbidden by the Dean, William Van Mildert.[247] According to Bishop Bathurst, writing to Edward Daubeny, his son was 'was not so much to blame, as, I fear, you think, in undertaking to Preach at St. Pauls; Mr: Brougham wrote, by the express command of the Queen, to desire that he would undertake that Office, much against his own wishes'.[248] Such reluctance to comment on party politics in the pulpit persisted in 1831, when Anglican preachers concerned

[245] G. I. Huntingford, *The Petition of the English Roman Catholics Considered in a Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Gloucester, at the Triennial Visitation of that Diocese in the Month of June 1810* (3rd edn, London, 1810); G. Pretyman-Tomline, *A Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Lincoln, at the Triennial Visitation of that Diocese in May, June, and July 1812* (London, 1812); T. Burgess, *A Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Salisbury, at the Primary Visitation of that Diocese in August 1826* (Salisbury, 1826).

[246] *Hansard*, 2nd Series, XIII, 649-52 (17 May 1825); XX, 802 (6 March 1829), 926-8 (10 March 1829).

[247] Dixon, 'Church and Monarchy', 18-19.

[248] Henry Bathurst to Edward Daubeny, [?] March 1821, Norfolk RO, DCN/154/5/12/2. See also H. Bathurst, *An Easter Offering for the Whigs, from Archdeacon Bathurst, being a Supplement to the Memoirs of the late Bishop of Norwich, consisting of Letters hitherto suppressed, from and to the Leading Members of the late Whig Governments, including Lord Melbourne, the Marquis of Lansdowne, Lord Brougham, Earl Grey, Lord Monteagle, Lord Duncannon, the late Lord Holland, and Sir John Hobhouse, and Other Matters omitted before, illustrative of Personal and Political Conduct in the Above Individuals* (London, 1842), 74-7.

themselves very little with the anticipated effects of the Reform Bill, challenging instead an abstract 'spirit of reform' which they considered morally deleterious.[249]

However, the intensification of clerical involvement in electoral contests precipitated frequent accusations of politicised preaching. At the Newark election of 1829, Whig candidate Thomas Wilde claimed at the hustings that 'on going to church yesterday … I was edified with a political sermon, and heard a canvass for Mr. Sadler [Tory candidate].'[250] The following year, a 'Loyal Inhabitant of Sherborne' informed Wellington that 'a Sermon was preached … in Sherborne Church, in which the ministers of the Crown were publickly libelled: this many loyal Men can prove.'[251] Political preaching remained a staple of Whiggism until the advent of Grey's administration. In August 1830, following the defeat of Tory MP Jonathan Peel in Norwich, local Whig rector Robert Elwin preached a sermon from 2 Samuel 1:26: 'I am distressed for thee my brother Jonathan.'[252]

The normalisation of political preaching did not, however, come until 1835 and coincided with the formation of Conservative associations. John Ferrers, Rector of Beddington in Surrey, preached a sermon on the 'alliance between church and state' in August 1834, which was explicitly addressed in its published form 'to the electors of Great Britain' and dated 1 January 1835.[253] Other Conservative clergyman went further than this. In April, it was reported from Chester that a clergyman had preached 'a most violent sermon of a political nature, in which he designated the Opposition to the late Ministry as Infidels, Socinians, and *perjured* Papists; in consequence of which many respectable individuals walked out of their seats, and

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[249] Saunders, 'God and the Great Reform Act', 392. See also the approach to preaching in response to reform recommended in *The Christian Remembrancer*, August 1831, 471-2.
[250] *Leeds Intelligencer*, 5 March 1829, 3. See Harratt, 'Tory Anglican Hegemony', 104-5.
[251] 'A Loyal Inhabitant of Sherborne' to Wellington, 6 July 1830, HL, WP1/1159/70.
[252] HoP 1820-1832, II, 739.
[253] J. B. Ferrers, *Alliance between Church and State: A Sermon, preached at Beddington, Surrey, August, MDCCCXXXIV, addressed to the Electors of Great Britain, January 1, 1835* (London, 1835). Cf. S. C. Wilks, *The Duties of Christian Electors: A Sermon, preached on Sunday, September 2, 1832, at Bentinck Chapel, in the Parish and New Electoral Borough of St. Mary-le-bone* (London, 1832).

the night following he had many of his windows broken.'[254] Meanwhile, a Yorkshire clergyman 'attempted to prove that "those who supported Lord Melbourne's administration were traitors to their country."'[255] As with electioneering, such conduct provoked considerable censure. In July 1835, a friendly society in Melton Mowbray were treated by a curate to 'a most violent political sermon' which irritated 'persons of every variety of opinion, who met together for benevolent purposes, without any political object, but simply to do good to each other.'[256]

At the very end of the period newspapers were flooded by reports of the increasingly brazen behaviour of Conservative clergy in the pulpit. At Watford in 1836, the incumbent stated that 'he was particularly anxious to impress upon his auditors, the necessity of electing proper Representatives, who had been proved good men to their country, and not addicted to change.' Following this sermon, the choir '*under the special direction of their worthy Pastor*, and much to the astonishment of the Congregation, struck up and sung *God save the King!!!*'[257] At the time of the general election of 1837, political preaching was openly advocated by such Conservative publications as *The Standard*, which exhorted the clergy to 'universally lay before their hearers, without personal allusion, or indecent strength of language, the description of men who ought to be sent to Parliament for the defence of the Queen, the realm, and the Church; and the description also of those unworthy of that high trust.'[258] Sermons of such a character were evidently delivered, while the minority of clergy who advocated the abolition of church rates also used preaching to further their cause.[259] By December 1837, it was possible to observe (as a member

[254] *Bradford Observer*, 23 April 1835, 3.
[255] *Leeds Mercury*, 16 May 1835, 5.
[256] *Nottingham Review*, 10 July 1835, 2. For further examples of political preaching in 1835, see e.g. *Reading Mercury*, 26 January 1835, 4; *Shrewsbury Chronicle*, 15 May 1835, 3; *Nottingham Journal*, 9 October 1835, 2.
[257] *The Reformer*, 28 June 1836, 2.
[258] *The Standard*, 14 July 1837, 2.
[259] See e.g. *Morning Advertiser*, 4 April 1837, 2; *Western Times*, 6 May 1837, 3; 13 May 1837, 4; *Manchester Times*, 19 August 1837, 3; 2 September 1837, 3; *Leeds Intelligencer*, 16 September 1837, 7; *Huntingdon, Bedford & Peterborough Gazette*, 30 September 1837, 4; *Liverpool Mercury*, 6 October 1837, 6; *Suffolk Chronicle*, 11 November 1837, 4.

of Hereford Town Council did) that 'political sermons appeared now to have become the rule, and religious sermons the exception, in many of our churches.'[260] The widespread politicisation of the pulpit represented the last element in the general process of the politicisation of the Church of England, a process which by the time of Queen Victoria's coronation was complete.

Conclusion

It should now be evident that the increased independence and activity which characterised episcopal legislators in the House of Lords was, in many respects, mirrored by the political exploits of the clergy at a local level. This can be seen most obviously in the university parliamentary elections, in which the clergy, released from the constraints of proprietorial politics, challenged the governments of the day with unprecedented firmness in 1829 and 1831. But the process was also traceable, albeit in a more uneven fashion, in borough and county elections, in connection with which clergymen developed a formidable array of means of influencing contested elections in addition to their votes. These tactics went beyond traditional canvassing and included the production and distribution of printed propaganda, the nomination of candidates, the delivering of speeches and the boycotting of tradesmen with whom they had political differences. That such tactics had an extensive and sometimes decisive impact, particularly towards the end of the period, may be inferred from the plaudits and opprobrium garnered by electioneering clergy. But the involvement of the clergy in local political life went far beyond participation in elections. They were prominent, too, in the framing of the mass petitions and addresses which formed an increasingly significant component of political debate in this era. Political societies were also not immune from clerical influence, and in the case of provincial Conservative associations, a certain degree of dominance. Furthermore, while partisan politics was mostly absent from Anglican preaching for most of this period,

[260] *Hereford Journal*, 13 December 1837, 3.

the pulpit became increasingly politicised after 1835. Cumulatively, these developments represented a displacement of an older, more pacific model of clerical politics which had obtained at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This process was set in motion long before the advent of Tractarianism, from which it was largely independent.

In the face of this evidence, it is surprising that the involvement of the clergy in elections and other forms of political activity has been so widely denied or overlooked by historians. This has been due not only to historians' longstanding focus on the Oxford Movement but also to the imposition of historical frameworks on this era in which increased clerical political activity, independence and influence simply do not fit. In both the social history of E. P. Thompson and the revisionist account of J. C. D. Clark, the clergy were the passive upholders of an established order that was doomed to extinction.[261] Yet this deterministic approach denies the central facet of Anglican political activity in this period: clerical agency. To employ Thompson's terminology, the clergy played a role in their own 'making' as a distinct political class; unlike the Eldonian supporters of the *ancien régime* so central to Clark's narrative, clergymen were sufficiently flexible to invent new ways of projecting their influence. The consequence was the liberation of the clergy from the kind of prescriptive apolitical role marked out for them by their disqualification from the House of Commons in 1801. In the succeeding four decades, the Anglican clergy were agents of political change, and made their mark politically in ways that were both innovative and effective. Yet their efforts actively to remodel English society went further than this, finding a more enduring expression in the National Society and the SPCK, the two societies which are focus of the next two chapters.

[261] See above, 9, 11.

Chapter 4: The National Society and Education

If the Anglican clergy made significant efforts to extend their influence over the political sphere, they were no less concerned to achieve dominance in the field of education. Indeed, their educational exertions were of an even more ambitious nature. A Norwich school committee declared in 1828, 'be it the zealous and uncompr[om]ising endeavour of every member of the Church of England, to make our holy *religion* the *basis* of all our systems of education, the foundation and the completion, the beginning and the end'.[1] Whereas clerical interventions in political discussion were often viewed with suspicion, clerical supervision of education was an uncontroversial proposition. The established status of the Church, together with its canonical obligations to catechise children and license schoolmasters, gave Anglican educational efforts a strong basis in precedent. As Henry Brougham stated in 1820, the clergy were 'not only teachers of religion, but, in the eye of the law, they were teachers generally'. Brougham grounded his proposals for parish schools on a belief in 'the infinite benefit that would arise from having the constant, the daily superintendence of such a character as a well-educated and pious English churchman'.[2] Even the Unitarian radical John Wade, in his *Extraordinary Black Book* of 1831, conceded that '[p]ublic education is a subject that appears to have peculiar claims on the attention of the clergy', before castigating them for having 'generally neglected' their 'duty' as 'instructors of the people'.[3]

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[1] 'Sixteenth Report of the Norfolk and Norwich National Society', 16 July 1828, Norfolk RO, DN/NDS 137.
[2] *Hansard*, 2nd series, II, 73-4 (28 June 1828).
[3] [J. Wade], *The Extraordinary Black Book: An Exposition of the United Church of England and Ireland, Civil List and Crown Revenues, Incomes, Privileges, and Power, of the Aristocracy, Privy Council, Diplomatic, and Consular Establishments, Law and Judicial Administration, Representation and Prospects of Reform under the New Ministry, Profits, Influence, and Monopoly of the Bank of England and East-India Company, with Strictures on the Renewal of their Charters, Debt and Funding System, Salaries, Fees, and Emoluments in Courts of Justice, Public Offices and Colonies, Lists of Pluralists, Placemen, Pensioners, and Sinecurists, the Whole corrected from the Latest Official Returns and presenting a Complete View of the Expenditure, Patronage, Influence, and Abuses of the Government, in Church, State, Law and Representation* (London, 1831), 6.

Wade's charge owed more to polemic than fact. The foundation by clergy, statesmen and philanthropists in 1811 of the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church throughout England and Wales marked a watershed in popular elementary education. This institution existed for the establishment, improvement and homogenisation of Anglican daily schools under clerical supervision for children between the ages of seven and 14 whose parents could not afford to pay for their education. Although a not inconsiderable number of Anglican charity schools already existed and remained formally independent of the National Society, it was the principal motive force behind an Anglican educational revival of unprecedented scale. In 1832, there were around 13,000 Anglican charitable schools throughout England and Wales, educating almost a million children.[4] Six years later, it was estimated that 67.8% of children in England and Wales were receiving an Anglican education.[5] Conversely, non-Anglican schools accounted for a relatively small share of educational provision. A parliamentary enquiry of 1833 found that only 2.2% of daily schools in England were dissenting institutions, accounting for 3.9% of scholars.[6]

However, the work of the National Society and other Anglican educational initiatives did not go unchallenged. Although the fact of clerical control over education was not generally contested, there was no consensus regarding the extent to which education should be specifically Anglican or whether it was desirable for the Church to monopolise this sphere. Non-Anglicans of many different shades but especially dissenters and secular utilitarians challenged the clergy's ambitions for

[4] NS AR (1832), 105-8, 123. This statistic resulted from a survey sent to parishes throughout England and Wales, in which approximately 83% of parishes completed returns. The figures for the remaining 17% were estimated on the basis of averages.
[5] R. Burgess, *Educational Statistics: A Letter, addressed to J. C. Colquhoun, Esq., M.P.* (London, 1838), 15-16.
[6] Figure derived from *Education Enquiry: Abstract of the Answers and Returns made pursuant to an Address to the House of Commons, dated 24th May 1833* (London, 1835), 1208. The proportion for Sunday schools was rather different, as the Church did not prioritise these, but nevertheless around two-thirds of English Sunday schools were Anglican, accounting for 55% of scholars.

unitary Anglican education.[7] John Styles, a dissenting preacher, labelled the National Society's supporters '[t]he intolerant part of the community', condemning their 'insufferable arrogance' and 'bigotry'.[8] Additionally, the Church itself contained within its pale influential supporters of non-denominational education. Bishop Bathurst asserted that 'societies for the INDISCRIMINATE *education* of the lower orders' could 'never be too numerous or of too *comprehensive* a nature'.[9] Opponents of Anglican exclusivity generally supported the rival British and Foreign School Society (BFSS), which offered non-denominational religious education for the poor, but failed to match its rival's financial and numerical strength.[10] Moreover, clerical supervision of education had significant political implications, even if these were seldom made explicit. Those engaged in the Church's educational work therefore inhabited a politically and religiously charged environment that was always potentially hostile.

The success of the Church of England in advancing its educational aims under such conditions has often been belittled by educational historians. National Schools were long regarded as largely ineffectual and barely distinguished from BFSS schools on account of certain similarities in teaching method. Frank Smith, writing in 1931, delivered a withering verdict on both societies' schools: 'Their emphasis on

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[7] See e.g. J. Fox, *A Comparative View of the Plans of Education, as detailed in the Publications of Dr. Bell, and Mr. Lancaster* (2nd edn, London, 1809); [J. Mill], *Schools for All, in preference to Schools for Churchmen Only* (London, 1812); J. Styles, *The Design of God in Blessing us: A Sermon, Preached at Salter's Hall, February 23, 1812, for the benefit of the Royal Lancasterian Institution* (London, 1812); J. Bentham, *Church-of-Englandism and its Catechism Examined, preceded by Strictures on the Exclusionary System as pursued in the National Society's schools, interspersed with Parallel Views of the English and Scottish Established and Non-established Churches, and concluding with Remedies proposed for Abuses indicated, and an Examination of the Parliamentary System of Church Reform lately pursued* (London, 1818); *Schools for the Industrious Classes; or, the Present State of Education among the Working People of England* (2nd edn, London, 1837).
[8] Styles, *The Design of God*, 36. Cf. Fox, *Comparative View*, 55.
[9] H. Bathurst, *Memoirs of the late Dr. Henry Bathurst, Lord Bishop of Norwich* (2 vols., London, 1837), II, 69-70. See also Sydney Smith's 1806 *Edinburgh Review* article 'Trimmer and Lancaster' in S. Smith, *Works* (3 vols., London, 1839-40), I, 72-83.
[10] *Education Enquiry*, 1338; H. B. Binns, *A Century of Education: Being the Centenary History of the British and Foreign School Society 1808-1908* (London, 1908), 55-7, 81, 103, 123-4.

religious teaching (and in the Church schools on sectarian teaching), their meagre curriculum with reading as the chief accomplishment, their mechanical methods applied by unskilled assistants, and their cheapness and poverty, conspired to fossilise the elementary school'.[11] More recent studies have been less dismissive of the efforts of Anglican educationalists, but have remained focused on their contribution to education *per se*. Two institutional histories of the National Society draw attention to its achievements, relying largely on annual reports and the deliberations of the society's central committee in London.[12] Since the 1970s, a series of local case studies has also served to qualify conventionally negative assessments of the National Society, demonstrating its capacity to educate effectively.[13]

Contrastingly, the socio-political role of the National Society, though frequently remarked upon by contemporary observers, remains little understood. Assessments of the National Society's purpose have been largely in the realm of sociology, with occasional allusions to its desire to check political sedition.[14] Neil Smelser, for

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[11] F. Smith, *A History of English Elementary Education 1760-1902* (London, 1931), 80. Cf. J. W. Adamson, *English Education 1798-1902* (Cambridge, 1930), 24-31; H. C. Barnard, *A History of English Education from 1760* (2nd edn, London, 1961), 57; M. Sturt, *The Education of the People: A History of Primary Education in England and Wales in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1967), 34.

[12] H. J. Burgess, *Enterprise in Education: The Story of the Work of the Established Church in the Education of the People prior to 1870 (London, 1958)*; L. M. R. Loudon, *Distinctive and Inclusive: The National Society and Church of England Schools, 1811-2011* (London, 2012).

[13] M. Sanderson, 'The National and British School Societies in Lancashire 1803-1839: The Roots of Anglican Supremacy in English Education' in T. G. Cook (ed.), *Local Studies and the History of Education* (London, 1972), 1-36; P. Silver and H. Silver, *The Education of the Poor: The History of a National School 1824-1974* (London, 1974); M. Cruickshank, 'The Anglican Revival and Education: A Study of School Expansion in the Potteries 1830-1850', *North Staffordshire Journal of Field Studies*, 20 (1980), 19-31; M. C. Martin, 'Church, School and Locality: Revisiting the Historiography of "State" and "Religious" Educational Infrastructures in England and Wales, 1780-1870', *Paedagogica Historica*, 49 (2013), 70-81.

[14] J. Lawson and H. Silver, *A Social History of Education in England* (London, 1973), 243, 271; T. W. Laqueur, 'Working-Class Demand and the Growth of English Elementary Education, 1750-1850' in L. Stone (ed.), *Schooling and Society: Studies in the History of*

instance, maintains a sharp distinction between the political and religious contexts for the development of working-class education.[15] The only study to address the political import of such instruction at length is Philip McCann's case study of schools in early nineteenth-century Spitalfields, in which this aspect is presented through the lens of sociological theories of 'socialization'.[16] In his recent comparative study of education and state formation, Andy Green suggests, 'The stultifying condescension of the Anglican schools, deriving from the ritual conservative belief in rank and status, no doubt did much to alienate the working class from education.'[17] In this schema, also discernible in the writings of Brian Simon and Thomas Laqueur, National Schools were a generally ineffective form of social control promoted by an unpopular Anglican elite.[18] On the other hand, Akira Iwashita argues that National Schools were operated in a 'liberal' fashion which anticipated more comprehensive state schemes of education.[19]

However, the National Society's social and political functions were much more varied and complex than such models suggest, as appears when it is analysed more comprehensively. The present discussion of the work of the National Society in promoting Anglican education is the first to use both printed and manuscript sources from throughout England.[20] Only by viewing geographically dispersed sources in relation to each other can a true assessment of the clergy's claim to be implementing

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Education (Baltimore, 1976), 198; D. G. Paz, *The Politics of Working-Class Education in Britain, 1830-50* (Manchester, 1980), 4.

[15] N. J. Smelser, *Social Paralysis and Social Change: British Working-Class Education in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley, CA, 1991), 26-32, 70-90.

[16] P. McCann, 'Popular Education, Socialization and Social Control: Spitalfields 1812-1824' in idem. (ed.), *Popular Education and Socialization in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1977), 1-40.

[17] A. Green, *Education and State Formation: Europe, East Asia and the USA* (2nd edn, Basingstoke, 2013), 224.

[18] B. Simon, *The Two Nations and the Educational Structure 1780-1870* (London, 1974), 132-3; Laqueur, 'English Elementary Education', 199.

[19] A. Iwashita, 'Politics, State and Church: Forming the National Society 1805-c. 1818', *History of Education*, 47 (2018), 1-17.

[20] The society's work in Wales is beyond the scope of this study. On this, see H. G. Williams, '"Learning Suitable to the Situation of the Poorest Classes": The National Society and Wales, 1811-1839', *Welsh History Review*, 19 (1999), 452-5.

a ‘National’ system of education be adequately judged, and the consequences of their exertions assessed. The subject is approached thematically through a consideration of the foundation and organisation of the National Society, its support base, its religious and political aims, its teaching, its outward aspects and its place within the broader educational context.

Foundation and Organisation

Many of the events leading to the National Society’s foundation are described elsewhere and require no reiteration here.[21] Andrew Bell’s invention of an Anglican monitorial system at a Madras orphanage; Joseph Lancaster’s use of a similar but non-denominational system in Southwark; Sarah Trimmer’s 1805 riposte to Lancaster; Herbert Marsh’s 1811 sermon on ‘National Education’; and the ensuing debate between supporters of Bell and Lancaster all form part of the familiar narrative of English educational history. As early as 1833, Lancaster quoted a newspaper’s observation ‘that as much ink had been shed in the wars between Bell and Lancaster, as blood was shed in the civil wars between the houses of York and Lancaster.’[22] But the less immediate causes of this process are not so well appreciated. The desire to educate the poor according to the principles of the established church had deep roots in the eighteenth century. In the foundation of the National Society, three powerful forces converged in a common cause: the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK), royalty and the episcopacy.

It had been a primary aim of the SPCK ever since its foundation in 1698 to support ‘Schools … for the instruction of such poor Children in Reading, Writing, and in the Catechism, whose Parents or Relations are not able to afford them the

[21] See R. Southey and C. C. Southey, *The Life of Rev. Andrew Bell* (3 vols., London, 1844); E. Churton (ed.), *Memoir of Joshua Watson* (2nd edn, Oxford, 1863); Burgess, *Enterprise in Education*, 3-24; R. A. Soloway, *Prelates and People: Ecclesiastical Social Thought in England, 1783-1852* (London, 1969), 349-79.
[22] J. Lancaster, *Epitome of some of the Chief Events and Transactions in the Life of Joseph Lancaster* (New Haven, CT, 1833), 44.

ordinary means of Education'.[23] Though it did not establish schools itself, the SPCK made the provision of books and staff to 'charity schools', as they became known, a major part of its operations.[24] By 1741, the society was supporting nearly 2,000 charity schools on this model throughout Great Britain and Ireland.[25] However, the movement stagnated somewhat in the latter part of the eighteenth century, as the SPCK increasingly directed its efforts towards missionary work and publishing.[26] The non-denominational Sunday school movement, promoted by Robert Raikes from 1783, also diverted attention from the SPCK's efforts.[27] Nevertheless, charity schools were still an important part of the educational landscape at the beginning of the nineteenth century, especially in urban centres. In 1799, there were 179 charity schools in London teaching 7,108 pupils.[28] The pre-existing network of SPCK-supported charity schools represented an important foundation upon which a national system of Anglican education could be built.[29]

The patronage of royalty was another decisive factor in the formation of the National Society. George III was an influential proponent of the education of the poor, but favoured the non-denominational Sunday school and Lancasterian movements.[30] Lancaster also gained the support of the Duke of Kent, the Duke of Sussex and the Prince of Wales.[31] However, the supporters of Bell managed to outmanoeuvre the Lancasterians with regard to such patronage. Mrs Trimmer wrote to Bell in 1806 that '[t]hrough the well-directed zeal of an excellent friend of mine, the Rev. Mr Plimley, who is the rector of Windsor, the arrogant Quaker has been

[23] W. O. B. Allen and E. McClure, *Two Hundred Years: The History of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1698-1898* (London, 1898), 135-7.
[24] M. G. Jones, *The Charity School Movement: A Study of Eighteenth Century Puritanism in Action* (Cambridge, 1938), 41.
[25] Allen and McClure, *Two Hundred Years*, 146.
[26] Jones, *Charity School Movement*, 24.
[27] Ibid., 142-54.
[28] Ibid., 61.
[29] Ibid., 27.
[30] F. Prochaska, *Royal Bounty: The Making of a Welfare Monarchy* (New Haven, CT, 1995), 14.
[31] Ibid., 32-4.

disappointed in his attempt to set up a school there, which was to be called the *king's school*, and I have every reason to think that all which he included under the term "*Royal Patronage*," will be in future *discontinued*.'[32] A further boost to Bell was given by the adoption of his methods in the Royal Military Asylum and their extension throughout the Army at the behest of the Duke of York.[33] But it was the advent of the Regency in 1811 that placed the monarchy firmly on the side of Anglican education. As John Bowdler explained to Lord Sidmouth, Archbishop Manners-Sutton was asked by 'some friends of good government in Church & State' to patronise what became the National Society and 'thought it proper to take the sense of the Prince Regent upon it':

> [H]is Royal Highness was pleased to express himself, fervently attached to the Church of England, and earnestly desirous of promoting its interests, considering it as an integral part of the Constitution. The Countenance he had given to Mr Lancaster, he said, was conceded to him on no other motive than a desire of facilitating the education of the lower orders; but that if the Church was disposed to apply the same method to the education of her own Members & to the inculcating [of] her own Principles, any Society established for that purpose should have his support & Patronage.[34]

This transferral of patronage had very beneficial consequences for the Church.[35]

The role of Manners-Sutton in securing the Prince Regent's patronage reminds us of the integral part that the episcopacy played in forwarding educational designs. Bishops had taken an interest in schemes for the education of the poor long before the dissemination of Lancaster and Bell's systems. The example of Shute Barrington is instructive.[36] As Bishop of Salisbury in the 1780s, he was an early champion of

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[32] Southey and Southey, *Life of Rev. Andrew Bell*, II, 154-5.
[33] Ibid., 377-9.
[34] John Bowdler to Lord Sidmouth, 27 September 1811, Devon Heritage Centre, 152M/C1811/OE.
[35] N. A. Dixon, 'Church and Monarchy in England, 1811-1837' (unpublished MPhil thesis, University of Cambridge, 2015), 81-4.
[36] Also of importance were Beilby Porteus, Lewis Bagot, John Douglas and Richard Watson. Samuel Horsley's condemnation of charity schools and Sunday schools as 'schools of

Sunday schools, and, after his translation to Durham in 1791, he made significant efforts to provide schools for the poor. By an Act of Parliament of 1801, compensation for the enclosure of his manorial lands in Chester and Lancaster was applied to this purpose.[37] Although he initially favoured Lancaster's system, by 1808 Barrington was convinced of the merits of Bell's method, lending his assistance to proposals for a school in Marylebone on that plan.[38] Barrington had ordained Bell and now expressed his hope that 'the Madras system will be extended to most parts of the county of Durham.'[39] Accordingly, Bell drew up a plan for a school at Bishop Auckland which would have the dual function of teaching children and training teachers. Named after Barrington, the institution opened in May 1810.[40] The Barrington School was incorporated into the National Society after 1811 and, within five years, had set up National Schools for 8,000 children.[41]

The co-operation of the SPCK, royalty and bishops was conspicuous at the foundation of the National Society on 16 October 1811. The initiative came from a meeting of three prominent members of the SPCK: Joshua Watson, Henry Handley Norris and John Bowles.[42] By July 1811, this group had expanded to nine, and a circular was issued proposing a society for promoting Bell's system.[43] At the founding meeting, Manners-Sutton was made President of the society, while all the bishops of England and Wales were made ex-officio vice-presidents.[44] In early documents, the society was referred to as the 'Metropolitan Society for promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church', but this was

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Jacobinical Religion, and Jacobinical Politics' was atypical: Soloway, *Prelates and People*, 352-70.

[37] Allen and McClure, *Two Hundred Years*, 151; Soloway, *Prelates and People*, 356; *Statute Law Repeals: Nineteenth Report* (London, 2012), 75.

[38] Southey and Southey, *Life of Rev. Andrew Bell*, II, 211-2, 252.

[39] Ibid., 250.

[40] Ibid., 251-2.

[41] NS AR (1815), 71.

[42] Churton, *Joshua Watson*, 56. On this and subsequent meetings, see Iwashita, 'Forming the National Society', 5-10.

[43] Southey and Southey, *Life of Rev. Andrew Bell*, II, 340.

[44] National Society General Committee minute book, 16 October 1811, CERC, NS/2/2/1/1/1, f. 3.

considered by some to be too London-centric a title. Reynold Gideon Bouyer, Archdeacon of Northumberland, complained to Norris that '[t]he adaption of the new system of education will involve local exigencies, which cannot be fully known, nor easily described to the inhabitants of London'. Bouyer desired 'not a metropolitan, but a national society for the education of the poor.'[45] When this point was discussed at the founding meeting, layman George Marriott stated the title 'metropolitan' ran the risk of being 'construed … as distinguishing the society from a national one.' Bishop Randolph responded that 'no one present could think of forming any but a national institution', to which 'there was no dissentient voice.'[46] Hence it was resolved that 'the Title of the Society now constituted be, "The National Society for promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church, throughout England and Wales."'[47] The society was the first in Britain to carry the appellation of 'national'.[48]

The claims of the National Society were just as assertive as its title. Its activities were premised on the belief that 'the National Religion should be made the first and chief thing taught to the Poor, according to the excellent Liturgy and Catechism provided by our Church for that purpose'.[49] Its aim was 'to instruct and educate the poor in suitable learning, works of industry, and the principles of the Christian religion, according to the Established Church.'[50] At their early meetings late in 1811 and early in 1812, the society's newly-appointed general committee determined what this meant in practice. Firstly, there was to be a central school in Westminster for the education of 1,000 children.[51] A site in Baldwin's Gardens, Westminster, was found

[45] Southey and Southey, *Life of Rev. Andrew Bell*, II, 344, 349-50.
[46] Ibid., 358.
[47] National Society General Committee minute book, 16 October 1811, CERC, NS/2/2/1/1/1, ff. 2-3.
[48] B. Tennant, *Corporate Holiness: Pulpit Preaching and the Church of England Missionary Societies, 1760-1870* (Oxford, 2013), 152.
[49] National Society General Committee minute book, 16 October 1811, CERC, NS/2/2/1/1/1, f. 1.
[50] Ibid., f. 3.
[51] Ibid., 11 December 1811, f. 13.

for this and the central school opened in July 1812. Far from narrowly 'metropolitan' in its function, it was projected to be 'a Store-house, from which the means of the new system of instruction might be derived and propagated through the whole kingdom.'[52] As with the Barrington School, a primary function of the Baldwin's Gardens school was to train teachers who would disseminate the National system across the country. Initially, ten schoolmasters were retained to travel to other schools for the purpose of introducing Bell's methods, while numerous teachers came to London to learn the system.[53]

The second major resolution of the committee was that 'it be recommended to form Societies in the several Dioceses, upon the same general plan with the National Society' and that 'such Societies should communicate with the National Society, in order to preserve as far circumstances will admit, an uniformity in their regulations and proceedings.'[54] The diocesan societies were to receive 'pecuniary aid' from the parent society, which would also 'assist them in procuring Books, and a Master for their Central School, at its first foundation', expecting them to become more self-sufficient thereafter. The committee further stipulated:

> [I]t is required that *all* the Children received into these Schools, be, without exception, instructed in [the] Liturgy and Catechism, and, that it be earnestly recommended that … they do constantly attend Divine Service in their Parish Churches, or other places of Public Worship under the Establishment, wherever the same is practicable, on the Lord's Day; and that no religious Tracts be admitted into any School but which are, or, shall be contained in the Catalogue of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.[55]

This clause ensured that dissenters' children would have to conform to Anglican worship and set up the SPCK catalogue as the standard of Anglican orthodoxy within schools. Concern about compelling dissenters' children to attend church from

[52] NS AR (1814), 5.
[53] Southey and Southey, *Life of Rev. Andrew Bell*, II, 437-8.
[54] National Society General Committee minute book, 3 December 1811, CERC, NS/2/2/1/1/1, f. 9.
[55] Ibid., 15 January 1812, ff. 25-6.

Manners-Sutton and Barrington among others ensured that the language of this requirement was toned down a little.[56] Although church attendance remained the norm, children could be absented from it if 'such reason … be assigned, as shall be satisfactory' to the managers of a particular school.[57]

The organisational structure and basic requirements of the National Society, as fixed in 1812, essentially endured throughout the period under discussion. It was a structure that was highly centralised and uniform, but at the same time heavily dependent on the activity and discretion of local committees. Diocesan societies, some of which predated the parent society itself, were quick to unite with the National Society. By 1816, every diocese in England bar three had a local arm of the National Society.[58] The exceptions were London, Rochester and Oxford. In the Diocese of London, committees for Essex and the City of London were supplemented by a variety of parochial and deanery groupings.[59] In Rochester, the centre of local activity was the town of Bromley, and remained so even after a diocesan society was established around 1829.[60] At Oxford, the University seems to have taken the lead in promoting the National system until at least 1833.[61] Besides diocesan societies, a number of local committees were formed at county and deanery levels, some of the latter being answerable to county or diocesan societies.[62] Each of

[56] Southey and Southey, *Life of Rev. Andrew Bell*, II, 405-6; C. Abbot (Lord Colchester) (ed.), *The Diary and Correspondence of Charles Abbot, Lord Colchester, Speaker of the House of Commons 1802-1817* (3 vols., London, 1861), II, 352-4, 358-60, 363-6.
[57] National Society General Committee minute book, 29 January 1812, CERC, NS/2/2/1/1/1, f. 33.
[58] NS AR (1814), 23-177; M. A. Smith, 'Introduction' to H. Ryder, 'A Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Gloucester in the Year 1816' in M. A. Smith and S. Taylor (eds.), *Evangelicalism in the Church of England c. 1790-c. 1890: A Miscellany* (Woodbridge, 2004), 75. On the growth of diocesan auxiliaries of Anglican societies more generally, see R. A. Burns, *The Diocesan Revival in the Church of England, c. 1800-1870* (Oxford, 1999), 114-30.
[59] NS AR (1826), 'Index to "Extracts," &c. at the End of this Report'.
[60] NS AR (1815), 156-7; NS AR (1820), 208-10; NS AR (1829), 13; NS AR (1837), 40.
[61] Phineas Pett to William Jackson, [21 April 1812], Oxfordshire History Centre, MS. Oxf. Dioc. Papers c. 662, ff. 193-4; Pett to Jackson, 28 April [1812], ibid., f. 195; Pett to Jackson, 3 May [1812], ibid., f. 192; NS AR (1814), 168-70; NS AR (1815), 154-5; NS AR (1833), 43.
[62] See e.g. NS AR (1814), 179-81.

these arms of the National Society was a miniature version of the London organisation, with a committee of prominent clergy and laity, a duty of oversight over individual schools and for the most part a central school.[63]

Although coverage was sometimes patchy, most parishes had come under the purview of a local committee by 1830, as demonstrated by a 'Summary View of Diocesan & District Societies & Schools in Union' published that year. This showed that the local leadership of the National Society was overwhelmingly clerical, with clergymen accounting for 70% of listed officials. In two-thirds of English dioceses, pan-diocesan societies had given way to smaller groupings based on county, district or archdeaconry boundaries.[64] In the largest diocese, Chester, the diocesan society had been inactive since 1818, its work supplanted by societies for Cheshire, Lancashire, Blackburn, Manchester, Preston and the Archdeaconry of Richmond.[65] Although diocesan societies were the model envisaged for the National Society's local organisation, the uneven and unwieldy nature of diocesan boundaries made this aspiration impractical except in smaller dioceses.[66] The swift abandonment of the diocesan model led to a multiplication of more localised structures for promoting the society's work. Such was the centrality that local activity assumed that it was judged necessary for a resolution to be passed in 1818 'that local exertions for individual Schools do not supersede the necessity of upholding the Parent Society.'[67] Within a relatively short space of time, the National Society had acquired a well-organised and growing network of supporters throughout England.

[63] See e.g. NS AR (1812), 27-54.
[64] Figures derived from NS AR (1830), 87-94. This pattern persisted. See e.g. the locations of central schools in 1837: NS AR (1837), 40-41.
[65] Sanderson, 'National and British School Societies in Lancashire', 23; NS AR (1830), 90.
[66] Hence the dioceses which retained pan-diocesan structures were Canterbury, York, Durham, Bath and Wells, Gloucester, Salisbury and Worcester: NS AR (1830), 87-94.
[67] National Society report of proceedings, 1 May 1818, CERC, NS/2/1/2.

Subscribers and Supporters

Until the introduction of government grants for National and British schools in 1833, the National Society was entirely dependent on the generosity of private donors to finance its operations. Even after 1833, it was a condition of government grants that equivalent voluntary subscriptions be raised. By this point, the clergy who largely led the National Society had established a firm lay support base in many localities, such that the majority of the government grants went to the National Society as opposed to its non-denominational counterpart.[68] Investigating the identity of the individuals who financed this enormous undertaking reveals much about the Church's influence in a variety of contexts.

The most prominent supporters of the National Society were the same parties that had brought about its foundation: the Royal Family, the bishops and the SPCK.[69] George IV made continual donations to the society and granted it a royal charter.[70] The following year, the Duke of York chaired a meeting appealing for subscriptions to the society.[71] The issuing of a King's letter appealing for funds to be read in all churches in 1823 also assisted greatly in its extension, an expedient that was repeated in 1832 and 1837. However, William IV was more equivocal in his support for Anglican education, accepting the simultaneous patronage of the BFSS and failing to make a personal donation to the National Society until 1834.[72] His lack of interest was compensated for by Queen Adelaide in 1831 when she pledged an annual donation of £50, approximately five times the amount of the next largest yearly subscription.[73] In November of that year, she made a personal appearance at

[68] Burgess, *Enterprise in Education*, 64-5.
[69] The contribution of the SPCK, mainly in the provision of books to the schools, is discussed below, 253-6.
[70] Dixon, 'Church and Monarchy', 82-3.
[71] National Society report of proceedings, 1 May 1818, CERC, NS/2/1/2.
[72] Dixon, 'Church and Monarchy', 83.
[73] National Society General Committee minute book, 6 July 1831, CERC, NS/2/2/1/1/3, p. 167; NS AR (1831), 55-76.

the central school in Brighton, attending a 'Fancy Sale' and examination.[74] Her example was followed by the Duchess of Kent, who in 1832 became a patron with an initial donation of £100.[75] Two years later, the 15-year-old Princess Victoria laid the foundation stone of the Victoria National School in Tunbridge Wells.[76]

The role of bishops extended far beyond their ex-officio positions as vice-presidents of the society. They patronised diocesan and district societies, advocated the society's cause through sermons and charges, examined schoolchildren and often made substantial personal donations.[77] They also served as a useful conduit between the parochial clergy and the National Society in grant applications, as examples from the Diocese of Chester demonstrate.[78] In 1819, the committee of the Runcorn National School reported that they had been able to gain funds for enlargement 'through the Kind assistance' of Bishop Law.[79] In 1828, Bishop Blomfield assured Blackburn's Vicar John William Whittaker that he would 'do what I can to procure you a grant from the N[ational] Society', adding that a 'regular application' to its secretary was also advisable.[80] In 1833, the Everton curate Thomas Tattershall transmitted a grant application directly to Bishop Sumner in advance of a London committee meeting Sumner was chairing, which had the desired effect.[81] The

[74] Brighton National Schools minute book, 8 November 1831, East Sussex RO, PAR 255/25/1/1, p. 206; *Brighton Gazette*, 17 November 1831, 3.
[75] National Society General Committee minute book, 5 December 1832, CERC, NS/2/2/1/1/3, pp. 216-7.
[76] *Brighton Gazette*, 2 October 1834, 3.
[77] For patronage, see e.g. NS AR (1812), 33, 50, 121; NS AR (1814), 221; NS AR (1826), 'Salisbury'. On sermons and charges, see Tennant, *Corporate Holiness*, 144-55; Soloway, *Prelates and People*, 370-99. For examinations, see e.g. *Kentish Chronicle*, 14 July 1815, 4; Hampshire Society for the Education of the Infant Poor minute book, 5 August 1828, Hampshire RO, 128M84/3, f. 22; *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 13 October 1832, 3. The personal donations are recorded in the lists of 'Benefactors and Annual Subscribers' appended to the society's annual reports.
[78] Sanderson, 'National and British School Societies in Lancashire', 10-11. All grant applications had to be signed by a bishop, at least from 1827: NS AR (1827), 19.
[79] Runcorn National School minute book, 12 Apr 1819, Cheshire Arch., P95/3516/1.
[80] Charles James Blomfield to John William Whittaker, 2 June 1828, WP(B).
[81] Everton National School minute book, 14 June 1833, Liverpool RO, 283 AUG/10/1. See also John Bird Sumner to [Le Gendre Starkie], 3 June 1830; Sumner to [J. C. Adamson], 4 June [1830], Lancashire Arch., PR 2863/5/20.

importance of episcopal support was also evident in the Diocese of Exeter. In 1826, it was reported that a grant had been made for the building of a school in Falmouth, where 'little or no contribution … could be expected from the inhabitants', after being 'strongly recommended' by Bishop Carey.[82] Royal and episcopal patronage was combined with the support of elite statesmen. Spencer Perceval was of much assistance to Manners-Sutton in persuading the Prince Regent to support the National Society, while Lord Liverpool accepted the office of Vice-President of the society.[83] Prime Ministers Sidmouth, Grenville, Peel and Grey also lent their personal support as subscribers.[84]

In many instances, however, the most vital supporters of the National Society were the local aristocracy and gentry. Noblemen frequently took the lead alongside bishops in organising the diocesan and county arms of the National Society. A circular letter of April 1812 soliciting support for the formation of a Norwich society was signed by Bishop Bathurst and Baron Suffield.[85] When the society's founding meeting was held in July of that year, Viscount Primrose was in the chair. He and four other peers headed the list of vice-presidents.[86] In Lincoln the Lord Lieutenant of the county, Baron Brownlow, presided at the diocesan society's first meeting, while in Colchester the local MP, Richard Hart Davies, chaired a meeting to found an Essex society.[87] The leadership of local worthies was not always an asset. In

[82] NS AR (1826), 13-4.
[83] Dixon, 'Church and Monarchy', 80-81; Lord Liverpool to Charles Manners-Sutton, 3 November 1811, BL, Add MS 38323, f. 169. On Perceval's contribution, see also E. Hicks, '"Christianity Personified": Perceval and Pittism' (unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2018), 129-30.
[84] See e.g. NS AR (1827), 'Benefactors and Annual Subscribers'.
[85] Henry Bathurst and Baron Suffield to Viscount Anson, 24 April 1812, Staffordshire RO, D615/P(A)/29.
[86] Paper entitled 'Norfolk and Norwich Society, for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church', [c. July 1812], Norfolk RO, DN/NDS 162/1.
[87] Paper entitled 'National Society for the Education of the Poor', [c. January 1812], Norfolk RO, DN/NDS 204/3; paper entitled 'At a Special Meeting of the Clergy and Laity of Colchester and its Vicinity…', Norfolk RO, DN/NDS 204/4/2. Elsewhere, high-ranking clergy chaired such meetings. Bishop North presided in Winchester, while in Lichfield the Dean, John Woodhouse, was in the chair: Hampshire Society for the Education of the Infant Poor minute book, 19th November 1811, Hampshire RO, 128M84/1, pp. 1-4; paper entitled

1825, it was found that at the Leeds institution, 'there is a nominal Committee of Ladies and Gentlemen but none of them appear to take any interest in the School.'[88] Nevertheless, in financial terms such support was often found to be indispensable. The committee of the National School of Northwich, Cheshire, stated to their patron Sir John Fleming Leicester in 1826, 'The Scale of Subscriptions to Public Charities is generally commensurate with the Rank and Influence of the Subscribers, and, in cases like the present, Local Property is for the most part regarded.' This remark was in response to an 'intimation' from Leicester that he was reducing his annual subscription to the school from £10 to £5. The committee represented to him that the risk of other 'principal subscribers' reducing their contributions 'in a similar proportion', combined with the effects of 'the late depression in Agricultural Affairs', threatened the school's very existence.[89] Leicester relented and the managers of the school thanked him for 'holding up an Example which cannot fail greatly to influence its future prosperity.'[90]

The appeal to property and landed wealth was a persuasive if occasionally unreliable one.[91] When the funds of the National School at Mayfield, Sussex, fell into debt shortly after its foundation, the vicar John Kirby decided that 'it would be useless in me to be making a second appeal to my parishioners (who consist principally of Tenantry & labouring people)'. Instead, as he explained in a letter to Lord Hampden, he determined to adopt 'this method of making our case known to those Landlords, who unfortunately for the parish do not reside in it'.[92] Although Hampden did not proffer assistance, lord of the manor Lord Camden gave a 'very

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'At a very numerous and respectable meeting of the Nobility Gentry and Clergy of the Diocese of Lichfield and Coventry…', [February 1812], Norfolk RO, DN/NDS 204/4/1.

[88] National Society School Committee minute book, 16 September 1825, CERC, NS/2/2/2/1/5, p. 76.

[89] Thomas Marshall et al. to Sir John Fleming Leicester, [May 1824], Cheshire Arch., DLT 4996/35/24.

[90] Marshall to Leicester, 30 May 1824, Cheshire Arch., DLT/C3/42.

[91] Sanderson records 17 prominent landowners who gave substantial support to the National Society in Lancashire: Sanderson, 'National and British School Societies in Lancashire', 16.

[92] John Kirby to Lord Hampden, 27 October 1817, East Sussex RO, KIR 28/24.

handsome donation towards defraying the expenses', but only upon ascertaining that the contributions of other non-resident landlords were not sufficient.[93] Earl Talbot was similarly circumspect in responding to a request for funds from H. B. Fowler, Vicar of Uttoxeter, Staffordshire. Fowler wrote of the difficulties that a committee to establish a National School had experienced 'from the Inability of the middle Rank of People to cooperate with them to the Extent requir'd'. Talbot instructed 'J.G.', presumably an agent, to '[f]ind out what is generally subscribed to this School' and offer that, observing that 'I cannot (from my very limited possessions in the Town of Uttoxeter) be expected to do any thing more than is generally the Case among the inhabitants'.[94] Elsewhere in Staffordshire, future bishop Richard Bagot had greater success in financing the building of a school in Abbots Bromley. Here, the three principal landholders (his brother Baron Bagot, the Earl of Dartmouth and the Marquess of Anglesea) all agreed to contribute.[95] The donation of land for schoolrooms represented a more permanent means of support. The Earl of Dartmouth twice facilitated the expansion of the National system in West Bromwich: in 1827, by the building of a 'New Upper Room' at Hall End for Sunday scholars, and in 1834, by funding an extension to the Mares Green schoolroom.[96] At Coveney, Cambridgeshire, curate Richard Taylor recorded for posterity in the parish register a gift in 1832 of land for a National School by lord of the manor Lord Rokeby, who also became an ex-officio trustee.[97]

Yet, despite the importance of elite patronage, the National Society's efforts also depended upon countless smaller donations from local inhabitants of more modest means. The unusually extensive records of subscriptions for the building of a National School in the town of Padiham, Lancashire, in 1830 reveal the social

[93] Lord Camden to Kirby, 17 July 1820, East Sussex RO, KIR 28/26; Kirby to Camden, 27 July 1820, East Sussex RO, KIR 28/27; Kirby to Camden, [1820], East Sussex RO, KIR 28/28.
[94] H. B. Fowler to Earl Talbot, 6 February 1818, Staffordshire RO, D240/E/C/1/16/15.
[95] Richard Bagot to Marquess of Anglesea, 13 May 1816, Staffordshire RO, D603/K/16/76.
[96] West Bromwich National School minute book, 31 August 1827, 2 April 1834, Staffordshire RO, D4031/1/35.
[97] Coveney composite parish register, Cambridgeshire Arch., P51/1/2.

breadth of the National Society's appeal. These were collected by Le Gendre Starkie, a local landowner and MP. At the higher end of the social spectrum among subscribers was Lord Montagu, who donated £20, but did not deign to respond to Starkie's request personally, not thinking it necessary thus to 'humble him'.[98] Earl Howe was more congenial, also giving £20 but regretting that this might be considered 'a very shabby donation'.[99] Several clergymen subscribed, as did the industrialist John Fort.[100] Among the Lancashire landowners contributing was John Fowden Hindle, who stated, 'I am well aware, not only of the poverty, but of the uncivilized state of the Inhabitants, of the town of Padiham, and it is indeed high time, that something should be done for their improvement.'[101] But the building of the school was not simply an exercise in social engineering from above, for there were many contributions, mostly of between two and ten shillings, from the tradesmen and craftsmen of the locality. Of the 32 Padiham subscribers who can be identified from a contemporary trade directory, there were ten shopkeepers, four publicans, four shoemakers, two joiners, two butchers, two cotton manufacturers, an iron and tin plate worker, a druggist, a blacksmith and a miller. Additionally, a donation was recorded from 'Workmen' in the shop of a 'joiner & builder'.[102] When Starkie laid the first stone of the school in April 1830, it was before 'a numerous assemblage of the inhabitants', who processed to the ceremony from a public

[98] Thomas Carr to Le Gendre Starkie, 3 February 1830, Lancashire Arch., PR 2863/5/20.
[99] Earl Howe to [Le Gendre Starkie], [7 February 1830], Lancashire Arch., PR 2863/5/20.
[100] R. Walton to Le Gendre Starkie, 25 June 1829; R. Birkett to Le Gendre Starkie, 28 November 1829; John Fort to Le Gendre Starkie, 30 January 1830; John Birtwhistle to [Le Gendre Starkie], 18 February 1830; James Hornby to Le Gendre Starkie, 27 February 1830, Lancashire Arch., PR 2863/5/20.
[101] John Fowden Hindle to Le Gendre Starkie, 23 February 1830, Lancashire Arch., PR 2863/5/20.
[102] 'Subscriptions to the Intended National School at Padiham', Lancashire Arch., PR 2863/5/20; *Pigot and Co.'s National Commercial Directory for 1828-9* (London, 1828-9), pt. 1, 432.

house.[103] The building of the school represented a truly collaborative effort, all the remarkable for the fact that it took place at a time of severe economic distress.[104]

Religious and Political Functions

As discussed above, the National Society aimed to promote an exclusive Anglicanism grounded in the Prayer Book, the Catechism and the works in the SPCK catalogue. Its claim to represent 'the National Religion' was a potentially disruptive one in a plural religious landscape. As Joanna Innes has argued, this was a bold assertion of the Church of England's capacity to represent the nation at large.[105] In anticipation of criticisms on this score, the society had conceded from its inception that 'in this Country of Civil and Religious Liberty … every man has a right to pursue the plan of Education that is best adapted to the Religion which he himself professes.' Hence non-Anglicans were free to combine 'the mechanism of the new system' with whatever 'religious tenets' they wished 'without reproach or interruption from the Members of the Establishment'.[106] At the founding meeting of the Lincoln diocesan society in January 1812, the confessional nature of the National system provoked fierce debate. Sir Robert Heron, a Whig MP, argued that 'the plan recommended assumed the rank of *nationality*, and ought, therefore, to be on a system of the most extensive and liberal comprehension.' In this he was opposed by the Rev. S. Turner, who asserted that 'the religion of the Church of England was the more pure; and to make education most useful, one would necessarily go to the

[103] *Lancaster Gazette*, 1 May 1830, 2.
[104] Hornby and Fort referred to this in the letters cited above, n. 100. Starkie's sister Elizabeth wrote from Springfield, 'the poor in this & every other neighbourhood, have required much assistance for some months past to enable them to procure food, clothing & Coals, which at the present moment are still more essential than Education': Elizabeth Starkie to Le Gendre Starkie, 16 February 1830, Lancashire Arch., PR 2863/5/20.
[105] Joanna Innes, 'L'«éducation nationale» dans les îles Britanniques, 1765-1815: Variations britanniques et irlandaises sur un thème européen', *Annales*, 65 (2010), 1103-4.
[106] National Society General Committee minute book, 16 October 1811, CERC, NS/2/2/1/1/1, f. 1.

purest source.' The Rev. W. Hett said that 'he would be glad to see the families of sectarists availing themselves of the schools; for, without meaning any offence, he must say, the more they were taught to understand the National Religion the better.' The appellation of 'National' especially irked the dissenters present. Mr Draper, a dissenting minister, asked, 'How can that be called a "National" School which is founded on a partial view of religions.' At this point Sir Jenison Gordon interjected, 'Because there is such a thing as a National Religion.' It was this claim which won the day, and a motion by Heron to allow dissenters' children 'to attend divine service at the places of their religious worship' was rejected.[107]

The Anglican effort to redefine nationality in exclusively Anglican terms was equally evident elsewhere. In the Exchange Room in Manchester, the Rev. C. W. Ethelson delivered a speech in which he averred that in 'our own commercial town', 'permanent prosperity must have a permanent basis. And what basis (let me ask) can be so permanent as the venerable Institutions of a *National* Religion?' Attacking the religious pluralism of the Lancaster system, he stated that 'to keep the minds of children uncontaminated by *heretical* notions, there must be an unanimous agreement in the *fundamental* articles of faith and doctrine.' This was 'admirably promoted by the general use of the Church Catechism'. In the printed version of this address, Ethelston was careful to disclaim any 'Spirit of Intolerance' and claimed that a 'reasonable Dissenter' had in it 'no just cause of offence.'[108] Other promoters of the National system were less interested in placating dissenting opinion. At a meeting of the Bristol diocesan society in 1813, William Ady delivered a jeremiad against 'Non-Conformists, and Revolters after subscription, and the followers of

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[107] *Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury*, 31 January 1812, 4. The complaint that the National Society's title was a misnomer because of its religious exclusivity persisted throughout the period. See e.g. *Windsor and Eton Express*, 2 August 1818, 2; *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 13 April 1831, 2; *Leeds Mercury*, 19 October 1833, 8; *Taunton Courier*, 27 January 1836, 9; *Yorkshire Gazette*, 22 October 1836, 2.

[108] C. W. Ethelston, *Address delivered in the Exchange Room, in Manchester, to a General Meeting convened by the Boroughreeve and Constables, on Wednesday the 11th. of Decr., 1811, for the purpose of Taking into Consideration the Expediency of Founding Schools on the Plan of Dr. Bell* (Manchester, 1811), 8, 13-15.

such', who, he asserted, were infiltrating the society.[109] The sense that the National Society was engaged in a conflict for confessional dominance could also be discerned in the competitive tone of the promoters of individual schools. Bagot wrote in 1817 that '[n]othing can shew the necessity of a good school for the Poor in [Abbots Bromley] more than when I state that … a decided Methodist school amounting to 150 children is established there. I am confident this will be knocked on the head the moment a national one can be established.'[110] In 1829, Brighton curate H. J. Tayler wrote of how the foundation of a new National School in the east of the town 'was rendered indispensably necessary by the exertions of the Dissenters who had expressed their intention to open a School in that immediate neighbourhood to be conducted on the principles of the British & Foreign School Society.'[111]

The foundation of a National School had significant potential to lay bare the religious differences of a locality. In 1814, the Rev. Edward Crosse wrote to Bishop Howley from Colchester that there were 'many obstacles' in the town to any plan for 'giving greater security to the ecclesiastical & civil branches of our constitution.' Colchester's dissenters were 'in all points in which they conceive their interests to be involved … perhaps more than equally vigilant with ourselves.' Accordingly, they had responded to the foundation of a National School by 'a counter-Institution, denominated the Lancasterian Schools; and caused it to be understood, that they proceeded on a more liberal plan than the Founders of the other establishment',

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[109] 'An Address by Mr. William Ady, and partly delivered by him at the Guild-Hall, in the City of Bristol, on Monday the 1st day of February, 1813, before the Bristol Diocesan Society, for the Education of the Poor, in the principles of the Established Church', Oxfordshire History Centre, MS. Oxf. Dioc. Papers c. 450, ff. 8-9.

[110] Bagot to Anglesea, 27 February 1817, Staffordshire RO, D603/K/16/76. Cf. *Hereford Journal*, 5 May 1830, 4.

[111] Brighton National Schools minute book, 6 February 1829, East Sussex RO, PAR 255/25/1/1, p. 115. Such competitiveness produced noticeable results at least in Ipswich, where the committee of an existing Lancasterian school reported that the foundation of a National School 'hath been the means of preventing many admissions into the school of which your committee have the direction, and the occasion of withdrawing others, who were already members, from it': *Ipswich Journal*, 30 January 1813, 4. In 1836, a Methodist chapel in Warwick was converted into a National School: Papers concerning National School in Warwick, Warwickshire RO, DR1130/124.

discarding 'the principle of exclusion or of non-admission, as adopted by the Church'. They also provided clothes to the children, an incentive which the National School then felt obliged to adopt despite difficulties in financing it. Evangelical Anglicans had also presented a challenge by obstructing the establishment of a 'School of Industry' when the school committee 'would not suffer several Gentlemen of this description to inculcate what doctrines they chose in the school'.[112] A similarly divisive atmosphere was evident in Liverpool in 1836 when Anglicans responded to the radical Corporation's decision to introduce the Irish system of non-denominational education in its schools. Thousands of people crowded into the city's Amphitheatre for a meeting to protest against this and set up a subscription for new Church of England schools. On this occasion the Rev. Hugh McNeil thundered, 'five thousand voices had that day been raised against the system, and twice five thousand hands were ready to join in the cry of "No Popery".'[113] This public pressure resulted in the eventual abandonment of the Corporation's plans.[114]

However, the extension of Anglican education was not always accompanied by inter-denominational strife. There were occasional instances of co-operation between the supporters of the rival schools. In 1813, the children of Bury's National and Lancasterian institutions gathered together in church to hear 'a most liberal, pathetic, and enlightened discourse'.[115] In 1825 and 1828, bazaars were held in Manchester

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[112] Edward Crosse to William Howley, 27 May 1814, LPL, FP Howley 12, ff. 237-8. In 1811, Thomas Grenville wrote that Northampton was 'as hot in the hostilities of Lancaster and Bell as if we were still in the days of Calvin and of Luther.': Thomas Grenville to Lord Grenville, 26 November 1811, in F. B. Bickley (ed.), *Report on the Manuscripts of J. B. Fortescue, Esq., preserved at Dropmore, Vol. X* (London, 1927), 182.

[113] *Morning Post*, 16 July 1836, 2.

[114] G. R. Balleine, *A History of the Evangelical Party in the Church of England* (London, 1908), 201-2. See also the account of the laying of the foundation stone of one of the Anglican schools established in Liverpool as a result of the meeting in *Morning Post*, 7 September 1836, 3. Such schools were not formally in union with the National Society but nevertheless used its system: NS AR (1837), 53-4.

[115] *Bury and Norwich Post*, 12 May 1813, 2. This harmony was still evident in Bury in 1825, when a dissenter wrote that the town's National School had 'not been opposed' to the Lancasterian School, and that the donations of Anglican clergy to the latter 'have exceeded, and do exceed, the contributions of the Dissenters in a degree which, as Dissenter [sic], I am unwilling to state': ibid., 23 November 1825, 2.

for the joint benefit of the city's National and Lancasterian schools.[116] It was also possible to offer assistance to both societies simultaneously, as William IV did with his patronage. At the City of London's Court of Common Council in 1815, '[t]he cause of the National Schools in and near the Metropolis, was liberally advocated … by the Friends of the Lancasterian Establishment.'[117] Harrow's Vicar J. W. Cunningham, a subscriber to the National Society, addressed a meeting of the BFSS in 1833. Expressing a hope that 'the two Societies would go on without any rivalry', he called on Anglicans and dissenters 'to see how they could co-operate in the promotion of an object equally interesting to both.'[118]

Furthermore, the National Society was in some places indebted to non-Anglican benefactors. The National School at Kendal, Westmorland, was endowed in 1817 by a Quaker, Matthew Pyper, who was buried in a vault in the school at his own request when he died in 1821.[119] In the course of a parliamentary debate on Catholic emancipation in 1825, Bishop Law spoke of a Catholic landowner in his diocese 'who, in a spirit of liberality (may I be permitted, without offence, to say) worthy of a purer faith, supported nearly at his own expense, a national school.'[120] Among the patrons of the Brighton National Schools was Maria Fitzherbert, the Catholic Irishwoman whom George IV had secretly wed in 1785.[121] Such examples of inter-denominational co-operation were, however, more remarkable for the fact of their occurring at all than for their profusion. The majority of Anglicans concurred with

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[116] *Manchester Courier*, 16 April 1825, 3; 3 November 1827, 1-2; 23 February 1828, 2-3. On the Isle of Wight, the proceeds of a music festival were 'divided between the National and Lancasterian Schools': *Hampshire Chronicle*, 3 September 1827, 1.
[117] *Bury and Norwich Post*, 8 November 1815, 2. Cf. *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 22 August 1818, 3; *Dorset County Chronicle* 26 May 1825, 3.
[118] *Western Times*, 14 September 1833, 4.
[119] *Westmorland Gazette*, 3 November 1821, 2-3. There were also many dissenters among the managers and subscribers of schools: *Report of the Select Committee on the State of Education* (London, 1834), 65-6.
[120] *Hansard*, 2nd series, XIII, 727 (17 May 1825). He was presumably referring to John Clifton, who donated £20 towards the building of a National School in Blackpool, 'but declined any annual aid for the Master': NS AR (1820), 248.
[121] Brighton National Schools minute book, 2 April 1818, East Sussex RO, EMA 13/1/1, p. 73.

Howley's statement that 'every populous village, unprovided with a national school, must be regarded as a strong hold abandoned to the occupation of the enemy.'[122] Questioned in a parliamentary committee as to whether a system of religious education could be devised confining its teaching to those beliefs shared by 'all christian sects', National Society secretary Joseph Cotton Wigram flatly asserted his 'conviction that there were no such things as principles common to all sects in England.'[123]

Nevertheless, many non-Anglicans sent their children to National Schools. Tindal Thompson Walmsley, Wigram's predecessor as secretary, told a parliamentary committee in 1816 that dissenters were 'not slack' in patronising the central school in London: 'we have people of all denominations; we have even Jews'. He was unable to give further detail, explaining that 'the only question we ask when the child is admitted is "are you seven years old?"'[124] In 1828, it was reported from London that 'almost without exception the Dissenters do not object to their children regularly attending Church'.[125] There were various opinions concerning whether it was right to insist on church attendance, a point which had been left to the discretion of individual committees.[126] In 1815, Leeds committee member R. J. Coulman wrote to Norris that he regretted 'the difference of opinion' that had 'prevail'd' in London, but that he intended to 'make a firm stand on the ground we have hitherto acted upon, which is that of admitting into our School poor Children of all Sects, with the express condition, of being taught the *principles*, & attending the *service* of the

[122] W. Howley, *A Charge delivered to the Clergy, of the Diocese of London at the Primary Visitation of that Diocese in the Year 1814* (London, 1815), 31.
[123] *Select Committee on the State of Education*, 64-5.
[124] *Report from Select Committee of the House of Commons appointed to inquire into the Education of the Lower Orders in the Metropolis* (London, 1816), 57. Cf. *Select Committee on the State of Education*, 4-5, 58-60.
[125] Brighton National Schools minute book, 4 August 1828, East Sussex RO, PAR 255/25/1/1, p. 101. Cf. *Select Committee on the State of Education*, 64. An interesting counter-example is found in the register of a National School in Stockport, where is written in pencil next to an 1835 entry for one pupil, 'mother does not like him to go to church': Stockport National Day School Register, 1831-78, Cheshire Arch., P14/3435/10/1, no. 1651.
[126] *Select Committee on the State of Education*, 5, 63; Iwashita, 'Forming the National Society', 12-14.

Established Church.' Were 'laxity' to 'prevail', he 'should almost cease to have an interest in an establishment, which I have all along consider'd as the most likely, under Divine Providence, to *secure* the *ascendancy* of the Church.'[127]

At the annual meeting of Exeter's Central School in 1833, one attendant, a Captain Lewis, maintained a similar rigidity, criticising the school's policy of allowing a parent to 'take his child to any place of worship he pleased.' Sir Thomas Acland stated in response that at Westminster's National School 'one of the best boys' had been Catholic, while Thomas Lowe, the Cathedral's Precentor, stated that 'two of the cleverest boys' in the Exeter school were Jewish. Lowe then argued, 'Suppose you force them to go to church, they would be taken away, and really and truly you lose the prospect of bringing them into the pure faith.' John Moore-Stevens, Archdeacon of Exeter, asserted that 'it is our duty to extend religious education as far as possible, and if the mind be enlightened, eventually the truth must prevail.'[128] Thus, even in its more tolerant moments, the National Society had a clear confessional goal in view. Inclusivity did not indicate any fundamental acceptance of religious pluralism on the society's part; rather, it was considered a means towards the exclusive end of promoting Anglicanism.

Besides possessing the religious function of entrenching the dominance of the 'National Religion', the society also had broader political aims. In his sermon of 1811, Marsh argued that the Church of England's '*alliance* with the State implies *utility* to the State' and that it was 'the interest of *Statesmen*, as well as *Clergymen* … to enable … the Church to render that service to the State, which the State requires, and compensates by reciprocal aid.' Political support for institutions in which Anglican doctrine was 'openly and avowedly discarded' would make the Church

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[127] R. J. Coulman to Henry Handley Norris, 3 July 1815, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 789, f. 71.
[128] *Bury and Norwich Post*, 20 November 1833, 4. Cf. *Leamington Spa Courier*, 6 September 1828, 4. The policy of the National School at East Grinstead, Sussex was not to exclude 'any child, on account of its parents being dissenters from the Church of England, or of its non-attendance at church on the Lord's Day, provided the parents or friends of the child undertake for its attendance with them, on the Lord's Day at some place of its public worship': NS AR (1818), 174-5. See also Iwashita, 'Forming the National Society', 11.

'despair of being able to fulfil the *condition* of our alliance.'[129] Godfrey Faussett, preaching before the University of Oxford, took the argument still further, asserting that 'the defence of our Ecclesiastical Establishment is the defence of our Political Constitution'. Arresting the progress of non-denominational education was 'manifestly the interest of the ecclesiastic and the statesman'.[130] For Daniel Wilson, religious education was 'the spring of public tranquillity', conveying 'the elements of a cheerful and uniform subjection to all lawful authority.'[131] According to Lowe, such a course was the only means whereby the poor could be secured 'in after life, from being deluded by the plausible pretences of sectarian teachers, and the worse arts of the apostles of sedition.'[132]

Preachers did not, for the most part, specify a political function for the National Society beyond such generalised appeals to the promotion of the church-state alliance, the constitution and civil obedience. Yet the National Society could hardly fail to be affected by the increasing politicisation that was sweeping the Church as a whole. In 1812, Bishop Pretyman-Tomline presented National Schools as a potential compensation for the repeal of test legislation, hailing 'the Power with which this systematic Instruction may be made to operate in support of the Protestant Church … should the Legislature ever be induced to remove those safeguards, which have been hitherto thought necessary for its security.'[133] Archdeacon Ralph Churton wrote to

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[129] H. Marsh, *The National Religion the Foundation of National Education: A Sermon, preached in the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, London, on Thursday, June 13, 1811, being the time of the Yearly Meeting of the Children educated in the Charity-schools in and about the cities of London and Westminster, to which is added, a Collection of Notes, containing Proofs and Illustrations* (London, 1811), 38-40.
[130] G. Faussett, *A Sermon on the Necessity of Educating the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church: Preached before the University of Oxford, at St. Mary's, on Sunday, Dec. 1, 1811* (Oxford, 1811), 18-19.
[131] D. Wilson, *The National Schools a National Blessing: A Sermon Preached at Christ Church, Middlesex, on Sunday Evening, March 28, 1819, in the aid of the Spitalfields Schools for the Education of One Thousand Children, in connection with the National Society* (London, 1819), 32-3.
[132] T. H. Lowe, *A Sermon, preached in the Parish Church of Tenbury, for the benefit of the National School, established in that Town* (Ludlow, 1817), 15.
[133] G. Pretyman-Tomline, *A Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Lincoln, at the Triennial Visitation of that Diocese in May, June, and July, 1812* (London, 1812), 9.

Lord Sidmouth in the aftermath of a parliamentary debate on Catholic emancipation of the same year that he was going to 'attend a Committee of the National Education at Northampton; where the present state of public matters, particularly on this awful question, will inevitably be mentioned.'[134] Minute books of National School committees do not appear to record such political discussions, but it seems from Churton's statement that these may have occurred off the record.

The Queen Caroline Affair had the effect of bringing the political potential of the National Society out into the open in 1820. Some acted in accordance with the loyalist ethos of the organisation. It was reported that a committee of 17 had met in private at the Lambeth National School and issued a 'loyal declaration' on behalf of the parish's 60,000 inhabitants.[135] But it was also possible for National Schools to be co-opted for more subversive demonstrations. The National School at Alford, Lincolnshire, was lit in celebration of the dropping of the bill of pains and penalties.[136] In Limehouse, some subscribers to the National School voted to allow their schoolroom to be used for a meeting to frame a supportive address to the Queen. This meeting was interrupted by the school's treasurer, Christopher Richardson, who protested that 'there were many Subscribers to the Charity who did not reside in the parish, and who might, perhaps, withdraw their patronage if political Meetings were suffered there.' A Mr Fitch responded that the schoolroom 'could not be devoted to a more laudable purpose than the support of innocence against injustice and oppression. […] [I]f the worthy Speaker thought otherwise, why did he not muster her Majesty's enemies, and oppose the proceedings?' At this point Richardson departed, and the address was 'carried without a dissentient voice'.[137]

[134] Ralph Churton to Sidmouth, 17 June 1812, Devon Heritage Centre, 152M/C1812/OE.
[135] *Evening Mail*, 25 December 1820, 2.
[136] *Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury*, 24 November 1820, 3.
[137] *Morning Chronicle*, 9 December 1820, 3. The National schoolroom in Greenwich was also used for a meeting to address the Queen: *Bath Chronicle*, 17 August 1820, 2.

National Schools were further drawn into political debate by the proliferation of petitions against Catholic emancipation in the late 1820s. At Coventry, an anti-emancipation petition lay for signature 'for some days' at the city's National School.[138] An especially bitter dispute occurred in Norwich. The Whig *Norwich Mercury* sparked controversy when it reported that 'the Boys of one of the National Schools were marched up in procession … to a house near Fye-bridge, where all who could write set their signatures to the Petition against Catholic Emancipation preparing in this city.'[139] Henry Bathurst, Archdeacon of Norwich, asked that a 'satisfactory and public contradiction' of this report be given. Accordingly, a denial of the allegation was published by the trustees of the school. It then emerged that eight National schoolboys had signed the petition '*in a body*', but apparently without official encouragement.[140] In this instance, attendance at a National School appears to have been politically formative. In response, Bathurst argued that 'for children to take such a part in public matters, and especially where the subscribers to the charity are of different opinions as to the subject in question, is not only absurd in itself, but prejudicial to the character and interests of the institutions in which they are educated.'[141] The affair gained national attention when the Duke of Sussex, in an effort to discredit anti-emancipation petitions, repeated a variant of the original report in the *Mercury* in Parliament, claiming that the schoolboys had been dismissed by their master early to sign the petition.[142]

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[138] *Northampton Mercury*, 29 December 1827, 4. Cf. *Coventry Herald*, 29 June 1827, 2.
[139] *Norwich Mercury*, 31 January 1829, 3.
[140] Ibid., 7 February 1829, 2; 24 January 1829, 2. In 1837, fighting broke out between the boys of a Catholic school in Kensington and those of a nearby National School, who were heard to shout 'No Popery' and 'No Paddies': *The Standard*, 23 September 1837, 4.
[141] *Norwich Mercury*, 14 February 1829, 3. The *Reading Mercury* was similarly deprecating about National schoolchildren signing anti-emancipation petitions, stating that '[a] few of our disappointed electioneering serviles, may attempt something of a "hole and corner" petition … and by the aid of a few "old ladies in breeches" and the little boys and girls of the National Schools obtain some signatures, but here their contemptible opposition must end!': *Reading Mercury*, 9 February 1829, 3.
[142] *Hansard*, 2nd series, XX, 941-2 (10 March 1829). The *Norfolk Chronicle* commented that 'it appears little to comport with the dignity of the Illustrious Individual that he should be told to make such statements as these, which have any thing but fact and fairness to

Although occasional reformist gatherings were held at National Schools, their political function tended in the 1830s to assume a fixed form in their increasing use as venues for meetings of working class supporters of the nascent Conservative party, especially in industrial Lancashire.[143] At Chorley the formation of an 'Operative Conservative Association' at a National School elicited a protest from local manufacturers, while at a dinner of the Pilkington Operative Conservative Association held in a National schoolroom a clergyman named Sandford remarked to cheers that 'he trusted we should never look forward to the time when children would be taken from the care of the clergy in the national schools'.[144] It is not possible to determine how many members of such associations had attended National Schools, but such a correlation seems highly probable. By this time, the promoters of the National Society were rather less reticent in avowing specific political aims. At a meeting to establish a National School in Windsor, a clergyman named Allen stated that such an institution would 'if he might so express himself, be productive of great political advantages' in counteracting the 'disposition among the lower classes to regard not with proper feelings the higher class.'[145] In 1836, Lincolnshire rector John Robinson wrote of the need to maintain the National School at Market Rasen 'beset as it has been by *Liberals*, even of Rank & Station in Society.'[146]

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recommend them': *Norfolk Chronicle*, 14 March 1829, 2. It is perhaps not coincidental that the Duke of Sussex was one of the foremost supporters of the BFSS: Binns, *Century of Education*, vii, 50, 72, 85-6, 97-8, 136, 159.

[143] See e.g. *Sheffield Independent*, 19 March 1831, 2; *Maidstone Journal*, 22 May 1832, 1; *Morning Post*, 2 February 1833, 2; 5 September 1836, 2; *Morning Advertiser*, 5 December 1834, 1; *Durham County Advertiser*, 6 January 1837, 4; *Blackburn Standard*, 24 May 1837, 2. In Canterbury, the clergy used National schoolrooms for meetings to frame their responses to Church reforms: *Kentish Gazette*, 29 March 1833, 3; 10 January 1837, 2.

[144] *The Standard*, 24 November 1836, 1; *Bolton Chronicle*, 25 November 1837, 3.

[145] *Windsor and Eton Express*, 5 December 1835, 4.

[146] John Robinson to Earl Brownlow, 13 October 1836, Lincolnshire Arch., BNLW/3/10/1/10/2.

Teaching: Methods, Personnel and Outcomes

Having considered the multiple functions of National Schools, it is possible to explore how these were implemented in practical terms. The basis of the National Society's teaching was Andrew Bell's *Elements of Tuition* (1808). Bell stipulated that schools should be divided into classes according to ability. Each class was to have a 'tutor', 'assistant teacher' and 'teacher' from among the pupils, the whole being overseen by an adult 'schoolmaster' who was 'responsible for the order, behaviour, diligence, and improvement of the class.' Above the schoolmaster was a 'superintendent, or visitor, or chaplain, or parochial minister, whose scrutinizing eye must pervade the whole machine'.[147] The course of instruction recommended by Bell incorporated basic reading, writing and arithmetic, besides which there was to be specifically 'moral and religious Instruction' based on the Anglican Catechism.[148] Such attempts at mental improvement were to be coupled with physical exertion. Bell asserted that '[e]very institution for training up the poor I regard as imperfect, if it do not embrace industry'.[149] Discipline was to be kept primarily by offering rewards and incentives for good behaviour, with corporal punishment used only as a last resort.[150] These ideas provided a template which, with varying degrees of faithfulness, was applied throughout England.

The establishment of the National system depended upon the nurturing of a large body of teachers with a detailed acquaintance with Bell's method. National Society central schools served as a training ground for teachers learning the new system, and also sent out teachers to organise provincial schools.[151] In 1812, a training master from London spent six weeks at the new Norwich central school overseeing the

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[147] A. Bell, *The Madras School, or Elements of Tuition* (London, 1808), 15-17.
[148] Ibid., 84-8.
[149] Ibid., 324-5.
[150] Ibid., 10-14.
[151] On this training, see *Select Committee on the State of Education*, 9-12, 62, 66; NS AR (1835), 44-8; R. W. Rich, *The Training of Teachers in England and Wales during the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1933), 1-25.

introduction of Bell's system, while the Norwich master appointed to the school was sent to London to learn the system, a task which he accomplished within a month.[152] A strict uniformity in teaching was enjoined by the society, who determined in 1813 that 'no Training Master sent out in the service of this Society do, on any account deviate from the practices of the Madras System as laid down by Dr. Bell in his instructions, last Edition, and as practised in the Central School of this Society.'[153] This regulation was adopted 'to provide against a prevailing propensity in the Masters to the making what may be deemed improvements, from the introduction of which the beautiful and efficient simplicity of the System would much more probably receive injury than advantage.'[154]

Within the limits of this standpoint, the National Society took account of regional variations. At first, the London central school was concerned to achieve comprehensive regional coverage in its training of masters, making a specific appeal in 1813 for applicants from 'the Northern, or Western parts of the Kingdom'.[155] Three years later, however, the Durham committee was told by the London committee that they were unable to send them a master for an unspecified school but that it was 'probable that a Native of the North will, of all persons be most likely to suit the appointment; & they trust that the Durham Diocesan Society will be able to find such a person'.[156] In the event, northern National Schools achieved a degree of self-sufficiency through the Barrington School and Liverpool's central school.[157]

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[152] Norfolk and Norwich National Society minute book, 14 August 1812, Norfolk RO, DN/NDS 137, p. 4; 25 August 1812, pp. 4-5; William Johnson to [?], 25 September 1812, Norfolk RO, DN/NDS 162/2/2; Charles Sutton and Robert Walpole to Tindal Thompson Walmsley, 28 October 1812, Norfolk RO, DN/NDS 162/2/1. See also the arrangements made for training a Brighton master at the London central school prior to the reopening of a school on the National system in 1817: Brighton National Schools minute book, 22 October 1817, East Sussex RO, EMA 13/1/1, p. 54; 29 October 1817, pp. 55-6.
[153] National Society School Committee minute book, 14 September 1813, CERC, NS/2/2/2/1/1, f. 111.
[154] NS AR (1815), 14.
[155] National Society School Committee minute book, 28 May 1813, CERC, NS/2/2/2/1/1, f. 89.
[156] Ibid., 11 April 1816, CERC, NS/2/2/2/1/2, f. 37.
[157] Sanderson, 'National and British School Societies in Lancashire', 22-4.

When, in 1818, the managers of a newly-established institution in Accrington came to appoint a master and mistress their first port of call was the Barrington School, where suitable appointees were found.[158] Le Gendre Starkie, organising the Padiham National School in 1831, focused his attention in Liverpool after the meagre proposed salary deterred London applicants.[159]

The National Society aimed not only for uniformity of method; it also intended there to be a uniformity of religious opinion among its personnel.[160] Its criteria for accepting masters reflected its broader confessional aims. In October 1812, a form for admitting teachers for training at the London central school was drawn up in which a clergyman had to certify that the applicant was 'a Member of the united Church of England and Ireland as by Law established, and of a sober and religious Life and Conversation.'[161] This ideal was not always adhered to. In 1819, the master of a Roman Catholic school was admitted to the London central school to learn Bell's system, while at Liverpool in 1831 there were two Catholic teachers in training.[162] But such deviations were the exception, not the rule. The Hampshire committee refused in 1816 to admit a Catholic master for training, fearing this to be 'of dangerous consequence' (a phrase later deleted in the minute book).[163] During the same decade, the committee also dismissed teachers for distributing non-SPCK tracts and for attendance at a dissenting meeting house.[164] A report reached the

[158] Accrington National School minute book, 27 January 1818, 24 June 1818, Lancashire Arch., PR2890/2/5.
[159] Joseph Cotton Wigram to Le Gendre Starkie, 11 February 1831; R. Grystyn to Le Gendre Starkie, 8 March 1831, Lancashire Arch., PR 2863/5/20.
[160] *Select Committee on the State of Education*, 11.
[161] National Society School Committee minute book, 9 October 1812, CERC, NS/2/2/2/1/1, f. 50. In December this was altered to become a test of civil loyalty also, so that applicants had to be 'well affected to his present Majesty and to the Church of England as by law established' as well as 'of a sober and religious life and conversation': ibid., 11 December 1812, f. 62. But the first version prevailed: NS AR (1814), 197.
[162] National Society General Committee minute book, 5 May 1819, CERC, NS/2/2/1/1/3, f. 108; Southey and Southey, *Life of Rev. Andrew Bell*, III, 448.
[163] Hampshire Society for the Education of the Infant Poor minute book, 18 April 1816, Hampshire RO, 128M84/2, pp. 44-5.
[164] Ibid., 19 October 1815, pp. 31-2; 1 December 1817, p. 89.

London school committee in 1817 that a Miss Trelawny had 'induced three boys & one Girl to go to instruct the children in her Roman Catholic School', conduct which met with the committee's 'high disapprobation'.[165]

At times, the society's confessional stance could cause considerable difficulty. At Brighton in 1835, the appointment of Alfred Gee as master of a National infant school was rescinded when it was discovered that he was a dissenter.[166] When Gee insisted on taking his first quarter's salary, the committee reluctantly reinstated his appointment, remarking that he had been 'deficient in candour & … ought in the first instance to have mentioned that he was a dissenter.'[167] Gee lasted in the post for almost a year, leaving when he found a position at a London school 'congenial to my conscientious religious views'.[168] The centrality of Anglicanism to National Schools' teaching was further accentuated by alterations to teacher training at the London central school. In 1821, the central school committee agreed it to be 'essentially requisite' for teachers to be capable of examining children 'in their knowledge of the religious principles, the great articles of Christian Faith & Doctrines in which they are instructed.'[169] In this spirit, it was decided in 1830 that 'the masters & mistresses in training will assemble on the Saturday morning to be instructed in religious knowledge from 9 until 1 o'clock by the superintendent'.[170]

The imparting of Anglican principles to National schoolchildren was attempted through both classroom instruction and familiarisation with liturgy. According to Wigram, the society pursued its aims '[i]n the same way a parent trains his own children to the Established Church; he does not tell them that it is for that purpose,

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[165] National Society General Committee minute book, 1 August 1817, CERC, NS/2/2/1/1/2, f. 134.
[166] Brighton National Schools minute book, 22 July 1835, East Sussex RO, PAR 255/25/1/1, p. 270.
[167] Ibid., 29 July 1835, p. 271.
[168] Ibid., 9 June 1836, pp. 287-9.
[169] National Society School Committee minute book, 20 July 1821, CERC, NS/2/2/2/1/4, f. 9.
[170] National Society General Committee minute book, 23 June 1830, CERC, NS/2/2/1/1/3, f. 137.

but he brings them up to it.'[171] Hence the textbooks used in National Schools to teach reading and spelling were suffused with admonitions about the importance of a reverent attention to the religious duties prescribed by the Church. For instance, one 'lesson' told the story of an ignorant 'poor boy' named Tom Bowles who, in an allegory of the work of the National Society, was introduced by 'one of the good friends of the poor' to school and church and 'soon learnt to pray to God, and praise him for all things; and left off all his bad words, and bad ways, and was one of the best boys in the whole school.'[172]

Such messages were reinforced by the prayers composed for daily use in the schools. In National Schools in Norfolk, prayers were said every morning that 'we may live in uniform practice of every religious duty' and that 'the important work of National Education, thus happily begun, may be for ever continued'.[173] The catechism was learned by rote with the aid of SPCK textbooks. A catechetical method was also used, as Bell prescribed, with regard to the study of the Bible. The New Testament was divided into parables, miracles and discourses and expounded in the format of questions and answers.[174] If the political function of National Schools was not made explicit in the classroom, the duty of civil obedience was nevertheless strongly inculcated, as in this dialogue:

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[171] *Select Committee on the State of Education*, 60.

[172] *National Society Central School Book. Number II.* (London, 1820), 1-3. For a discussion of teaching materials of this kind, see J. M. Goldstrom, 'The Content of Education and the Socialization of the Working-class Child, 1830-1860' in McCann, *Popular Education*, 93-109.

[173] Paper entitled 'Morning Prayer', [c. January 1813], Norfolk RO, DN/NDS 162/8/1.

[174] For lists of books recommended by the London committee, see National Society School Committee minute book, 31 July 1812, CERC, NS/2/2/2/1/1, ff. 38-9; 5 February 1813, ff. 70-71. For examples of use, see Hampshire Society for the Education of the Infant Poor minute book, 11 January 1816, Hampshire RO, 128M84/2, p. 38; 7 December 1834, pp. 234-5; ibid., 17 May 1835, 128M84/3, f. 54; SPCK Lewes District Committee minute book, 26 Feburary 1818, CUL, SPCK.MS A38/11, pp. 93-4; Brighton National Schools minute book, 5 November 1824, East Sussex RO, PAR 255/25/1/1, p. 7; 5 May 1828, p. 91. For Bell's division of scripture, see Bell, *Elements of Tuition*, 333-44. On the teaching of the Catechism, see *Select Committee on the State of Education*, 60-61.

> Who placed our king over us?
> God.
> Prove this from Scripture.
> Rom. xiii. 1. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers; for there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained by God."
> Can a good Christian then, be a disloyal subject?
> No; for the Bible says, "Fear God, honour the King."[175]

On Sundays, National schoolchildren were generally taken *en masse* to church, where attentive behaviour was expected.[176] On occasion, more frequent observances took place. Thomas Dunning, a former pupil of the National School in Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire, recalled that '[a]ll the scholars had to attend church on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays and gabble over the responses.'[177] The season of Lent was a particular focus of devotional activity. In 1813, it was resolved at Winchester that the children should attend church every day in 'Passion-Week'.[178] At Brighton in 1820, schoolboys were taken to the Chapel Royal every Wednesday and Friday in Lent to recite the Catechism.[179] In the 1830s, as modifications were made to the National system, its confessional basis remained intact. At the London central school, efforts were made to sever 'the religious from the mechanical part of the tuition'.[180] It was recommended that children should learn 'a prayer for *private*

[175] *The National School Magazine*, 15 June 1824, 73-4.
[176] See e.g. Rules of Witney National School, 17 May 1813, Oxfordshire History Centre, MS. Oxf. Dioc. Papers c. 450, f. 48; Runcorn National School minute book, 1 July 1817, Cheshire Arch., P95/3516/1; Rules of Moseley National Schools, [1828], Birmingham Arch., S 273/1/1/1; Hampshire Society for Education of the Infant Poor minute book, 16 April 1833, Hampshire RO, 128M84/3, ff. 39-40; *Select Committee on the State of Education*, 62.
[177] T. Dunning, 'Reminiscences of Thomas Dunning' in D. Vincent (ed.), *Testaments of Radicalism: Memoirs of Working Class Politicians 1790-1885* (London, 1979), 120.
[178] Hampshire Society for the Education of the Infant Poor minute book, 8 April 1813, Hampshire RO, 128M84/1, p. 99. At Cheltenham in 1830, 1,000 National schoolchildren attended church 'on Wednesday in Easter week': *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 8 April 1830, 3.
[179] Brighton National Schools minute book, 2 March 1820, East Sussex RO, EMA 13/1/1, p. 100. At the National School in Moseley, Worcestershire, the children were examined in a chapel in 'Passion Week', 1829: Moseley National School minute book, 24 April 1829, Birmingham Arch., S 273/1/1/1.
[180] National Society General Committee minute book, 23 June 1830, CERC, NS/2/2/1/1/3, f. 137. See also *Select Committee on the State of Education*, 58.

use (morning & evening) of such a nature that it may not be unsuitable to the necessities of the Scholars in more advanced life' and that 'the important texts of scripture & doctrines of Christianity be not allowed in any case to form the subject of … mechanical repetitions.'[181] New textbooks were also introduced with the proviso that 'whatever additional materials may be introduced into the Central School should be made subservient to the great object of *religious* instruction'.[182]

To a limited extent, gender also played a role in determining the type of teaching offered in National Schools. The number of boys and girls educated by the National Society was fairly equal, suggesting parity in the relative number of boys' and girls' schools.[183] Committees of female subscribers were usually responsible for the day-to-day running of girls' National Schools.[184] The teaching offered to girls was entrusted to schoolmistresses and was similar to that of the boys. However, there was a greater emphasis on works of industry. Needlework and knitting were regular activities, the clothes made by the girls being sold to aid school funds.[185] A primary aim of the girls' schools was to train girls for domestic service.[186]

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[181] National Society School Committee minute book, 3 March 1830, CERC, NS/2/2/2/1/5, p. 302.
[182] Ibid., 18 June 1835, CERC, NS/2/2/2/1/8, p. 30.
[183] NS AR (1837), 131.
[184] See e.g. NS AR (1812), 46; NS AR (1814), 15-6, 49, 64, 90, 108, 114, 136; NS AR (1815), 11, 91, 128; NS AR (1818), 154, 174-5, 206, 224, 226, 228, 237, 257, 275; NS AR (1820), 173, 195, 244; Hampshire Society for the Education of the Infant Poor Ladies' Committee minute books, 1813-1839, Hampshire RO, 128M84/7-8; Warwick Female National School: 'Miss Welch's Cash Book', 1819-1837, Warwickshire RO, CR1908/234.
[185] See e.g. NS AR (1812), 46; NS AR (1814), 90, 108-9, 111, 135, 176-7, 195; NS AR (1815), 26-7, 36, 43, 47-8, 69, 72, 79, 91, 115, 117, 122, 128, 139, 142, 144, 159, 161, 164; NS AR (1818), 154, 163-4, 169, 175, 189, 200, 204, 206, 219, 226, 263, 269; NS AR (1820), 131, 182, 184, 197-8, 234, 264, 276; Handbill regarding Bampton National School, [c. 1815], Oxfordshire History Centre, MS. Oxf. Dioc. Papers c. 450, f. 3; Runcorn National School: Record of work done by girls, 1817-57, Cheshire Arch., P95/3516/2.
[186] See e.g. NS AR (1814), 166; NS AR (1815), 45, 73; NS AR (1818), 179; NS AR (1820), 160, 162, 177; 'An Address, Delivered by the Rev. H. Gwyther, Vicar of Yardley, at the Vestry of the Church, August 11, 1828, to the Parents and Friends of the Girls, who wish to enter the Yardley National School on the 27th of August, 1828', Birmingham Arch., MS 737/5.

To what extent did the teaching offered in National Schools succeed? The question is difficult to address in the light of later educational developments, which have had the effect of dispensing with most of the assumptions upon which the National system operated. The decline of the monitorial system together with the rise of religiously neutral, state-directed and egalitarian ideals of popular education have created dramatically different criteria for judging educational success than existed during the period under discussion.[187] It is therefore important to recall that the promoters of the National Society had contrasting aims from both their non-denominational contemporaries and the later architects of schemes of state and religious education. Their intention was not to raise the social condition of the objects of their charity, nor to accommodate the Church of England to religious pluralism or voluntarism. Neither did they consider education to be an end in itself. Instead, they aimed to preserve Anglicanism as the 'National Religion' by disseminating its principles among the most populous section of English society in the most efficient manner.

Even when considered from this standpoint, the picture was sometimes bleak. Thomas Vowler Short, secretary of the Hampshire society, recorded his observations on National Schools in the county he visited in a notebook begun in 1830. Although he noted some successful schools, the most striking feature of his notes is the frequent failure of National Schools to meet their own standards. At Chilbolton the school was 'much out of repair' and, by 1833, it had been 'discontinued'.[188] The school at Gosport was deemed to be 'on its last legs'.[189] Both Fareham's school and Emsworth's were 'in a very inefficient state'.[190] West Tytherley had a 'very poor' master, while at Barton Stacey and Southampton the children 'knew nothing'.[191] In a

[187] R. Aldrich, *An Introduction to the History of Education* (London, 1982), 22-40; H. Silver, *Good Schools, Effective Schools: Judgements and their Histories* (London, 1994); Martin, 'Church, School and Locality', 70-73.
[188] Notebook of Thomas Vowler Short, Hampshire RO, 128M84/24, p. 17.
[189] Ibid., p. 93.
[190] Ibid., p. 103, 107.
[191] Ibid., p. 19, 37, 147.

tract of 1835, Short attributed such failures principally to 'the negligence or inadequacy' of local committees. Without competent visitors, 'the school generally languishes'; a '*general* system of inspection' was therefore desirable.[192] A decade earlier, Walmsley had visited National Schools in Yorkshire. He found 'the discipline very imperfect' at Hull, and at Leeds 'he found two School-Rooms … and was sorry to observe in these two very capacious rooms a very small number of children and those in a state of almost perfect ignorance, the mistress quite incompetent to her situation'.[193] A vignette from the minute book of the Brighton National Schools gives further evidence of the kind of slackness that occasionally prevailed. At 2.12pm on 9 June 1831, the vicar entered Brighton's central school, where 'he found a part only of the Boys assembled, those Boys in great disorder & Mr. Williams the Master reading the Brighton Gazette.'[194] Dunning's verdict on his education was that he learned 'very little'.[195]

Yet the National system was a success overall, as well as a prime manifestation of the exercise of clerical agency. It is clear that National Schools were managing to reach the labouring classes that were intended to form their core constituency. At Blackburn in 1832, it was recorded that 'great numbers of [the] children in [the] Sunday Schools' attached to the National Society worked in 'spinning factories'.[196] The 1830s register of Stockport National School recorded the occupation of each pupil's father. Among those noted were labourers, weavers, spinners, dyers, soldiers, mechanics, dressers, bill-posters, jobbers and hawkers.[197] In more rural counties, National Schools catered for agricultural labourers. When the National system was introduced at Salehurst in Sussex in 1827, many of the children evidently worked in

[192] T. V. Short, *National Education and the Means of Improving it* (London, 1835), 9-11.
[193] National Society School Committee minute book, 16 September 1825, CERC, NS/2/2/2/1/5, p. 76.
[194] Brighton National Schools minute book, 10 June 1831, East Sussex RO, PAR 255/25/1/1, p. 198.
[195] Dunning, 'Reminiscences', 119-20.
[196] Blackburn National and Sunday Schools minute book, 5 June 1832, Lancashire Arch., PR1551, p. 24.
[197] Stockport National Day School Register, 1831-78, Cheshire Arch., P14/3435/10/1.

the fields, as the master was sent away to learn the new method 'during the days of harvest' when the school was 'less likely to be attended'.[198] From Barking in Essex, it was reported that 'there are so many working fishermen, and so many families employed in the labors of agriculture' that 'the children, without the advantage afforded by these schools, would be … almost without knowledge of GOD'.[199]

Contemporary observers frequently remarked on the behavioural effects of National Schools. In 1812, it was reported that 'the happiness of the Children under this plan of Education forms a prominent subject of remark'.[200] At London's central school, an improvement in discipline and order was noticeable. At a committee meeting of 1815, '[u]pon examining the weekly Report of the employment & attendance of the children in the Central School, it was observed that they had been particularly regular in the course of the last week notwithstanding the temptations of Bartholomew Fair, which in former years had been found very prevailing.'[201] It was also noted that 'most of the Children on Sundays, being anxious to keep their Cloaths [sic] clean, made use of their Pocket handkerchiefs to kneel upon.'[202]

There is also evidence to suggest that the schoolchildren attached value to their education independently of any compulsion. At Middleton, Lancashire, in 1832 the scholars of a National School significantly in debt 'expressed a wish that prizes might not again be distributed until the debt was discharged'.[203] When the schoolmistress arrived late at the Brighton girls' National School one morning in 1834, the vicar 'heard the prayers repeated & the morning hymn sung before the arrival of the Mistress'.[204] Additionally, it was a common though contested belief

[198] Salehurst Charity School minute book, 12 March 1828, East Sussex RO, PAR 477/25/1/1.
[199] NS AR (1826), 'London'.
[200] National Society School Committee minute book, 1 May 1812, CERC, NS/2/2/2/1/1, f. 25.
[201] Ibid., 8 September 1815, f. 237.
[202] Ibid., 14 April 1815.
[203] R. C. W. Wilkinson to Lord Suffield, 19 November 1832, Norfolk RO, GTN/5/9/71.
[204] Brighton National Schools minute book, 14 February 1834, East Sussex RO, PAR 255/25/1/1, p. 246.

that National Schools tended to reduce crime on the basis that very few criminals had been educated in these institutions. For instance, in 1820, the chaplain of Millbank Penitentiary could only find two inmates who had received an Anglican education.[205] It was found in Warwick Gaol in the same year that 'of 34 prisoners under 17 years of age, considerably more than half were quite uninstructed, and not one had been at a National School.'[206] Judges James Alan Park and William Garrow accordingly considered the Gloucester Assizes to be an appropriate occasion to advocate the cause of the National Society in 1817.[207]

However, the greatest measure of the success of National Schools was the testimony provided by alumni of such institutions by their words and lives in adulthood. In 1833, criticism of the National Society appeared in the *Bath Herald* newspaper. In response, an address containing 'spontaneous testimony' from around 70 former pupils of Bath National School was presented to its committee:

> *From the extensive connection which we enjoy with those who were once our schoolfellows, and from information derived from others, there exists not among them, as far as we know, one solitary instance of a departure from the faith* … We do most heartily and conscientiously express our firm and unshaken belief in those doctrines and precepts which were so indefatigably inculcated upon us by our excellent Master; and we hope that, in the practice of those duties, our employers would bear testimony to our zeal and industry.[208]

A more comprehensive perspective is afforded by a survey conducted by the National Society for the annual report of 1836. Local committees were asked to provide information regarding 'the character and general conduct of young persons brought up in National schools'. The published results were far from being a propaganda exercise; the society freely admitted that in some respects the

[205] Samuel Bennett to William Howley, 15 April 1820, LPL, FP Howley 7, f. 121.
[206] G. Chandler, *Two Sermons on the Prevention and Correction of Crime, preached at St. Mary's Church, Warwick, at the Spring and Summer Assizes for the County of Warwick* (London, 1823), 25.
[207] *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 11 September 1817, 3; NS AR (1817), 168-70.
[208] *Bath Chronicle*, 19 December 1833, 3.

information collected was 'exceedingly defective' and even detailed two National schoolboys' convictions for crimes.[209] Despite some misunderstandings and difficulties in correspondents' answering of questions, relatively reliable information was obtained regarding 24,466 scholars in 382 places.[210]

Extracts from some of the returns were printed and present a mostly positive picture. The vast majority of pupils were said to be of good character.[211] Of 741 educated in three schools in County Durham, it was claimed, 'All regular in attendance at Church, and useful members of Society. They are distinguished by their good conduct, and are, in many instances … religious characters.'[212] From Bacup, Lancashire, it was reported that 'about one-third of our communicants have been educated in the schools'.[213] Likewise, from Broadclyst, Devon, the following was related: 'an unusual attendance of young persons at the Lord's Supper, within two or three years, I attribute wholly to education.'[214] At Crimplesham, Norfolk, the effects of the National School were said to be more general: 'comparing the past and present state of the village, I cannot find words to express my gratitude for the establishment of this institution.'[215] Many answers focused on the absence of badly-behaved pupils: 'the worst characters in the parish are those who never attended the school' (Mudford, Somerset), 'not one young woman educated in this school has disgraced it' (South Cerney, Gloucestershire), 'we do not know of any one who has been convicted of any misdemeanour' (Newborough, Staffordshire), 'none that I ever heard of have been before a court of justice' (Binham, Norfolk).[216] Many correspondents also commented on the number of National school pupils who had become teachers, a phenomenon particularly noticeable in Lancashire. For example, Bottom Gate in Blackburn, a place where poor children were described as growing

[209] NS AR (1836), 61, 86.
[210] Ibid., 94.
[211] Ibid., 61-90.
[212] Ibid., 69.
[213] Ibid., 76.
[214] Ibid., 79.
[215] Ibid., 86.
[216] Ibid., 72, 80, 82, 86.

up ‘in a state little short of Heathenism’ by Whittaker in 1824, had now produced seven Sunday school teachers.[217] In the judgement of one district committee, the National system had now ‘stood the test of years; and begins to show abundantly the fruits which its founders justly expected it to produce’.[218]

Ritual and Public Display

It is clear from the above that the National Society’s teaching had a significant effect in maintaining Anglican ideals among the labouring classes. But any measure of the society’s influence must also take into account its impact beyond the classroom, in the form of ritual and public display. For National Schools developed a ceremonial function in many localities through their continual organisation of and participation in public occasions. The proliferation of these ceremonies challenges the common notion that there was an absence of ritual in the early nineteenth-century Church of England.[219] If most church services were largely devoid of elaborate ritual, a National Society ceremony was seemingly incomplete without a long procession of dignitaries and children, the carrying of colourful banners, the singing of hymns or patriotic songs and a dinner for hundreds.

The monarchy provided a focal point for many of the ceremonies under discussion, with royal birthdays being regularly commemorated. At Ipswich on the

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[217] John William Whittaker to Tindal Thompson Walmsley, [?] May 1824, Lancashire Arch., PR 3073/2/9; NS AR (1836), 76.

[218] NS AR (1836), 92. In 1834, William Johnson, superintendent of the London central school, told a parliamentary select committee that ‘many are now very respectable men that have been educated in the National Society’s Central School; some have risen above their previous station, and two or three I could point out that are now ordained clergymen of the Church of England; there are exceptions, I am sorry to say, but the majority have turned out much better than they would have done had they been uneducated’: *Select Committee on the State of Education*, 7.

[219] See e.g. D. Cannadine, ‘The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the “Invention of Tradition”, c. 1820-1977’ in E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983), 115; F. C. Mather, ‘Georgian Churchmanship Reconsidered: Some Variations in Anglican Public Worship 1714-1830’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 36 (1985), 261-2.

King's birthday in 1812, the National schoolroom was festooned with 'a wreath of laurel, encircling "God save the King" handsomely gilt' and the children received 'a plentiful dinner of beef, beer and plum-puddings', the almost invariable fare at such occasions.[220] After an examination held on the Prince Regent's birthday in 1817 at Wendover National School, '[t]he festivities of the day were concluded by all the children drinking the health of his ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE REGENT, the firm friend and patron of the NATIONAL SOCIETY.'[221] On occasion, royal observances assumed a positively antiquated character. From 1818, it was an annual custom for two boys and two girls from the Westminster National Schools selected for 'good conduct' to participate in the Royal Maundy ceremony, following the Sub-Almoner as he distributed the alms.[222] For the 1820 anniversary of Charles II's restoration, National schoolchildren in York attended the commemorative service prescribed in the Prayer Book at the cathedral and heard a preacher expound the text, '*My son, fear thou the Lord and the King, and meddle not with them that are given to change*.'[223] As late as 1825 the schools in connection with the National Society in Rotherhithe were marking 'King Charles the First's Martyrdom', in addition to the Restoration and 5 November, with holidays.[224]

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[220] *Ipswich Journal*, 13 June 1812, 2. Cf. *Kentish Chronicle*, 6 June 1817, 4.
[221] *Cambridge Chronicle and Journal*, 22 August 1817, 3.
[222] *Evening Mail*, 20 March 1818, 4; *Morning Post*, 20 April 1821, 3; 5 April 1822, 3; 28 March 1823, 1; *The Courier*, 16 April 1824, 2; *Bell's Life in London*, 3 April 1825, 3; *Morning Post*, 24 March 1826, 2; 13 April 1827, 3; 4 April 1828, 3; 17 April 1829, 3; 9 April 1830, 3; 1 April 1831, 3; W. J. Thoms, *The Book of the Court; exhibiting the Origin, Peculiar Duties, and Privileges of the Several Ranks of the Nobility and Gentry, more particularly of the Great Officers of State, and Members of the Royal Household; with an Introductory Essay on Regal State and Ceremonial, and a Full Account of the Coronation Ceremony, etc.* (London, 1838), 314-5.
[223] *Yorkshire Gazette*, 2 June 1820, 3.
[224] *An Address to the Parents of Children, admitted into the Rotherhithe Charity and Amicable Society Schools, with the Rules and Orders to be Observed* (London, [1825]), 9. In 1816, the National schoolchildren of Canterbury were 'indulged with a holiday, to keep the seventy-ninth birth-day of our good old King; and at the same time to celebrate the marriage of his grand daughter, her Royal Highness the Princess Charlotte of Wales': *Kentish Gazette*, 7 June 1816, 4.

Yet the supporters of the schools were also perfectly capable of inventing new observances as circumstances demanded. One of the most elaborate spectacles recorded was a procession of National schoolboys in Norwich marking the peace of 1814:

> The head boys preceded the whole, carrying a banner with "NATIONAL SCHOOL" inscribed upon it. Next followed a representation of a Bible and Crown, with the appropriate quotation of Scripture, "FEAR GOD: HONOUR THE KING." After which came the Book of Common Prayer, over which was written in large characters, "Train up a Child in the Way he should go."[225]

If the ties between monarch and subject were strongly reinforced by such rituals, they also called to mind obligations to their immediate patrons. Sir John and Lady Shelley, benefactors of Maresfield National School in Sussex, gave an annual dinner on New Year's Day for the children of this institution in the servants' hall of their country seat at which they distributed prizes and clothes.[226] Bonds of this kind were further expressed in the schoolchildren's participation in events of family significance. At Knaresborough in 1824, 600 children processed from the National schoolroom 'headed by a band of music' to celebrate the birth of a son and heir to local worthy Sir William Slingsby, giving 'three cheers for the family of Slingsby'.[227] In 1832, the committee of Runcorn National School decided that, in recognition of 'the invariable attention paid by Sir Richard Brooke Baronet and his

[225] *Norfolk Chronicle*, 9 July 1814, 2. Banners could also have strong military overtones. At a procession to commemorate George IV's coronation in Manchester, the children of the National Schools carried 'a light blue flag' with the words 'Manchester and Salford National Schools', the staff of which 'formerly belonged to the colours of the gallant 72*d* Regiment of Foot, which was raised in Manchester, in 1777, by voluntary subscription, and gained immortal honour at the siege of Gibraltar': 'Authentic Particulars of the Processions in Manchester and Salford on Thursday the 19th of July, 1821, in celebration of the Coronation of His Most Gracious Majesty King George the IVth.', Bolton Arch., ZZ/130/12/7.
[226] *Sussex Advertiser*, 4 January 1819, 3; *Public Ledger*, 4 January 1821, 3.
[227] *Yorkshire Gazette*, 18 September 1824, 2.

family to this Institution', the schoolchildren would attend the wedding of Brooke's daughter Jessy.[228]

The inaugurations of National Schools presented further opportunities for the ostentatious display of lay patronage. In 1817, the Bath National School was opened with 600 children walking 'in procession to the Abbey Church, attended by the Gentlemen of the Committee, the Most Noble the Marquis of Bath, several members of the Body Corporate, and other benevolent characters.' A 'plentiful dinner of beef and plum-pudding' followed.[229] At Bourne, Lincolnshire, in 1829, 'the steward of the Marquess of Exeter, in the name of his Lordship … laid the first stone of a National School now erecting … upon a piece of land in an eligible situation which has been given for this purpose by the Marquess, lord of the manor of Bourn'. After a prayer was offered by the curate, 'wine was spilt on the stone, and distributed to all present, who gave three hearty cheers to the undertaking.'[230] Yet inaugurations were also events at which bishops could assume prominence. When the Duke of Wellington visited Gloucester in 1816, he was accompanied by Bishop Ryder in laying the foundation stone of a National School.[231] Bishop Ryder twice laid foundation stones for National Schools at the behest of the Rector of Stafford, William Coldwell, in 1824 and 1832.[232]

Besides these singular occasions, the National Society established more regular rituals, the most common of which was the anniversary. In around 1830, Short described in detail the procedure for the Hampshire society's anniversary, which seems to have been fairly typical. Held in conjunction with a public examination of the National schoolchildren, the occasion involved both a sermon in the cathedral by 'some clergyman (of distinguished Rank in the Church if possible,)' at which a

[228] Runcorn National School minute book, 17 May 1832, Cheshire Arch., P95/3516/1; *Gentleman's Magazine*, August 1844, 205.
[229] *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, 15 September 1817, 4.
[230] *Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury*, 9 October 1829, 3. Cf. *York Herald*, 11 September 1819, 2.
[231] *Berrow's Worcester Journal*, 1 August 1816, 3.
[232] *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 7 August 1824, 3; 13 October 1832, 3.

collection was taken and dinners for the children and the society's supporters. Each year the committee appointed stewards whose task it was to 'hold the plates at the two lower doors' of the cathedral, assisted by 'four young Ladies'. Between 1812 and 1828, the preachers included four bishops, while Lord Palmerston and the Duke of Wellington were among the stewards. After the service, a meeting was held at which the annual report was read by the secretary and a series of votes of thanks passed. At the dinner of 1830, the principal toasts were 'Church & King', 'The Queen', the 'Royal Family' and the 'B[isho]p of Winton.'[233]

At times, anniversaries could assume a more overtly political aspect. At Thorpe-le-Soken, Essex, the National School's second anniversary of 1814 was essentially a celebration of Napoleon's recent defeat. The church service 'concluded with a Hymn of Thanksgiving, sung by all the children collected in one gallery'. At the dinner which followed, a toast was given to King Louis XVIII of France and a version of 'God save the King' was performed which included such lines as:

> If Statesmen dead can know,
> What passes here below,
> Pitt! how thy heart must glow,
> God save the King.[234]

Such politicking was still evident in the 1830s. A dinner to mark the sixteenth anniversary of Deptford National School took place shortly after the 1835 general election and was presided over by Wolverley Attwood, the unsuccessful Conservative candidate for the local constituency of Greenwich. Attwood was eager to show magnanimity in defeat, telling diners that '[o]n all occasions like the present every feeling of political difference should be banished' and toasting the health of

[233] Notebook of Short, Hampshire RO, 128M84/23, ff. 4-8, 38-40. For other accounts of anniversaries, see e.g. *Ipswich Journal*, 31 July 1813, 3; *Cambridge Chronicle*, 6 August 1813, 3; *Suffolk Chronicle*, 18 June 1814, 4; 9 August 1817, 4; *Kentish Chronicle*, 8 July 1817, 4; *Northampton Mercury*, 2 August 1817, 3; *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 18 October 1834, 3.
[234] *Ipswich Journal*, 7 May 1814, 2.

his victorious Whig opponents. This ploy fell flat, however, as the toast was given 'in any thing but a cordial manner, a great portion of the company being silent, and the cheers of a very faint description.'[235] As ever, Anglican attempts to disclaim political partisanship rang hollow.

Another important ritual for National Schools was the public examination of the children, held either as a standalone event or as part of the anniversary. Although examinations were theoretically intended as an accurate test of the children's abilities, the unvarying satisfaction which was expressed at their results in the somewhat perfunctory reports of such occasions suggests careful stage management.[236] It was a general policy of the National Society to encourage the public to visit its schools, in the hope of gaining and maintaining support.[237] A public examination attended by subscribers formalised the act of visiting, allowing the managers of the schools to demonstrate that subscriptions were being put to good use. The format of the examination was usually catechetical, with children answering questions put to them, usually by a clerical superintendent. Such exercises were often followed by an address from a clergyman and the ubiquitous roast beef and plum pudding dinner.[238] In common with other rituals, examinations were a ready means of publicising the work of the National Society and demonstrating its practical results. By embracing public display as a means of self-promotion, the

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[235] *Greenwich, Woolwich and Deptford Gazette*, 4 April 1835, 4. Attwood made another appearance at the school's anniversary in 1837 following the success of his second attempt at being elected an MP for Greenwich: *West Kent Guardian*, 28 October 1837, 8.

[236] See e.g. the assessments of annual examinations in West Bromwich National School minute book, 20 January 1823, 21 January 1824, 19 January 1825, 22 December 1826, 21 December 1827, 24 December 1828, 24 December 1829, 24 December 1830, 19 December 1833, 19 December 1834, 23 December 1835, 23 December 1836, 22 December 1837, Staffordshire RO, D4031/1/35.

[237] NS AR (1814), 15. See also G. Heathcote, *An Address to the Principal Farmers, Churchwardens, and Overseers, of Small Towns and Country Villages, on the subject of introducing Dr. Bell's System of Instruction into their Respective Parishes* (Winchester, 1817), 22.

[238] For accounts of examinations, see e.g. *Morning Post*, 18 May 1816, 2; *Bath Chronicle*, 28 May 1818, 3; 8 May 1823, 3; 26 April 1827, 2; *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 30 December 1826, 4; Moseley National School minute book, 19 December 1828, Birmingham Arch., S 273/1/1/1; Notebook of Short, Hampshire RO, 128M84/23, ff. 11-13.

society carved out a niche for itself in the civic life of many English towns, providing the Church with an additional political platform.

Broader Educational Context

For all the single-mindedness and exclusivity of its aims, the National Society did not exist within an educational vacuum. Its activities, though focused on the education of poor children, had important implications for adult education, pre-existing schools and the universities. Though these areas of English education have usually been considered in isolation from the National Society, a consideration of them from the vantage point of the society reveals much about the educational context of early nineteenth-century England.

One of the ruling assumptions of the National Society was that, through educating poor children, one could educate their parents as well. The Gloucester society reported in 1820 that returns from schools related an 'improvement in the manners and conduct of the Children, and look forward with hope to a proper influence on the minds of the parents, and a more general and permanent effect on the lower orders of Society.'[239] More direct approaches were frequently adopted. In an address of 1815, the committee of Preston's National School exhorted parents to '*set your Children good examples*, – let them not see any thing in your behaviour at home, contrary to what is taught them at Church, or at School'.[240] In 1832, a lengthy harangue about the duty of family prayers was printed for personalised distribution among parents of schoolchildren.[241] Among the papers of the Hampshire society are two pasteboards with texts intended to be displayed in the children's homes. One contains family prayers for morning, evening and Sundays to be said while the entire family kneeled.

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[239] NS AR (1820), 174.
[240] 'An Address to the Inhabitants of Preston and the Neighbourhood, especially to Parents and Masters, from the Committee of the National School', 2 January 1815, Lancashire Arch., DDX 28/344.
[241] 'An Address from _ to the Parents of _ admitted into the School _ on the Duty of Family Prayer', CUL, SPCK.3.1832.3.

The other contains on one side rules for parents '*on the Admittance of their Children into Schools*', and on the other an exposition of the ways in which Christ was 'A PATTERN TO BELIEVERS', one of which was 'His contentment in a low condition'.[242]

Such efforts did not always meet with success. It was reported from the National School at Brampton, Cumberland, that 'the Parents do not seem much altered; and the indifference shewn by them to the religious instruction of their Children, testifies how little they enter into the welfare of the Institution'.[243] But elsewhere, genuine changes in parental behaviour were noted. In the Forest of Dean, the effect of the establishment of a National School on the parents was said to be 'something wonderful', with regular church attendance resulting from '[t]he zeal of the children'.[244] From Blackburn it was reported, 'illiterate Parents have in several instances expressed great satisfaction at the advantage which they now enjoy of hearing the Bible read by their Children.'[245] At Ashford, Kent, the parents' 'demeanour' was 'improved, and drunkenness is not so common in our streets as before the Children were taught in the National System.'[246]

At a local level, National Schools also developed more formal means of instructing adults. At West Bromwich a National schoolroom was used by a clergyman to instruct adults in reading from 1823, while the committee of the Brighton National Schools took on the management of some adult evening classes that had run into financial difficulty in 1834.[247] Another means of providing for

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[242] Pasteboards distributed by the National Society, c. 1811-36, Hampshire RO, 128M84/29.
[243] NS AR (1820), 242. Religious motives were not foremost among the reasons children were sent to National Schools. According to Wigram in 1834, '[w]ith respect to nine-tenths of the people who send their children to us, if our schools were to become inefficient and other schools could teach reading and writing better, the parents without at all thinking about the religious knowledge they get, would send them to the others': *Select Committee on the State of Education*, 65.
[244] NS AR (1812), 66.
[245] NS AR (1815), 109.
[246] NS AR (1819), 162.
[247] West Bromwich National School minute book, 20 January 1823, Staffordshire RO, D4031/1/35; Brighton National Schools minute book, 24 November 1834, East Sussex RO, PAR 255/25/1/1, p. 257. See also NS AR (1837), 99-102.

religious education beyond childhood was the formation of lending libraries in connection with the schools. In 1819, the committee of the Runcorn National School reported the foundation of 'a Parochial Library for the purpose of enabling the Children, after they shall have left the School and arrived at years of maturity to preserve the Knowledge of reading by the payment of one penny weekly'. It was also hoped that the library would 'not be overlooked by the inhabitants' and that it would be of use 'not only to the Poor of Runcorn'.[248] However, the library evidently did not meet with long-term success, as it had to be re-founded in 1835.[249] In Winchester a more restrictive approach was evident. A library exclusively of SPCK books was established at the central school in 1822 'for the Use of the children educated there', with former pupils allowed to borrow books 'on their subscribing 6d yearly in advance.'[250] Nine years later, Short proposed that this library become a general one for 'all persons resident in Winchester' and that it should no longer be confined to 'religious works' or the SPCK catalogue. But these suggestions were 'rejected on account of their dangerous & innovating tendency.'[251]

Yet, in other areas, the National Society was not afraid of innovation. In 1814, the committee of the Louth National School announced an intention 'to unite this establishment with a friendly society … though they are not aware that the experiment has been elsewhere made.'[252] This idea gained widespread appeal.[253] The Stockport National School's friendly society, established in 1827, gave medical provision for schoolchildren and former pupils for a subscription of 1½d weekly for the former and two shillings quarterly for the latter. Although such initiatives might seem extraneous to the National Society's broader educational aims, the rules of the Stockport society suggest otherwise. A fine of five shillings was imposed for any

[248] Runcorn National School minute book, 26 July 1819, Cheshire Arch., P95/3516/1.
[249] Ibid., 21 February 1835.
[250] Hampshire Society for the Education of the Infant Poor minute book, 6 August 1822, Hampshire RO, 128M84/2, pp. 180-81.
[251] Notebook of Short, Hampshire RO, 128M84/23, ff. 33-4. On lending libraries more generally, see NS AR (1837), 88-9.
[252] NS AR (1814), 126.
[253] NS AR (1837), 89-92.

member bringing 'political or irreligious works' to meetings or engaging in 'immoral licentious or irreligious conversation'.[254] According to a correspondent of the *British Magazine*, such societies could keep 'the old scholars in some degree under the eye of their former instructors' and be 'incidentally influential upon their moral conduct'.[255]

Another category of English educational activity affected by the National Society was the work of the charity and endowed schools which predated it. A large number of Anglican charity schools were replaced by National Schools, creating greater homogeneity in educational provision. However, there were pockets of resistance to this. In 1829, James Slade, Vicar of Bolton, told Whittaker that 'there is no National School in Bolton, nor have we any connection whatever with the National Society: And I do not deem the introduction of their system into our *Sunday Schools* by any means desirable; nor should I think of attempting it.' The present Sunday and infant schools were '*tolerably* adequate to the wants of the poor', while those 'above the condition of absolute poverty' had day and grammar schools.[256] Elsewhere, it was clergymen who attempted the introduction of the National system in the face of lay opposition, usually from the managers of older charities.[257]

The effects of National Schools were felt not only by the poor, but also among more affluent social strata. In some respects, the National Society was providing a service to the poor which was not available to parents who had the means of paying for their children's education. In 1824, it was reported from Pentonville that while '[t]he due Education of the Labouring Classes is happily provided for in the various

[254] 'Rules, Orders and Regulations of the Stockport National School Sick Society', 5 July 1827, Cheshire Arch., P14/3435/10/4. Cf. *Rules of the Friendly Society, of the Runcorn National School* (Runcorn, 1849). Despite the late publication date, these rules date from before 1840: ibid., 7.
[255] *British Magazine*, 1 January 1836, 52.
[256] James Slade to John William Whittaker, 11 April 1829, WP(B).
[257] See e.g. papers regarding the establishment of a National School at Yoxall, Staffordshire RO, D730/8; papers regarding the mastership of Market Rasen National School, Lincolnshire Arch., BNLW/3/10/1/10/2; R. Sharp, *The Diary of Robert Sharp of South Cave: Life in a Yorkshire Village 1812-1837*, ed. J. E. Crowther and P. A. Crowther (Oxford, 1997), xli-xliv, 279.

parochial and National Schools', many shopkeepers and tradesmen had only 'attain'd that little advancement in Society which sets them above the necessity, and as by them assumed, the degradation of being indebted to common Charity Schools for the education of their offspring.' Hence their children were sent to 'petty Seminaries' where 'they too commonly depart with minds as uninformed of the truths of Christianity … as they entered.' This was the rationale for an Anglican Sunday school teaching the Catechism to 100 children in Pentonville.[258] However, not all middling parents considered National Schools beneath their notice. The committee of West Bromwich National Schools was alarmed to discover in 1816 that 'Children have been admitted where Parents could afford to pay for their Education'.[259] Furthermore, in elite endowed schools (where religious instruction was often neglected), the National Society's methods won acceptance.[260] By 1818, the National system had been adopted by '[m]any superior schools, both public and private'.[261] These included Charterhouse, where Bell's methods were used throughout the headmastership of John Russell (1811-32).[262]

In the universities there was some awareness of the shortcomings of elite institutions in instilling Anglican principles by comparison with the National Society's efforts. In 1823, a sermon was delivered on the society's behalf in Halifax Parish Church by James Clarke Franks, chaplain of Trinity College, Cambridge. Franks lamented that 'the lower orders, in consequence of the methods now adopted for their improvement, are more systematically instructed in *religious knowledge*, than those of a higher station.' Wealthier parents were neglecting to have their children catechised, an omission for which the 'seminaries' of 'the higher orders'

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[258] George Ellerton and William Suttaby to Howley, 9 February 1824, LPL, FP Howley 34, ff. 210-11.
[259] West Bromwich National Schools minute book, 29 April 1816, Staffordshire RO, D4031/1/35.
[260] On the neglect of religious instruction in endowed schools, see e.g. H. C. Maxwell-Lyte, *A History of Eton College, 1440-1875* (London, 1875), 370; J. B. Oldham, *A History of Shrewsbury School, 1552-1952* (Oxford, 1952), 99.
[261] *New Monthly Magazine*, 1 August 1818, 26.
[262] A. Quick, *Charterhouse: A History of the School* (London, 1990), 41-8.

were not compensating.[263] The founders of King's College, London, intended as an Anglican response to the secularity of London University, accordingly made provision for middle-class schooling. In 1830, a 'Church of England' school was founded in connection with the college in Hackney. At its opening, headmaster Edward Churton explained that there was 'no positive provision' of religious education for the 'middle rank' of society, which had been a major cause of 'the growth of infidelity'. The Hackney school was supposed to remedy this defect, ensuring that middle-class children would 'know their duty to God and to their King.'[264] It was also intended to 'act as a feeder' for the newly-established college. This principle was extended when the college invited other schools for 'the sons of professional and mercantile men' to unite with it on the model of the National Society and 'thus form the centre of a system of education for the middling classes of society' on Anglican principles.[265] By 1836, 11 grammar schools in London were in union with King's College.[266]

Conclusion

The National Society performed multiple functions in early nineteenth-century England and its impact was extensive in a variety of areas. The key to understanding the society's operations lies in the title it chose for itself and applied to thousands of schools. By claiming to be the 'National Religion' and to be establishing a 'National system' of education, the Church successfully opposed attempts to define English nationality in pluralist terms vis-à-vis the labouring classes. The clergy's

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[263] J. C. Franks, *A Sermon, delivered in the Parish Church of Halifax, on the Morning of Sunday, August 31, 1823, on occasion of the Collections made in Compliance with His Majesty's Letter respecting the Incorporated National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church* (Halifax, 1823), 29-30.
[264] *Morning Post*, 7 October 1830, 4.
[265] F. J. C. Hearnshaw, *The Centenary History of King's College London 1828-1928* (London, 1929), 81-2. On the founding of King's College, see Dixon, 'Church and Monarchy', 85-7.
[266] Hearnshaw, *King's College London*, 103-4.

implementation of the National Society's project at a local level meant that such claims were anything but empty rhetoric. While dissenters disputed the Church's appropriation of the language of nationality, Anglicans the length and breadth of England were making their bold claims a practical reality. The building up of a socially diverse network of subscribers, ranging from the aristocrats to manufacturers to shopkeepers, enabled the Church to maintain its dominance, even while state grants for education theoretically placed the National and British societies on an equal footing.

Thus established and maintained, National Schools were enabled to fulfil important religious and political functions. By making few concessions to dissenters in their ministrations, the schools were in a strong position to propagate normative Anglicanism and civil obedience. And though their political role was less well-defined, National Schools increasingly became a significant venue for Anglican political activism, mostly of a Tory or Conservative hue. The training of a body of teachers to practise a uniform pedagogical method contributed to the homogenisation of Anglican education, and by extension education in general, along these lines. Despite serious shortcomings in some areas, the overall success of the National Society was a widespread and noticeable phenomenon. Managers of National Schools across England reported significant revivals of Anglicanism on the ground as the children thus educated matured into adulthood. Outside the classroom, the National Society developed a strong ritual component which was supportive of its religious and political aims. Through the aid of processions, anniversary sermons and dinners, the National Society made Anglicanism more visible and more entrenched in civic life. In extending its sphere of activity to adult education and friendly societies, the society also found ways of influencing its beneficiaries beyond childhood. The society's efforts further had the effect of exposing shortcomings in the religious instruction of wealthier children, which would do much to determine the shape of Anglican education during the rest of the nineteenth century.

Supporters of the National Society often maintained that the true effects of their system would only become apparent over a longer and more enduring timescale.

Faussett, in his sermon of 1811, spoke of 'the cheering hopes of … a generation that shall redeem the errors of their fathers, and restore our holy faith to those secure foundations, on which it may for ever rest.'[267] Whittaker wrote to his mother in 1835 that he had compiled a 'complete report' of the Anglican schools in Blackburn, where over 7,700 children were being educated: 'Surely [the] next generation must feel [the] benefits of [the] system now so extensively pursued in our National & Sunday schools!'[268] It lies beyond the scope of the present study to consider whether such predictions were genuinely realised after 1837. There can be no doubt, however, that the National Society laid broad and permanent foundations for the maintenance and extension of Anglican influence. Another such bulwark was the SPCK, which is the focus of the final chapter.

[267] Faussett, *Sermon*, 23.
[268] John William Whittaker to Sarah Whittaker, 29 April 1835, WP(B).

Chapter 5: The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and the Press

While the early nineteenth century witnessed important organisational innovations in Anglican political activity and popular education as described in the previous chapters, the Church of England already possessed significant associational resources for influencing society at large. Two societies founded by the clergyman Thomas Bray at the turn of the eighteenth century retained a formidable presence in the religious landscape of Britain and its colonies: the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG), founded in 1698 and 1701 respectively. While the SPG operated exclusively in a colonial context, the SPCK also carved out for itself a clear domestic role in the publication and distribution of bibles, prayer books and Anglican religious literature as well as the promotion of charity schools throughout England and Wales. Sanctioned and supported by the entire Church hierarchy and a vast number of the clergy and laity, the SPCK constituted a crucial component of normative Anglican identity and, in the absence of functioning convocations, was a sounding board for Anglican opinion. In the early nineteenth century, the SPCK underwent an unprecedented period of domestic growth, spurred mainly by the formation of new district committees. As such, its capacity to promote normative Anglican ideals among the populace was greater than at any time during the first century of its existence. This remained the case until the emergence of Tractarian and Evangelical factions within the SPCK severely weakened its authority towards the very end of the period.

In light of this, it is surprising that the early nineteenth-century SPCK has received so little attention from historians. The most complete history of the society remains the volume produced for its bicentenary in 1898 by W. O. B. Allen and Edmund McClure, of which W. K. Lowther Clarke's two brief accounts (1919 and

1959) were insubstantial summaries.[1] All of these accounts were published by the SPCK itself, and naturally tend towards self-congratulation, without positioning the society very convincingly in relation to contemporary religious, political and social currents. Maurice Quinlan, in a 1941 history of 'English manners', assigned an important role to the SPCK district committees in '[t]he regeneration of the S.P.C.K.' and hence 'the development of a stricter moral code', but presented this development as a kneejerk reaction to the success of the Bible Society, in which the SPCK came to approximate its Evangelical rivals.[2] More recent scholarly attention has focused on the SPCK during the 'short' eighteenth century, most notably in Brent Sirota's account of early eighteenth-century Anglican voluntarism and Isabel Rivers's study of the various eighteenth-century religious tract societies.[3] Almost the sole exceptions to this are Elizabeth Varley's biography of William Van Mildert and James Pereiro's study of the early Tractarian movement, which contain some valuable material on the internal debates that took place within the SPCK during the period under discussion.[4] We still lack a comprehensive account of the society's domestic operations between 1800 and 1837.

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[1] W. O. B. Allen and E. McClure, *Two Hundred Years: The History of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1698-1898* (London, 1898); W. K. L. Clarke, *A Short History of the S.P.C.K.* (London, 1919); idem., *A History of the S.P.C.K.* (London, 1959).
[2] M. J. Quinlan, *Victorian Prelude: A History of English Manners 1700-1830* (1941, repr. London, 1965), 132-3. Cf. H. Cnattingius, *Bishops and Societies: A Study of Anglican Colonial and Missionary Expansion 1698-1850* (London, 1952), 69-70; S. Mandelbrote, 'The Publishing and Distribution of Religious Books by Voluntary Associations: from the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge to the British and Foreign Bible Society' in M. F. Suarez and M. L. Turner (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume 5: 1695-1830* (Cambridge, 2009), 621-2.
[3] B. S. Sirota, *Christian Monitors: The Church of England and the Age of Benevolence, 1680-1730* (New Haven, CT, 2014); I. Rivers, *Vanity Fair and the Celestial City: Dissenting, Methodist, and Evangelical Literary Culture in England 1720-1800* (Oxford, 2018), 44-52. See also C. Rose, 'The Origins and Ideals of the SPCK, 1699-1716' in J. Walsh, C. Haydon and S. Taylor (eds.), *The Church of England, c. 1689-c. 1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism* (Cambridge, 1993), 172-90.
[4] E. A. Varley, *The Last of the Prince Bishops: William Van Mildert and the High Church Movement of the Early Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1992), 65-81, 102-4; J. Pereiro, *'Ethos' and the Oxford Movement: At the Heart of Tractarianism* (Oxford, 2007), 20-25.

In addition to this lacuna, there also remains much work to be done concerning the broader early nineteenth-century Anglican print culture of which the SPCK was so central a part. Jamie Latham has recently charted the involvement of the clergy in the print culture of the 'short' eighteenth century, while James Sack's study of Tory-leaning periodicals tangentially sheds much light on Anglican publications during the succeeding decades.[5] But the contribution of Rivington's and Hatchard's, *John Bull* and the *Christian Remembrancer*, the *Quarterly Review* and the *Saturday Magazine* to the pre-Victorian English press remains very obscure. Even less studied are the preferences and responses of the literate public to Anglican publications, in which connection E. P. Thompson's unsubstantiated claim that 'many of Hannah More's halfpenny tracts were left to litter the servants' quarters of the great houses' appears still to be many historians' ruling assumption, albeit tacitly.[6] The possibility that the vast number of Anglican publications produced throughout the early nineteenth century could have resulted from popular demand and might even been received with anything other than indifference or hostility is not one which has yet been sufficiently entertained. Moreover, a consideration of the mainstream of Anglican tract distribution provides a much-needed contextual view of the inception of the *Tracts for the Times*, and the disintegration of the Anglican consensus which resulted therefrom over a longer timespan.

The aim of this chapter is therefore twofold: to investigate the extended operations of the SPCK in England including the formation of its district committees, and to evaluate these relative to a wider culture of Anglican publishing which was not confined to the society. The principal issues thereby addressed are the extent of normative Anglican tract distribution, and the socio-political influence of

[5] J. M. Latham, 'The Clergy and Print in Eighteenth-Century England, c. 1714-1750' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 2017); J. J. Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative: Reaction and Orthodoxy in Britain, c. 1760-1832* (Cambridge, 1993).
[6] E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (3rd edn, Harmondsworth, 1980), 386. Susan Pedersen has however suggested that More's *Cheap Repository Tracts* had a genuine popular following, albeit possibly not for their religious content: S. Pederson, 'Hannah More meets Simple Simon: Tracts, Chapbooks, and Popular Culture in Late Eighteenth-Century England', *Journal of British Studies*, 25 (1986), 111-3.

such activity before its fragmentation under the strain of Tractarianism after 1833. The archival records of the SPCK survive in profusion at Cambridge University Library, where they have only recently been fully catalogued. The minute books and annual reports of central and local SPCK district committees held there and in county archives are utilised here, as are relevant collections of clerical correspondence in the SPCK archives and a variety of other repositories. These neglected sources allow us to delve beyond the dry statistics of distribution which, both during the period and since, have dominated assessments of the achievements of the SPCK and other Anglican tract distributors. They also invite a less London-centric approach, as the provincial role of the Anglican press is well documented. As will become clear, the role of Anglican distributors was not simply to act as an unvarying conduit for Church teaching; they, like their confrères in Parliament and the National Society, were engaged in public affairs and willing to intervene in them when they considered it appropriate. Thus this chapter is less about the content of the literature disseminated than its origins and effects.

The Structure and Operations of the SPCK

The professed object of the SPCK was 'THE PROMOTING OF CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE generally throughout the world.'[7] This aim was pursued in three principal ways: the support of Anglican charity schools, the printing and dispersal of 'the HOLY SCRIPTURES, the LITURGY and TRACTS in the ENGLISH language on all the leading points of Faith and Practice' and overseas missionary activity.[8] The SPCK was based in London, in rooms at Bartlett's Buildings, Holborn (earning it the moniker of 'the Bartlett's Buildings society') from 1777 and then, from 1824,

[7] *A General Account of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, to which are subjoined the Standing Rules and Orders; a List of the Subscribing Members, Donations and Legacies; with a Catalogue of the Books dispersed by the Society; and other Documents* (London, 1816), 2.
[8] Ibid., 4-16.

in Lincoln's Inn Fields.[9] Its members were elected by nomination and ballot, and were divided into two categories: subscribing members in London who were obliged to make a subscription and corresponding members, who lived outside London and were under no such obligation.[10] General meetings of members were held monthly in London at which previous minutes were read, motions proposed and reports and letters communicated.[11] The day-to-day business of the society was transacted by a General Committee of at least three subscribing members, which met weekly.[12] At the head of the Society's leadership was its President, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Secretary (from 1823, a role delegated to two people), who was responsible for record-keeping and corresponding with members.[13] Besides the secretaries, the SPCK executive consisted of treasurers and a clerk, who worked in the society's office daily and oversaw the dispersal of the Society's publications.[14] Whereas in its early years the national leadership of the SPCK was mostly lay, this position had been entirely reversed by the outset of this period. All secretaries from 1743 were clergymen, as were four of the five treasurers appointed during the period under discussion.[15]

Significant additions to the SPCK's structure were made from 1810, when it was agreed at a general meeting 'that a Committee be appointed for the purpose of considering and reporting upon the means proper to be adopted for extending the usefulness of this Society, for encreasing [sic] its influence, and promoting the union and co-operation of the parochial Clergy, & other friends of the Church, throughout the Kingdom, with the designs of the Society'.[16] This committee, chaired by Bishop

[9] Allen and McClure, *Two Hundred Years*, 130-31; D. Wilson, *A Defence of the Church Missionary Society against the Objections of the Rev. Josiah Thomas, M.A. Archdeacon of Bath* (11th edn, London, 1818), 13.
[10] *General Account*, 1.
[11] Ibid., 29-30.
[12] Ibid., 32-3.
[13] Ibid., 35-7; Allen and McClure, *Two Hundred Years*, 134.
[14] *General Account*, 37-8.
[15] Allen and McClure, *Two Hundred Years*, 132-3.
[16] SPCK General Meetings minute book, 5 June 1810, CUL, SPCK.MS A1/35, p. 246.

Dampier of Ely, recommended that committees be formed 'in each Cathedral City, consisting of the Bishop, the Dean & Chapter of the Church, and of such of the neighbouring Clergy & Laity being Members of the Society, as may be willing to co-operate with them.' These district committees were to receive donations, transmit membership applications and requests for books, distribute the society's annual reports and 'to endeavor by all suitable means to promote the designs & objects of the Society'. The recommendations 'receiv'd the unanimous confirmation of the Board' and it was agreed that 'that 4,000 Copies of the minutes of the last General Meeting, respecting this business and of the present meeting, be forthwith printed for circulation in the several Dioceses of England and Wales.'[17]

The prime movers behind the formation of the district committees were Henry Handley Norris, Perpetual Curate of Hackney, the wine merchant Joshua Watson (both of whom were on Dampier's committee) and Christopher Wordsworth, Dean of Bocking in Essex and domestic chaplain to Archbishop Manners-Sutton. Ranged against them were the long-established leaders of the Society and in particular George Gaskin, Secretary since 1783. Watson was told by 'a worthy dignitary of the London diocese' that 'their schemes would ruin the finances of the Society', while Gaskin expressed significant reservations when 'a communication was made from the Colchester District meeting' in January 1811. But the advocates of cautious inaction were outnumbered, and Watson carried a motion for pressing forward with the scheme.[18] Throughout the ensuing year, Wordsworth was at pains to place district committees on a firm footing in spite of Gaskin's opposition. He cavilled at the reluctance of Gaskin to hold general meetings in the summer months, and wrote to Norris, 'I look up to you, much more than to any other individual, for success (if

[17] SPCK General Meetings minute book, 12 June 1810, CUL, SPCK.MS A1/35, pp. 250-53. Although the SPCK committees organised at a diocesan level were sometimes known as 'diocesan committees', all of the SPCK local committees, both diocesan and non-diocesan, are termed 'district committees' in this thesis for the avoidance of confusion.
[18] E. Churton (ed.), *Memoir of Joshua Watson* (2nd edn, Oxford, 1863), 52-3. Gaskin wrote to Bishop Howley in 1813 that '[a]dvancing in life, I get every year less fit for exertion': George Gaskin to William Howley, 16 August 1813, LPL, MS 2184, f. 126.

we *are* to be successful) in this struggle for the establishment of the great and most salutary Plan of our District Committees'. Anticipating Gaskin's objection to the expense of supporting district committees, he argued that if a third of donations received by district committees were remitted to what was now known as 'the Parent Society', no loss would be thereby incurred.[19] This proposal was implemented, allowing the new committees a measure of self-sufficiency.[20]

The adoption of the scheme was rapid and extensive. By November 1811, committees had been formed in 14 cathedral cities and 12 towns in England.[21] A year later, there were 47 committees throughout England, including in all provincial English cathedral cities bar four.[22] With the formation of committees in Wells (1813), Carlisle, Durham (1814) and York (1819), the original design of committees in every diocesan centre was complete.[23] However, as with the National Society, the proliferating committees tended to follow more localised boundaries, such as archdeaconries, deaneries or urban parishes. By 1822, around 200 district committees were functioning throughout England, a number which had increased to 275 by 1837.[24] Besides a number of branches in other parts of the United Kingdom, the model of district committees was taken up throughout the British Empire, with branches in Gibraltar, Malta, India, the West Indies, Canada and Australia.[25] Within the space of two decades, the SPCK created both a national and a global network for tract distribution.

Whence did the support for this vast enterprise originate? The core patrons of the SPCK were very much the same elite groups who supported the National Society: the Royal Family, the bishops, the aristocracy and the landed gentry. George IV and

[19] Christopher Wordsworth to Henry Handley Norris, 27 August [1811], Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 789, ff. 18-19; Wordsworth to Norris, 4 September 1811, ibid., ff. 20-21.
[20] SPCK AR (1812), 179-81. From 1825, district committees were no longer required to make any such contribution: SPCK AR (1826), 16-17.
[21] SPCK AR (1811), 206-7.
[22] SPCK AR (1812), 182-4.
[23] SPCK AR (1813), 34; SPCK AR (1814), 24; SPCK AR (1820), 47.
[24] SPCK AR (1822), 55-62; SPCK AR (1837), 107-18.
[25] SPCK AR (1837), 119-20.

William IV subscribed to the SPCK, the latter presiding at one of its meetings when Duke of Clarence in 1827.[26] Queen Charlotte supported the Windsor district committee, and, in 1831, Queen Adelaide and the Duchess of Kent became patrons of the society.[27] At a micro level, the value of elite patronage is apparent in the especially detailed records which survive of Sussex SPCK committees. The SPCK stipulated that district committees should obtain the sanction of their bishops.[28] In response to such an application, John Buckner, Bishop of Chichester, wrote to the founders of the Hastings committee in 1813 that there could be 'only one opinion among the Friends of the Establishment, respecting the utility of forming Committees, in different parts of a Diocese, for the purpose of forwarding the views of the Society in Bartlett's Buildings.'[29] To the Lewes committee he wrote in 1816, 'Every Institution professing to act in concert with the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge has my unqualified good wishes' and that the 'promised patronage of that friend to the Church, the Earl of Chichester' (the committee's first president) augured 'most fortuitously'.[30] The Earl of Sheffield took the lead in organising a committee for Pevensey, but declined to become its President, apparently fearing encountering opposition from 'wild & eccentric' individuals at a public meeting.[31] Holding an executive position in a district committee was

[26] F. Prochaska, *Royal Bounty: The Making of a Welfare Monarchy* (New Haven, CT, 1995), 46-7, 50.
[27] SPCK AR (1818), 73; SPCK AR (1831), 18.
[28] *General Account*, 43.
[29] John Buckner to [George Augustus Lamb], 14 October 1813, East Sussex RO, PAR 236/43/1, p. 9.
[30] Buckner to Samuel Holland and Robert James Carr, 27 August 1816, CUL, SPCK.MS A38/11, p. 4. Cf. Shute Barrington to John Collinson, 27 November 1821, CUL, SPCK.MS A38/8. In 1825, it was reported that '[i]n the Dioceses of *Bristol*, *Bath* and *Wells*, *Carlisle*, *Chester*, *Chichester*, *Exeter*, *Llandaff*, *Lichfield* and *Coventry*, and *Peterborough*, extraordinary efforts have been made by the different Committees under the patronage, and in most instances the assiduous personal superintendence of their respective Prelates.': SPCK AR (1825), 42.
[31] George D'Oyly to Lord Sheffield, 17 October [1816], East Sussex RO, SPK 1/125/1; D'Oyly to Sheffield, 31 October [1816], East Sussex RO, SPK 1/125/2; D'Oyly to Sheffield, 6 November [1816], East Sussex RO, SPK 1/125/3; D'Oyly to Sheffield, 8 November [1816], East Sussex RO, SPK 1/125/7.

evidently more than a mere honorary status. Former MP Ewan Law declined the vice-presidency of the Lewes committee on account of ill health while praising the 'great object' of 'the support of the established Church against the encreasing [sic] host of sectaries, by which it is assailed.'[32]

In extending its subscription lists beyond the very wealthiest classes, the SPCK looked primarily to the lower clergy, manufacturers and farmers. The formation of district committees was a means of rousing the clergy of particular neighbourhoods to greater activity and co-operation. John Sawbridge wrote to Norris from Stretton, Rutland, in 1811, 'You are a provoking man & I have felt the full force of y[ou]r provocation, for your last letter has provok'd me to go out of the routine of my parochial duties … & to dub myself the agent … to collect & embody the clergy of this district.'[33] Initially, a prohibitive admission fee limited clerical participation. Wordsworth told Norris, 'I find every where a great dissatisfaction at the 2 pounds admission fee, as discouraging the admission, of the Clergy especially. At Norwich, Colchester &c &c it is heavily complained of; and *operates* much against our proceedings.'[34] Shortly afterwards, the admission fee was reduced to £1 and scrapped for 'all Parochial Clergymen with small incomes'.[35] Such concessions led to a massive increase in the SPCK's membership. Whereas there were 3,560 members in 1810, by 1820 there were 14,530.[36] As in the National Society, the clergy dominated the SPCK's local leadership. In 1826, 78% of listed English district committee officials were clergymen.[37]

The first annual report of the Hastings committee, from 1815, reveals the sections of the laity which were targeted for support. The committee stated that as the district was 'destitute of any large Towns, and without manufactories, it has not the means within itself of raising great contributions'. Its 'chief strength & importance' lay 'in

[32] Ewan Law to Sheffield, 8 December 1816, East Sussex RO, SPK 1/126/1.
[33] John Sawbridge to Norris, 27 August 1811, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 789, f. 16.
[34] Wordsworth to Norris, 27 August [1811], MS. Eng. lett. c. 789, f. 19.
[35] SPCK AR (1813), 23-4.
[36] Clarke, *History of the S.P.C.K.*, 148.
[37] Figure derived from SPCK AR (1826), 34-47.

the number & respectability of the Yeomanry', but they were 'too frequently found in every part of the kingdom, backwards in supporting this & similar institutions.' Nevertheless, the committee had already recruited 'several of the Yeomen to the Society' and planned to 'direct its efforts to conciliate as far as possible, this useful & respectable class of the Community'. In furtherance of that aim, it had moved the date of its anniversary sermon for the convenience of 'those members, who are chiefly occupied in Agriculture.'[38] A contrasting support base was evident in the Lancashire manufacturing district of Whalley in 1828, where, in addition to the conventional subscriptions of the local clergy and landowners, the subscription list included cotton spinner Jeremiah Garnett, calico printers James Thomson and Jonathan Peel, banker William Brooks and colliery owner John Hargreaves.[39]

Besides elite patronage and regular subscriptions, the finances of the SPCK were also bolstered by regular church collections. Initially, some committees had favoured more direct appeals for donations. At Brighton, it was ordered that 'the Assistant Secretary should wait annually upon the Visitors, and Inhabitants of the Town (not being Members of the District Committee) for the purpose of soliciting a Benefaction of One Shilling each'.[40] Wordsworth told Norris that in Norwich, the committee had been 'making personal application to individuals'. But, in his opinion, this method required 'more address & zeal than you can universally command: and is apt therefore to degenerate, decline and die away.' Instead, he favoured the holding of an annual sermon in the Bocking district with a collection

[38] SPCK Hastings District Committee minute book, 12 January 1815, East Sussex RO, PAR 236/43/1, pp. 24-5.
[39] *Report of the District Committee, of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, acting within the Parish of Whalley and the Neighbourhood* (Clitheroe, 1828), 7-8. See R. Garnett, rev. G. Hudson, 'Garnett, Thomas' in D. Cannadine (ed.), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (online resource, 2005, last updated 2018) [http://www.oxforddnb.com]; C. Aspin, 'Thomson, James' in ibid.; W. A. Abram, *A History of Blackburn, Town and Parish* (Blackburn, 1877), 222, 390; J. W. Kneeshaw, *Burnley in the Nineteenth Century, being the "Burnley Express" Souvenir of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, 1897* (Burnley, 1897), 37.
[40] SPCK Lewes District Committee minute book, 3 October 1816, CUL, SPCK.MS A38/11, p. 25.

for the society's funds in order to 'obtain (raising at the same time, probably, a decent sum of money) a sort of solemn anniversary, in one town in our District, in behalf of our Society, and in testimony of our regard to the great objects which it is established to promote.'[41] Such methods became conventional throughout the country, sometimes with impressive results. In Brighton from 1817, sizeable amounts were raised at anniversary sermons held in the unofficial Chapel Royal where the Prince Regent's private band played gratis, hymns were sung by National schoolchildren and aristocratic ladies held collecting plates at the doors.[42] George Pearson, chaplain to Bishop Blomfield at Chester, reported in December 1824 that '[a]t Chester, Warrington, Liverpool, and Manchester, since the beginning of October, [the SPCK] have produced not much less than £1300 *that I know of* and possibly more.'[43]

These sums were used for a variety of purposes by SPCK district committees, who were continually responding to local circumstances. Occasionally, individual committees encountered serious financial difficulties from a lack of resources, but in general they were capable of distributing books as they saw fit.[44] The society's

[41] Wordsworth to Norris, 9 August [1811], Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 789, f. 14. Robert Heath, secretary to the SPCK's committee at Clitheroe in Lancashire, described his committee's proceedings at its anniversary thus: '…I certainly anticipate a good effect from the celebration of our anniversary in a sober way, such as with Divine Service and a Sermon, followed by the publication of a report … directed chiefly to an explanation of the general designs of the Society and the advantages which it offers both to the individuals and the neighbourhoods with which it is connected. A Collection will be made in the Church which will be applied to the general expences [sic] of the Committee and on the Sunday after the report is distributed in the respective Chapelries, Sermons will be preached in every Church and collections made which will be appropriated to the Distribution of Books in the places where they are made and an opportunity will also be afforded for soliciting Donations and Annual Subscriptions.': Robert Heath to John William Whittaker, 20 April 1823, WP(B).
[42] SPCK Lewes District Committee minute book, 9 October 1817, CUL, SPCK.MS A38/11, pp. 75-6; 1 October 1818, p. 126; handbill entitled 'Lewes Deanery Committee of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge', c. October 1820, ibid.; handbill entitled 'Lewes Deanery Committee of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge', c. September 1821, ibid.
[43] George Pearson to John William Whittaker, 22 December 1824, WP(C), 12/15.
[44] For examples of impecunious committees, see SPCK Sutton District Committee minute book, 8 August 1831, CUL, SPCK.MS A38/16; *Report of the Blackburn District Committee of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge for the Year 1832* (Blackburn, 1833).

publications were printed in London and could be purchased by individual members at a discounted rate. In addition, publications could be ordered at members' rates by the secretaries of the district committees, who kept them in local depots or depositories. Books so ordered were to be 'either distributed *gratuitously* in the Districts, or sold *at reduced prices* to or for the use of the Poor'.[45] As successive annual reports of the SPCK show, the distribution of books by the society was carried out on a grand and ever increasing scale. In 1810, 213,052 books in total were dispersed; in 1820, 1,242,091; in 1830, 1,715,560; and in 1837, 2,235,614.[46] This was testament to the efforts not only of clergymen but also lay subscribers. Of the newly formed Caistor and Grimsby committee, it was stated in 1818 that 'their means, owing to the easy situation in which the cottagers are placed by the wisdom and humanity of the principal proprietors, will be fully sufficient to the supply of their District.'[47] Of Manchester in 1821, it was observed that 'several proprietors of the great manufactories in their District have purchased and distributed a considerable number of the SOCIETY's occasional Tracts.'[48]

However, the demand for distribution also came from below, especially with regard to Prayer Books. In 1815, Thomas Selkirk, curate of Penwortham, Lancashire, wrote to the London committee that 'just without the boundaries of his parish … there was a considerable Cotton Manufactory', the workmen of which 'being at a greater & more inconvenient distance from their proper Chapel attended *his*'. These workmen were 'extremely anxious' to obtain bibles and prayer books, but Selkirk was uncertain as to whether he was 'authorized to extend this supply beyond the limits of his own parish'. The general committee allowed Selkirk to extend his distribution, and granted him £5 towards those tracts which he deemed

[45] *General Account*, 45.
[46] SPCK AR (1811), 213; SPCK AR (1821), 27; SPCK AR (1830), 17; SPCK AR (1837), 24. This made the SPCK more extensive in its operations than the Bible Society, but less so than the Religious Tract Society: Quinlan, *Victorian Prelude*, 124, 129.
[47] SPCK AR (1818), 61.
[48] SPCK AR (1821), 67.

'most useful for the manufacturers in his Neighbourhood.'[49] Similar popular demands were evident in other regions of England. The Maidstone committee reported in 1819 that due to 'the increasing demand for Common Prayer Books, they were lately induced to distribute gratuitously, from their depository, a considerable number, among seven of the most necessitous villages'.[50] Two years later, they wrote that 'from the demands made upon them, there is every reason to conclude that considerable anxiety exists on the part of the lower orders to improve in Religious Knowledge'.[51]

Popular demand for SPCK publications continued unabated during the ensuing decade. In 1820, the Cleveland committee noted with satisfaction that 'the demand for the Prayer Book has kept pace with the issue of Bibles', while in Stepney 'the demand for Prayer Books' had 'materially increased'.[52] Bristol's committee resolved in 1821 'that it would be desirable to keep a larger stock of Prayer-books, if practicable; the demand for them being lately much increased.'[53] From Deddington, Oxfordshire, it was reported that 'the Book of Common Prayer in particular has been sought after with the greatest eagerness by the poor', while the Rochester committee observed in 1823 that 'the lower orders of the community are becoming daily more sensible of the value of our Liturgy, and that the demand for Prayer Books is consequently much increased.'[54] At the same time in Lewes, the committee stated that 'the demand for religious books is rapidly increasing.'[55] In 1824, the Worcester committee reported that 'the Common Prayer Book is in the greatest request among the lower classes of the community', while in Doncaster the committee stated that its books had not 'been *indiscriminately* distributed, or given to persons careless of

[49] SPCK General Meetings minute book, 10 January 1815, CUL, SPCK.MS A1/37, pp. 271-2.
[50] SPCK AR (1819), 51.
[51] SPCK AR (1821), 36.
[52] SPCK AR (1820), 52-3.
[53] SPCK Bristol District Committee minute book, 13 September 1821, CUL, SPCK.MS A38/2, p. 54.
[54] SPCK AR (1821), 90; SPCK AR (1823), 49.
[55] SPCK AR (1823), 48.

receiving them, but have been in all cases granted on the application of the poor themselves to their Ministers.'[56]

The proliferation of parochial lending libraries and shops under the auspices of district committees allowed the society further to extend its provision during the 1820s. The 1825 annual report noted that '[i]n every Diocese in the kingdom, the circulation of the SOCIETY's books has increased, and most of the Committees have made important additions to their former services.'[57] In addition to its general modes of distribution, SPCK district committees provided books for local institutions including hospitals, workhouses and prisons. For example, the Storrington committee reported in 1820 that 'they had been enabled to give supplies of books to the County Gaol at Horsham, and to the inmates of the Preston House of Industry, besides which they had supplied twenty-two Convicts with Prayer Books, who expressed themselves exceedingly grateful to the Committee for so seasonable a regard to their spiritual welfare.'[58] In the 1830s, the committee at Brighton granted books for the use of 'Prizoners [sic] at the Black Hole' (a night cell in the town hall), while the Rochester committee agreed 'that three Bibles and three Prayer Books be given … for the use of the house in Rochester endowed by Watts and frequented by poor travellers.'[59] Further to this, soldiers were also major recipients of SPCK distributions. In 1818, an anonymous donor gave £1,000, the interest of which when invested in government funds was to be used for 'supplying the *soldiers of His Majesty's land forces* with the Book of Common Prayer, and such Tracts as the SOCIETY might judge expedient.'[60]

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[56] SPCK AR (1824), 33, 36.
[57] SPCK AR (1825), 41-3.
[58] SPCK AR (1820), 71.
[59] SPCK Lewes District Committee minute book, 6 January 1831, CUL, SPCK.MS A38/11, p. 432; SPCK Rochester District Committee minute book, 1 January 1835, CUL, SPCK.MS A38/13. See also SPCK AR (1818), 35-6, 44; SPCK AR (1820), 90; SPCK AR (1821), 29, 38, 78; SPCK AR (1822), 31; SPCK AR (1834), 21; SPCK AR (1835), 21; SPCK AR (1837), 37; SPCK Rochester District Committee minute book, 8 July 1830, CUL, SPCK.MS A38/13.
[60] SPCK AR (1819), 113. See also SPCK AR (1823), 52; SPCK AR (1824), 29-30.

The domestic exertions of the SPCK were by no means confined to *terra firma*. In 1819, the Berkhamsted committee were 'supplying the bargemen employed in that part of the Grand Junction Canal which passes through Berkhamstead with Bibles, Testaments, Prayer Books and Tracts'. These were 'received with pleasure and thankfulness, on the return of the barges they have been found preserved, and the call for Bibles, Testaments and Prayer Books has been much larger than was calculated'.[61] Four years later, the Blackheath committee issued 'a large supply of such Tracts as were thought most suitable to the crews of small fishing vessels which sail from *Deptford*.'[62]

In the Navy, the SPCK had a more regular presence. For much of the Napoleonic War, individual captains requesting books for ships were granted them at no expense, most notably Lord Nelson.[63] But in April 1812, the Admiralty agreed to foot the expense of this distribution, and ordered the formation of SPCK depots in naval dockyards.[64] A year later, there were depots at Portsmouth, Plymouth, Chatham and Sheerness, from which 16,466 books had been distributed.[65] In 1827, the Duke of Clarence as Lord High Admiral requested further supplies for the Navy, the Senior Chaplain of Greenwich Hospital stipulating that 'no religious books or tracts will be circulated through the Navy, except such as are on the Catalogue of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.'[66] In the 1830s, the Rochester committee made grants for prayer books for the use of the marines in Chatham dockyard and of tracts for the military hospital and guard rooms there as well as HMS *Raleigh*.[67]

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[61] SPCK AR (1820), 86.
[62] SPCK AR (1824), 38.
[63] C. White (ed.), *Nelson: The New Letters* (Woodbridge, 2005), 111-3.
[64] SPCK AR (1812), 188-9.
[65] SPCK AR (1813), 45.
[66] SPCK AR (1827), 20-21. See R. Blake, *Religion in the British Navy 1815-1879: Piety and Professionalism* (Woodbridge, 2014), 53-5.
[67] SPCK Rochester District Committee minute book, 27 December 1832, 3 October 1833, 26 December 1833, 2 October 1834, 1 January 1835, 20 January 1837, CUL, SPCK.MS A38/13.

The society was no less active in the various branches of the coast guard. In 1814, books were granted to the revenue boats which patrolled the coast to prevent smuggling, where they were reportedly received with 'great eagerness and gratitude' and 'kept in good order'.[68] This was followed by similar grants to revenue 'cutters' and quarantine vessels.[69] In the 1820s, the Lewes committee supplied the coast blockade service with bibles, prayer books and tracts, while the men of the preventive service were given copies of Southey's *Life of Nelson* and *Robinson Crusoe*.[70]

The most regular grants given by district committees were, however, those which went to National Schools. As related in the previous chapter, the SPCK had long been active in supporting Anglican charity schools and the National Society partially originated from discussions among prominent SPCK members.[71] In 1812, papers relating to the establishment of National Schools were circulated to all SPCK members.[72] National schools were obliged exclusively to use books from the catalogue of the SPCK. Initially the National Society took upon itself the enormous task of supplying textbooks to its affiliated schools, but from 1815 it referred them directly to the SPCK.[73] Henceforth the district committees of the SPCK were responsible for supplying the National Schools, at discounted prices or gratis.[74] They also distributed tracts for children preparing for confirmation, and collected

[68] SPCK AR (1815), 30-31; SPCK AR (1816), 43.
[69] SPCK AR (1816), 44-5.
[70] SPCK Lewes District Committee minute book, 9 September 1824, CUL, SPCK.MS A38/11, p. 299; 2 October 1828, p. 388.
[71] See above, 187-90.
[72] SPCK General Meetings minute book, 12 November 1811, CUL, SPCK.MS A1/36, pp. 64-5.
[73] Ibid., 3 October 1815, CUL, SPCK.MS A1/37, pp. 389-90.
[74] See e.g. Hampshire Society for the Education of the Infant Poor minute book, 19 October 1815, Hampshire RO, 128M84/2, p. 31; 11 January 1816, p. 38; 7 December 1824, p. 234; ibid., 15 January 1833, Hampshire RO, 128M84/3, f. 38; SPCK Lewes District Committee minute book, passim, CUL, SPCK.MS A38/11; Brighton National Schools minute book, 8 April 1817, East Sussex RO, EMA 13/1/1, pp. 37-8; 7 October 1819, p. 86; ibid., 5 November 1824, East Sussex RO, PAR 255/25/1/1, p. 7; 5 May 1828, p. 91; SPCK AR (1833), 21-3; SPCK AR (1834), 21-2; SPCK AR (1835), 20-22; SPCK AR (1836), 23-5; SPCK AR (1837), 35-8.

information regarding the number of children being educated in local Anglican schools.[75]

Consequently, a close relationship developed between the SPCK and the National Society. In April 1819, the committee of Runcorn National School, which had received books from a local SPCK committee, wrote of the advisability of 'interweaving the benefits arising from National Education, with the substantial and highly interesting views of the Society For Promoting Christian Knowledge.'[76] Such co-operation persisted during the 1820s and 1830s. In Bristol, SPCK committee meetings were held in the local National School, which also accommodated the committee's depository.[77] Samuel Smith, the National schoolmaster, served as 'Agent & Collector of Subscriptions of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge & Receiver of the money arising from the sale of books at the Depot' until he was dismissed in 1829 for misappropriating funds.[78] In Bath, the National schoolmaster served as a 'confidential and intelligent Agent' of the SPCK district committee, making an annual excursion 'throughout the District' to receive payments and take orders during the 'Whitsuntide holidays'.[79]

This collaboration was part and parcel of a burgeoning Anglican associational culture. From 1819, the SPG adopted the model of the SPCK and the National Society, and began to establish its own district committees.[80] These were closely

[75] See e.g. SPCK AR (1813), 39-40; SPCK AR (1817), 26, 56; SPCK AR (1818), 35, 83; SPCK Lewes District Committee minute book, 1 February 1821, CUL, SPCK.MS A38/11, pp. 182-3; 3 April 1823, p. 251; 6 April 1837, p. 521; SPCK Gateshead District Committee minute book, 3 January 1824, 1 May 1824, 7 August 1824, 6 November 1824, 4 August 1827, CUL, SPCK.MS A38/8.
[76] Runcorn National School minute book, 12 April 1819, Cheshire Arch., P95/3516/1. See also ibid., 14 December 1822, 18 August 1831, 13 October 1832.
[77] SPCK Bristol District Committee minute book, 13 September 1821, CUL, SPCK.MS A38/2, p. 52; 27 August 1822, p. 60.
[78] Ibid., 5 March 1829.
[79] W. Downes Willis, Statement regarding SPCK Bath and Bedminster District Committee, 16 May 1835, Warwickshire RO, DR0362/108/3, p. 1.
[80] C. F. Pascoe, *Two Hundred Years of the S.P.G.: An Historical Account of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1701-1900* (2 vols., London, 1901), II, 827.

allied to the SPCK district committees, often sharing personnel and meetings.[81] By the early 1820s, the SPCK, SPG and the National Society formed a united phalanx for the promotion of Anglicanism in many localities, and clergymen lost no opportunity in pressing their collective claims upon the laity.[82] The prime expression of this was the new practice of holding joint anniversary sermons. In 1825, it was resolved in Bristol that 'the anniversary meeting of the Diocesan Society for the Education of the poor in the principles of the Established Church, should in future be holden on the same day with that of the other two Societies, and its members invited to attend divine service at the Cathedral.'[83] Such anniversaries were a calculated show of Anglican strength. At Norwich in 1829, the 'Anniversary Meeting of the three Church of England Societies' was held in the National schoolroom, before a sermon was preached in the cathedral before a 'congregation … so respectable and numerous that all the seats in the nave towards the organ were soon occupied, and those towards the western door completely filled with no less than Two Thousand

[81] See e.g. SPCK Bristol District Committee minute book, passim, CUL, SPCK.MS A38/2; handbill entitled 'Lewes Deanery Committee of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge', c. October 1820, CUL, SPCK.MS A38/11; SPCK Lewes District Committee minute book, passim, ibid.; SPCK Hastings District Committee minute book, 8 September 1837, East Sussex RO, PAR 236/43/1.

[82] See e.g. E. W. Grinfield, *"The Bulwarks of the English Church": A Discourse, preached at the Abbey, Bath, May 10, 1820, at the Joint Anniversary of the Bath District Associations, of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, of the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, and of the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church* (Bath, 1820); F. Merewether, *Co-operation in Promoting the Charitable Institutions of the Church of England recommended, in a Sermon, preached in the Parish Church of St. Martin's, Leicester, on Friday, August 16, 1822, being the Second Anniversary of the Association for the Archdeaconry of Leicester for Promoting the Designs of two of the Church's Leading Societies* (London, 1822); C. J. Blomfield, *A Sermon preached in All Saints' Church, Northampton, on Wednesday, July 4, 1827, at the Third Anniversary of the two Northampton Committees in aid of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts* (London, 1827). Co-operation was not always forthcoming, however. In Hastings, the SPCK committee saw the National Society as 'a powerful competitor for the generosity of the public' in 1815 and declined a request for support from the SPG in 1823 on account of 'the present distressed State of the Country': SPCK Hastings District Committee minute book, 12 January 1815, East Sussex RO, PAR 236/43/1, p. 25; 31 January 1823, pp. 73-4.

[83] SPCK Bristol District Committee minute book, 1 August 1825, CUL, SPCK.MS A38/2, pp. 98-9.

and Two Hundred and Seventy-two Poor, but neatly-clad, Children … educated in the principles of the Established Church'. The *Norfolk Chronicle* considered this 'a most gratifying sight'.[84]

Religious Viewpoint

Having discussed the structures whereby the SPCK disseminated its literature, it is important to consider the precise religious and political import of its operations. To belong to the SPCK was to belong not to a particular party or faction, but to the mainstream of the Church of England. Though a voluntary society, the SPCK had behind it the full authority of the established church and, to a certain extent, the backing of the state. In order to become a member of the society, applicants needed two existing members to certify that they were 'well affected to His Majesty King GEORGE, and his Government, and to the united Church of *England* and *Ireland*, as by law established; of a sober and religious Life and Conversation; of an humble, peaceable, and charitable disposition.'[85] Although non-Anglicans were permitted to join the society on these terms, it was further stipulated that 'no Person be an Officer of the SOCIETY, who is not a Member of the united Church of *England* and *Ireland*, as by Law established'.[86] This gave the SPCK a decidedly confessional character,

[84] *Norfolk Chronicle*, 15 August 1829, 2.
[85] *General Account*, 30.
[86] Ibid., 32. This rule did not consistently preclude the involvement of non-Anglicans in SPCK district committees in practice. In 1816, the secretary of the Wells committee stated that the rule had long been 'in agitation between the Parent-Soc[iet]y. and the District-Committee', who had '*resolved* to send *for no more* [books], *of any kind, until the proposed amendment* of the 15th. Rule shall have, first of all, been discussed by the *General Board*, and their final Sentiments thereon communicated to them accordingly': Thomas Salmon to Gaskin, 21 September 1816, CUL, SPCK.MS D1/S/2. In 1824, Sir Rose Price was removed from the presidency of the SPCK's Penzance committee on account of his alleged Unitarian opinions: *The Monthly Repository*, February 1824, 88-92. At Furness, Lancashire, it was resolved in 1826 that 'any person being a Member of the Church of England, or of the Episcopal Church of Scotland, may become a Local Member of the District Committee': SPCK Furness District Committee minute book, 6 September 1826, CUL, SPCK.MS A38/6.

but it did not make it distinctively 'High Church'. Members of the 'Hackney Phalanx' and the 'Clapham Sect' alike were SPCK subscribers.[87]

For much of the period, the catalogue of the SPCK had a function somewhat analogous to the Roman Catholic *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, defining which literature was considered 'orthodox' and in conformity with Anglican doctrines and practices. As mentioned above, in the National Schools and the post-1827 Royal Navy the circulation of religious tracts was restricted to those on the SPCK catalogue, and the same principle was applied in SPCK-sponsored parochial libraries.[88] The influence of the SPCK's sub-committee for revising tracts was therefore immense, and did much to determine the popular understanding of Anglicanism. Until the 1830s, the catalogue was dominated by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century devotional manuals largely free from Evangelical or Puritan fervour as well as Non-Juring or 'High Church' theology. Significantly, two sections of the catalogue were entitled 'Against Enthusiasm' and 'Against Popery', signifying the two extremes which the SPCK resolutely sought to avoid. Other sections contained tracts on the subjects of Bible, the Liturgy, the Catechism, preparing for communion, moral duties and educational methods.[89] When in 1831 there was a proposal to add a manual by Isaac Watts to the catalogue, Watson successfully opposed this innovation, asking, 'Is it, or is it not, fitting that [the] S. P. C. K., not only essentially, but exclusively, a Church Society, shall place a Dissenter in her chair of religious instruction; shall give her sanction to teachers not of her own communion, and employ her funds in forcing the circulation of Dissenting tracts?'[90]

In its Anglican exclusivity the society differed markedly from its principal rivals, the British and Foreign Bible Society and the Religious Tract Society. These organisations were interdenominational, and were largely (though not exclusively)

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[87] Allen and McClure, *Two Hundred Years*, 128.
[88] SPCK AR (1826), 72.
[89] *General Account*, 270-88; Rivers, *Vanity Fair*, 50-52.
[90] Churton, *Joshua Watson*, 197. For a contrasting view, see Harry Townsend Powell to Norris, 3 June 1831, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 790, f. 51.

supported by Evangelicals of various descriptions. The sole purpose of the Bible Society was to distribute bibles in as many languages as possible, while the Religious Tract Society disseminated Evangelical tracts.[91] Despite the latter's wide circulation of Evangelical literature, it was the Bible Society which most concerned supporters of the SPCK. The Bible Society's sporadic foundation of local 'auxiliary' societies from 1809 appears, in some measure, to have motivated the formation of SPCK district committees.[92] In March 1810, after being invited to join the Colchester auxiliary of the Bible Society, Christopher Wordsworth penned a pamphlet entitled *Reasons for Declining to become a Member of the British and Foreign Bible Society*, in which he argued that 'the exertions which are now making for the Bible Society should be made solely in behalf of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge'.[93] Wordsworth, in common with Norris and many Anglicans, considered that the Bible Society undermined the Church's episcopal structure and argued that bibles should not be distributed without prayer books and other explanatory literature.[94]

Conversely, Anglican support for the Bible Society came from Evangelicals, who emphasised the primacy of scripture, and successors of eighteenth-century Latitudinarians, who saw co-operation with dissenters as an overriding priority.[95] In many cases, membership of the SPCK and the Bible Society was not mutually

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[91] R. H. Martin, *Evangelicals United: Ecumenical Stirrings in Pre-Victorian Britain, 1795-1830* (Metuchen, NJ, 1983), 87-8, 153-4.
[92] Ibid., 91.
[93] C. Wordsworth, *Reasons for Declining to become a Member of the British and Foreign Bible Society* (London, 1810), 16-17.
[94] On the controversy between the SPCK and the Bible Society, see Martin, *Evangelicals United*, 99-110; M. A. Smith, 'Introduction' to H. Ryder, 'A Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Gloucester in the Year 1816' in M. A. Smith and S. Taylor (eds.), *Evangelicalism in the Church of England c. 1790-c. 1890: A Miscellany* (Woodbridge, 2004), 80-83.
[95] William Lort Mansel to Spencer Perceval, 31 July 1810, BL, Add MS 49185, ff. 71-5; J. S. Harford, *The Life of Thomas Burgess, F.R.S. F.A.S. &c. &c. &c. Late Bishop of Salisbury* (London, 1840), 272-3; T. Thistlethwayte, *Memoirs and Correspondence of Dr. H. Bathurst, Lord Bishop of Norwich* (London, 1853), 477; G. H. Sumner, *Life of Charles Richard Sumner, D.D. Bishop of Winchester, and Prelate of the Most Noble Order of the Garter during a Forty Years' Episcopate* (London, 1876), 189-90; Smith, 'Introduction', 82.

exclusive.[96] But the sense that the societies were antagonists became widespread during the 1810s. At a Bible Society meeting at Saffron Walden, Essex, in January 1811, a clergyman who was also a member of the SPCK related that 'he was present lately at a Committee at Bartletts Buildings when an application was laid before the Committee requesting a supply of Bibles &c or Books, for the use of a School … upon the Lancastrian [sic] plan at which there were educated both Protestant & Dissenters Children, & upon this account the Society which consisted only of Protestant Members refused the application'. Another attendee remarked, 'You may imagine the effect this had upon the whole meeting which consisted of the most respectable Gentlemen & Clergy in the Town & Neighbourhood.'[97] At Walsall in 1815, the local Bible Society auxiliary 'had to dissolve because its Anglican patrons all decided to join the S.P.C.K. instead.'[98] In the Basingstoke district, where SPCK and Bible Society branches were set up almost simultaneously, Jane Austen's brother James explained at an SPCK meeting that he objected to what the Bible Society 'left undone', but appealed for all to agree that 'nothing can be more destructive to the good effects of either than the existence of any party spirit … especially in a Neighbourhood which has appeared to me from the earliest period to which my Memory reaches, to have been remarkably free from dissension.'[99]

A less irenic attitude was adopted by John William Whittaker at Blackburn in 1822. Roger Carus Wilson, the Evangelical Vicar of Preston, wrote to ask Whittaker's permission to preside at a Bible Society meeting in Blackburn.[100] Whittaker refused his consent, expressing his strong disapproval of the 'structure,

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[96] N. Vansittart, *Three Letters on the subject of the British and Foreign Bible Society; addressed to the Rev. Dr. Marsh and John Coker, Esq.* (London, 1812), 25; J. Owen, *The History of the Origin and First Ten Years of the British and Foreign Bible Society* (2 vols, London, 1816), I, 142; I. Collins, 'Too much Zeal for the Bible Society: Jane Austen, her Family, and the Religious Quarrels of her Time', *Collected Reports of the Jane Austen Society*, 6 (2001-5), 30; E. Hicks, '"Christianity Personified": Perceval and Pittism' (unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2018), 61-3.
[97] Henry Hodgkinson to [?], 6 January 1811, CUL, SPCK.MS D1/H/35.
[98] Martin, *Evangelicals United*, 110.
[99] Collins, 'Too much Zeal for the Bible Society', 34-5.
[100] Roger Carus Wilson to John William Whittaker, 28 September 1822, WP(B).

internal economy & general proceedings of that establishment', which he considered 'eminently prejudicial to [the] Church of England.'[101] The feeling that the Bible Society undermined the Church continued to gain ground towards the end of the period. In 1827, Lord Suffield, a subscriber to both the SPCK and the Bible Society, was asked to become president of the latter's auxiliary in Middleton, Lancashire. He declined on the grounds that the auxiliary society's operations would lead to 'a great deal of impertinent intrusion to say nothing of its interference with the obvious duties of the ministers of our church establishment.'[102] For this refusal he was applauded by the vicar, John Haughton, who wrote that the SPCK was 'a Society *purely Church*, & infinitely more effective than theirs, more comprehensive in its views, & more practically beneficial to the poor.'[103] But such smugness did not satisfy Suffield, who placed the blame for any damage inflicted by the Bible Society on the clergy: 'the distribution of Bibles may I admit be productive of good or evil, but the intention in the distribution of them is good, & if that intention be perverted whose fault is it? Most undeniably the fault of the ministers of the established Church.'[104] Yet the supporters of the SPCK succeeded in identifying the Bible Society primarily with dissenting interests, such that by 1834 some clergymen considered withdrawing from the Bible Society in response to dissenting calls for disestablishment.[105]

Political Interventions

It is clear, therefore, that the SPCK functioned as a standard bearer for normative Anglicanism, as distinct from dissent and Evangelicalism, for much of the period.

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[101] John William Whittaker to Wilson, 30 September 1822, WP(B).
[102] Lord Suffield to Mr Smith, 9 December 1827, Norfolk RO, GTN/5/9/30/3.
[103] John Haughton to Suffield, 11 January 1828, Norfolk RO, GTN/5/9/32/7/1.
[104] Suffield to Haughton, 14 January 1828, Norfolk RO, GTN/5/9/32/6.
[105] Henry Tattam to John Kaye, 24 February 1834, Lincolnshire Arch., DIOC/COR/B/5/7/2/7; John Davies to George Elwes Corrie, 21 August 1834, StC, T/3/1/8/113.

However, its role in relation to the political sphere was much less distinct. Unlike the National Society, the SPCK's sphere of activity was not strictly coterminous with political boundaries, professing as it did a global missionary intent. It also did not possess the same degree of royal and political patronage. But, nevertheless, it did exercise a notable, if somewhat ambiguous, influence over political debate in this period. Initially, this manifested itself solely in relation to the question of Catholic emancipation. In April 1807, shortly after Grenville's dismissal as Prime Minister, the London clergyman Harry Wilson sent the SPCK 12 copies of an anti-Catholic tract, which were received with thanks at a general meeting. The committee proceeded to call a further meeting 'on Special business'.[106] At this meeting, resolutions were passed expressing alarm at the prospect of Catholic emancipation, which were then entrusted to a sub-committee of five for consideration.[107] At a third meeting, held the day before Parliament was dissolved in advance of the general election, the sub-committee presented a revised and shortened version of the resolutions:

> [T]his Society impress'd with the deepest veneration for the character of their Sovereign and with the sincerest gratitude for the firmness and magnanimity, with which he has recently oppos'd an innovation, hostile to the establish'd Church, feel it incumbent on them to express their grateful sense of the steady perseverance, which his Majesty has uniformly displayed, in the defence and preservation of the ecclesiastical Constitution, & to declare their readiness, on all occasions, to co-operate with his Majesty, as in duty bound, to the utmost of their ability, in the resistance of such measures, as have a tendency to endanger the invaluable Blessings, which that Constitution imparts, or to subvert those principles, which happily for his people, plac'd his Majesty's family on the Throne of his now United Kingdom.

This declaration was approved, and it was further agreed that it 'be printed in the public Newspapers'. Such actions were not entirely unprecedented: the preamble to

[106] SPCK General Meetings minute book, 14 April 1807, CUL, SPCK.MS A1/34, p. 371. The tract in question was [H. B. Wilson], *An Earnest Address to Men of all Orders and Degrees in the United Church of England & Ireland respecting the Papists* (London, 1807).
[107] SPCK General Meetings minute book, 20 April 1807, CUL, SPCK.MS A1/34, pp. 373-6.

the declaration referred to proceedings of 1790, when a public protest against the proposed repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts had been passed by the society.[108] But the SPCK's blatant opportunism in intervening when a general election was imminent was perceived as a new departure. Lord Grenville, himself a member of the SPCK, saw the declaration as an outrageous political attack, and expressed this view in an open letter to Gaskin.[109] A brief pamphlet war ensued, in which Wilson participated, writing an open riposte to Grenville's letter.[110] At a public dinner where Wilson's letter was being debated, John Gifford (one of the sub-committee who had framed the SPCK's declaration) 'rose from his chair and said in a voice loud enough to be heard beyond the table at which he had been sitting, "The writer of that letter deserves the thanks of every man in England."'[111]

Five years later, it was Gifford who attempted to revive the tactic of an anti-Catholic declaration by giving notice of his intention to submit 'certain resolutions relative to the Roman Catholic claims', for which a special meeting was called.[112] Lord Grenville got wind of this and complained to Gaskin. He objected to the dissemination of 'such notions as these, in place of our old practice … "of distributing Bibles, Prayer Books, and religious tracts."'[113] In the event, Gifford was too ill to attend the meeting, and sent a letter with his resolutions. But it was agreed

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[108] Ibid., 28 April 1807, pp. 377-9.
[109] *Morning Chronicle*, 5 May 1807, 2.
[110] *More Talents Still! Being Lord Grenville's Letter to Dr. Gaskin, with the Letters in answer thereto* (London, 1807); *A Letter stating the connection which Presbyterians, Dissenters, and Catholics, had with the Recent Event, which has agitated, and still agitates, the British Empire, to which are added, Lord Grenville's Letter to Dr. Gaskin, and Scævola's Letter, containing most important Facts respecting the Catholic Claims* (Glasgow, 1807); H. B. Wilson, *A Letter to Lord Grenville upon the Repeated Publication of his Letter to the Secretary of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, in consequence of their Resolution with respect to His Majesty's Late Conduct* (London, 1807). See also G. M. Ditchfield, 'A Unitarian View of English Dissent in 1807', *Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society*, 18 (1984), 5, 14-15.
[111] H. B. Wilson, *Contention for the Faith: A Sermon, preached in the Church of the United Parishes of St. Mary Aldermary and St. Thomas the Apostle, on Sunday, 28th October, 1849, being the Festival of St. Simon and St. Jude, Apostles and Martyrs* (London, 1849), 28.
[112] SPCK General Meetings minute book, 1 December 1812, CUL, SPCK.MS A1/36, p. 335.
[113] Lord Grenville to Henry Bathurst, 11 December 1812, in Thistlethwayte, *Memoirs*, 217-8.

'that the Society having in various other Ways … manifested their opinion on the subject in question deem it unnecessary to adopt the proposed resolutions'.[114] Shortly before this meeting, the society had resolved to circulate among its members 7,500 copies of a charge by Bishop Pretyman-Tomline of Lincoln arguing against emancipation.[115] Of the 'Packet' containing the charge, Wordsworth remarked to Norris, 'On every account, (not forgetting the Roman Catholic question) it ought to be pressed as much as possible.'[116] In response to such provocations, Bishop Bathurst of Norwich considered leaving the society, lamenting that 'Dr: Gaskin is a very weak, and a very violent Man, and I am sorry to add, that there are a few others, not perhaps so unwise, but equally intemperate, who take the Lead in Bartletts Buildings'.[117] In Bathurst's view, the circulation of Pretyman-Tomline's charge by the SPCK was 'in direct opposition to their *Eleventh Rule*', which stated that 'the SOCIETY will always decline the intermeddling with such Matters as are foreign to their Design of *Promoting Christian Knowledge*'. Furthermore, it had 'given offence to many Subscribers'.[118]

The SPCK now began to acquire some of the outward characteristics of a political society at its public gatherings. In 1813, the practice of holding an 'anniversary dinner' in London was revived.[119] The following year, it was decided to appoint 'stewards' for the dinner, an 'experiment' concerning which Wordsworth expressed doubts to Norris:

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[114] SPCK General Meetings minute book, 15 December 1812, CUL, SPCK.MS A1/36, p. 348.
[115] Ibid., 17 November 1812, pp. 323-4; 8 December 1812, p. 342.
[116] Wordsworth to Norris, 7 January 1813, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 789, f. 58.
[117] Henry Bathurst to Grenville, 14 December 1812, BL, Add MS 59002, f. 79.
[118] Henry Bathurst to Phil Williams, 9 July 1813, Norfolk RO, DCN/154/5/6; *General Account*, 31. Bishop Bathurst had already challenged the SPCK in 1810, when he preached a sermon at its annual charity school service in which he 'did what I thought justice to Mr: Lancaster's *mode of teaching*, and to his zeal in extending useful instruction, to the lower classes of society'. When this was published, 'to please two or three Members of the Board', the bishop 'gave them leave to alter one passage in a manner they thought proper': Henry Bathurst to Williams, 18 January 1811, Norfolk RO, DCN/154/5/5.
[119] *Morning Post*, 3 June 1813, 3. An annual dinner was held in the eighteenth century, but this appears to have fallen into abeyance: Allen and McClure, *Two Hundred Years*, 126.

> To my taste, I own, for a society so venerable as the S[ociet]y for P[romoting] C[hristian] K[knowledge] it sounds somewhat too Crown-and-Anchorish; and I do not feel, as if a dinner of Dukes and Earls would add much to out religious credit, which is the brightest jewel in our crown. Let us beware of catching too much of the popular, controversial contagion.[120]

Despite such qualms, the 'anniversary dinner', which was held at Freemasons' Tavern, persisted throughout the period. Whittaker described how, in 1821, 'The Duke of York was in the chair, & was received with warm applause when he entered the great dining room followed by the Bishops.'[121] In the aftermath of the Queen Caroline Affair, this was surely an indication of Tory political sympathies among attendees. However, 'Crown-and-Anchorish' conviviality did not unambiguously signify a broader Toryism. At a Bath SPCK dinner in 1822, former MP and advocate of Catholic emancipation Sir John Hippisley 'called the attention of the meeting to the present state of the Catholic Question', tactfully stating that 'he would endeavour to give the county of Somerset an opportunity of declaring its opposition to the enactment of any future law that may be proposed, *inconsistent with the entire security of the English Church and State*.'[122] The Whig peer Baron Lyttelton attended an SPCK district committee dinner in 1829, recording in his diary, 'Too many toasts and Nine drunk though the Revd. Gents were not actually toxicated [sic].'[123] Additionally, politics could serve as a distraction from the society's efforts. In 1831, Norris's nephew Harry Townsend Powell feared that an SPCK meeting in Leamington Spa would not be well attended as 'this Reform & electioneering will drive everything else out of people's heads.'[124]

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[120] Wordsworth to Norris, 9 May 1814, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 789, f. 45. The Crown and Anchor was a tavern in Westminster where radical political dinners were frequently held. See C. Parolin, *Radical Spaces: Venues of Popular Politics in London, 1790-c. 1845* (Canberra, 2010), 147-78.
[121] John William Whittaker to Sarah Whittaker, 5-6 June 1821, WP(C), 2/17.
[122] *Bath Chronicle*, 18 July 1822, 2.
[123] B. Askwith, *The Lytteltons: A Family Chronicle of the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1975), 34.
[124] Powell to Norris, 10 May 1831, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 790, f. 46.

Moreover, after 1813, the society avoided direct interventions in relation to Parliament's proceedings of the kind which agitated Grenville and Bathurst. In 1815, Wordsworth wrote disapprovingly of a growing tendency within the SPCK to make profuse professions of loyalty to the established church, repeating his concerns about the society's politicisation: 'let us continue, as much as may be, grave and sober, and catch as little as is possible of the character and temper of this pragmatical, factious, and progressive age.' In his view, talk of 'Establishment and Dissenters, and Test-laws, &c.' was inevitable, but it had to be restricted to 'proper places and times' as '[i]nopportune talk' showed 'confusion and alarm, and weakness.'[125] This view evidently gained ascendancy across the SPCK, which was conspicuously absent from Anglican anti-emancipation campaigns in the 1820s, and now confined its public representations to memorials respecting religious provision in India and New South Wales.[126]

During the 1830s, those who wished to harness the SPCK's resources for political campaigns were frequently disappointed. In January 1831, the secretary of the Taunton committee wrote a letter to the tract committee concerning 'the evil consequences resulting from some of the provisions of the late Beer Bill', suggesting that this was a subject which 'might justify an appeal to the Legislature for a more effectual restraint of the Evil which the Advocates of Christianity have just cause to complain of.' But it was agreed that 'this is a matter in which the Society cannot interfere.'[127] The following November, it was determined that a manuscript tract the tract committee had received entitled *Are you a Friend to Reform?* was 'not suited to the purposes of the Society.'[128] When, in 1833, another sub-committee received a letter regarding the corn laws, it was agreed that 'the Committee cannot undertake to

[125] Churton, *Joshua Watson*, 72-3.
[126] SPCK AR (1827), 82-4; SPCK AR (1832), 64-5; SPCK AR (1835), 95-9; SPCK AR (1837), 99-100.
[127] SPCK Tract Committee minute book, 24 January 1831, CUL, SPCK.MS A14/1, f. 27.
[128] Ibid., 23 November 1831, f. 48.

publish the letter'.[129] Nor did the SPCK attach itself to the Conservative party. In 1834, a Bedford bookseller named J. B. Merry attempted to depose the local SPCK agent, Mr White, by writing to the tract committee that he was 'a Churchman & conservative' while White was 'a Dissenter and a Preacher' who, 'from his religious and political opinions', was 'unfit to carry on the agency'.[130] However, the local clergy were of the opinion that 'that to remove Mr. White for being a dissenter would create hostility and do more harm than good.'[131]

The Anti-Infidelity Campaigns of 1819 and 1830

As an organisation, therefore, the SPCK became aloof from party politics to a far greater extent than many individual clergymen or the National Society. However, the SPCK did experience and excite politicisation in other, less direct, ways. Chief among these were the anti-infidelity campaigns which it undertook in 1819 and 1830. While ostensibly directed solely against those who promoted irreligion, the timing of both campaigns – during the Queen Caroline Affair and the Reform crisis – belied their political import. The campaigns are of particular interest for two main reasons: the light which they shed on the SPCK's ability to influence English society and the extent to which they challenged the pessimistic preconceptions of the SPCK concerning the level of Anglican allegiance.

According to Clive Field's estimates, the number of people in England and Wales who rejected religion entirely was infinitesimal, accounting for around 0.1% of the population in 1800 and 0.3% in 1840.[132] Yet there was a growing sense that, as the

[129] SPCK General Education and Literature Committee minute book, 16 January 1833, CUL, SPCK.MS A15/1, p. 67.
[130] Ibid., 5 March 1834, 12 March 1834.
[131] Ibid., 26 March 1834.
[132] C. D. Field, 'Counting Religion in England and Wales: The Long Eighteenth Century, c. 1680-c. 1840', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 63 (2012), 711, 716. Bishop Howley stated in a charge of 1814, 'The cause of avowed infidelity has never prospered in this country', also remarking that '[d]uring the course of the last twenty years the influence of religious sentiment on the people of this country has been increasing with progressive rapidity.':

Limehouse clergyman James Rudge put it in a letter to Sidmouth of 1817, 'the enemies of Religion and order are, with singular industry, sowing the tares of blasphemy and sedition in the minds of the people' and that moreover it was 'a solemn obligation imposed on the parochial clergy, more especially those of large parishes … to endeavour … to counteract the efforts of designing and wicked men.'[133] The trials of the London radical publishers William Hone and Richard Carlile for blasphemy in 1818-9 gave a greater prominence to open ridicule and criticism of Christianity than had existed since the furore surrounding the publication of Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* (1791). Hone, a Unitarian, specialised in parodies of the Anglican liturgy, while in the writings of Carlile, the deism of Paine and his epigones gave way to a new atheism, which viewed the established church as a principal antagonist.[134]

That such notions were being disseminated through cheap literature in the metropolis was a cause of deep concern to Anglicans in general. In October 1819, an 'Association for the Refutation of Infidel Publications' was formed in London, under the chairmanship of Sir James Bland Burges, an ex-MP and man of letters who held the court office of Knight Marshal.[135] Burges attempted to gain episcopal support for this association, but the bishops were reluctant to endorse an initiative which did not come from the SPCK. Archbishop Manners-Sutton wrote to Burges on 4 November, 'It does not appear to me expedient to multiply institutions bearing to [the] same point. The purposes for which your Society is about to be established, & [the] means you seek for carrying them into execution, are already professed & actively

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W. Howley, *A Charge delivered to the Clergy, of the Diocese of London at the Primary Visitation of that Diocese in the Year 1814* (London, 1815), 19, 24.

[133] James Rudge to Lord Sidmouth, 16 April 1817, Devon Heritage Centre, 152M/C1817/OH77.

[134] E. Royle, *Victorian Infidels: The Origins of the British Secularist Movement 1791-1866* (Manchester, 1974), 33, 41-2; D. Nash, *Blasphemy in Modern Britain: 1789 to the Present* (Aldershot, 1999), 80-86.

[135] *Public Ledger*, 22 October 1819, 1.

forwarded by [the] Society for promoting Christian Knowledge.'[136] Two days earlier, perhaps provoked by Burges's society, the SPCK had appointed a committee to look into the question of how to counteract irreligion.[137] Howley told Burges that the SPCK was 'now preparing to act, & I hope and trust its exertions may be in some measure effectual, in support of a cause, which involves every interest worthy of consideration either in this life or the next.'[138] Bishop Fisher of Salisbury, who had already circulated anti-infidelity tracts in his diocese, wrote to the secretary of Burges's society that their plan was not 'sufficiently extensive', before expressing support for the SPCK's efforts.[139]

Further outmanoeuvring Burges, the SPCK convened a special meeting in late November, at which the committee appointed at the beginning of that month stated that they considered 'the magnitude of the mischief to be so appalling, and the peril to the souls of thousands so imminent, as to demand from the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge every practicable exertion, and to justify almost every departure from its ordinary habits, which shall not actually compromise its character, or endanger its constitution.' They recommended that 'a special Committee may be appointed, with the fullest discretionary powers, suited to meet the exigence [sic] of this extraordinary crisis'.[140] This suggestion was approved, and on 3 December 'the Special Committee for counteracting infidel and other blasphemous Publications' held its first meeting. It was agreed that cheap editions of relevant tracts already on the Society's catalogue be printed, that arrangements be made with booksellers for this purpose and that an address to enlist public support for the committee's efforts

[136] Charles Manners-Sutton to Sir James Bland Burges, 4 November 1819, Bodl., Dep. Bland Burges 26, f. 82b.
[137] SPCK General Meetings minute book, 2 November 1819, CUL, SPCK.MS A1/38, pp. 258-60.
[138] William Howley to Burges, 11 November 1819, Bodl., Dep. Bland Burges 26, f. 86.
[139] John Fisher to James Bird, 29 November 1819, ibid., f. 95; Fisher to William Parker, 3 December 1819, CUL, SPCK.MS A13/1.
[140] SPCK General Meetings minute book, 29 November 1819, CUL, SPCK.MS A1/38, p. 269.

be drawn up and circulated.[141] Five days later, the committee resolved to send the address and list of cheap tracts to the district committees, requesting them to 'promote by special Meetings, Public Advertisements, or otherwise as they see fit, the peculiar Objects of the Address; and to receive and remit Subscriptions in aid of the same.'[142]

When the committee reconvened in January 1820, it was reported that the 'immediate Answers from the Secretaries of the District Committees were numerous, and, in general, highly satisfactory.' At Hereford, 'A most respectable Meeting was held at the Shire Hall, when the Marques [sic] of Salisbury presided, and the Members & many Gentlemen of the County attended; the warmest Expressions of Zeal in the cause were adopted; and a large Subscription was set on foot, which immediately exceeded One Hundred Pounds.' Overall, around £3,770 had been raised. From the early reports received from the provinces, a clear regional disparity emerged: whereas it appeared that 'the Southern, Eastern, and Western Districts of the Kingdom' were 'but little infected by the Poison of Infidelity', there were 'Parts of the Northern District of the Kingdom, where blasphemous and infidel Publications are known to have been numerously and successfully spread.' Especially gloomy reports were transmitted from Bolton and Manchester, where the Rev. William Johnson observed that 'the Churches are much deserted by the Poor, and … the Clergy are treated with contempt, with Indignity, and even with Violence … there will be much difficulty in prevailing upon the poor to read any of the Tracts, so strong are their prejudices'.[143] This picture was more or less borne out in the precis of district committee reports which appeared in the SPCK's annual report of 1821. The following committees reported little or no incidence of 'infidelity': Cleveland, Castle Hedingham, Barking, Barstable and Chafford, Colchester, Watford, Bath, Stow, Kibworth, Newport Pagnell, Berkhamsted and Stratford-upon-Avon. Though there were also evidently pockets of southern England where

[141] SPCK Anti-Infidel Committee minute book, 3 December 1819, CUL, SPCK.MS A13/1.
[142] Ibid., 8 December 1819.
[143] Ibid., 10 January 1820.

'infidelity' was considered an issue (e.g. Canterbury, Rochester and Winchester), the greatest concern was manifested throughout Yorkshire and the dioceses of Durham and Chester.[144]

Having ascertained this information, the special committee concentrated its efforts on London and northern England. Premises were acquired in Fleet Street for the printing and sale of the society's anti-infidelity tracts, the number of which significantly increased as new titles were approved by the committee.[145] Tracts were sent to London booksellers on the principle of 'Sale or Return', and in April it was reported that '[u]pwards of an Hundred Booksellers in London and its' [sic] Vicinity have been appointed Agents for the Sale of the Society's anti-infidel Publications.' Within London, as in England at large, there were clear regional variations: 'The Number of Books disposed of, in the western Parts of the Metropolis, has been considerable; but, in the Eastern division, particularly in the Borough, Spital-Fields, Shoreditch and Bethnal Green, it was not without some difficulty that Tradesmen were found to undertake the Business, and the Demand upon them, as they anticipated, has been very trifling.'[146] Large numbers of tracts were also sent to district committees or subscribers for distribution in Birmingham, Manchester, Halifax, York, Gateshead, around 20 of the most populous parishes in the Diocese of Chester, Bradford, Wetherby in Yorkshire and a lending library in the village of Milton in Cambridgeshire.[147] By April 1823, the total subscriptions it had received amounted to around £7,600 and the committee had circulated 798,201 publications in total, including 677,491 anti-infidelity tracts.[148] The special committee's mandate expired in 1825.[149]

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[144] SPCK AR (1821), 35-99.
[145] SPCK Anti-Infidel Committee minute book, 10 January 1820, 20 January 1820, 31 January 1820, 10 April 1820, CUL, SPCK.MS A13/1.
[146] Ibid., 10 April 1820.
[147] Ibid., 20 January 1820, 31 January 1820, 10 April 1820, 4 December 1820, 5 February 1821.
[148] Ibid., 3 March 1823.
[149] SPCK AR (1823), 51.

Did the technique of mass distribution of cheap tracts achieve its desired effect? In 1830, it was claimed that the anti-infidelity campaign of 1819-25 had ensured that 'the immediate object of the Society was obtained'; '[t]he enemies of religion were foiled in their attempt, and disappointed of their expected triumph.'[150] While this polemical judgement must be viewed this caution, it is significant that the special committee considered its own efforts to have been immediately effectual. As early as November 1820, the committee stated that 'the Effects of the Blasphemer and Infidel are for the present considerably relaxed'.[151] From that point, its principal focus was in furthering the SPCK's existing object of the establishment of parochial lending libraries, as a 'measure of a more permanent nature'.[152] Of course, this tells us very little about how the anti-infidelity tracts were received by the labouring population. The writings in question were mostly brief and simple dialogues in which the arguments of an irreligious person were confuted by a believer, and often also stressed the importance of civil obedience.[153] The Lewes committee considered such productions 'admirably adapted to counteract the Effect of Infidel & Blasphemous Publications'.[154] It seems from the wide sale and distribution of the tracts that this perception was very widespread, yet for the most part district committees relied on inference rather than direct knowledge in judging the campaign a success.[155] With regard to new parochial libraries, they were on firmer ground. In 1824, the Leicester committee reported that at one of their libraries, 'scarcely a volume has been on the Librarian's shelf.' They further stated that 'wherever a Parochial Library has been established, reports have been uniformly received of their beneficial and satisfactory

[150] SPCK General Meetings minute book, 7 December 1830, CUL, SPCK.MS A1/40, p. 103. Cf. *An Account of the Origin, Objects, and General Proceedings of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge* (London, 1839), 32.
[151] SPCK Anti-Infidel Committee minute book, 6 November 1820, CUL, SPCK.MS A13/1.
[152] Ibid., 10 April 1820.
[153] *Books and Tracts published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and which may be had at their Office for the sale of Temporary and Occasional Tracts, 21 Fleet Street, nearly opposite Chancery-Lane* (London, 1820).
[154] SPCK Lewes District Committee minute book, 6 March 1823, CUL, SPCK.MS A38/11, p. 246.
[155] SPCK AR (1820), 44-5; *Christian Remembrancer*, September 1821, 567.

results; and relying on the efficacy of this practical statement, the result of actual experience, they hope they shall be enabled in a succeeding year to report a considerable increase and extension of them.'[156]

Perhaps the surest indication that the 1819 anti-infidelity campaign was successful was that it was thought worthwhile to repeat the expedient in 1830, when Bishop Blomfield expressed alarm at 'the notorious attempts recently renewed with alarming activity to disseminate infidel & other mischievous principles amongst all classes of Society & especially the lower ranks'.[157] What most concerned the initiators of this second anti-infidelity campaign were the contemporary proceedings at the Rotunda, a lecture hall in Southwark where the clergyman-turned-atheist Robert Taylor preached against Christianity in a theatrical manner, while espousing radical politics.[158]

The perception that this spectacle represented a new departure for popular 'infidelity' had great currency among London clergymen, but struck less of a chord in the provinces when the support of district committees was enlisted. The committees expressed a willingness to co-operate with the 'Parent Society', but were more sanguine than their London counterparts. From Warwick it was reported that 'their own immediate district is, they believe, at present exempt from any open or systematic attacks.'[159] Likewise, it appeared that 'no particular Efforts have been made of late to spread Infidel Publications in the Deanery of Lewes.'[160] The Furness region of Lancashire was, in the judgement of the local committee, 'almost, if not

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[156] SPCK AR (1824), 35-6.
[157] SPCK Standing Committee minute book, 27 November 1830, CUL, SPCK.MS A5/6, p. 136.
[158] SPCK General Meetings minute book, 5 July 1831, CUL, SPCK.MS A1/40, pp. 184-6; Royle, *Victorian Infidels*, 38-40; Nash, *Blasphemy*, 88-90. Archbishop Howley was reluctant to initiate legal proceedings against Taylor in the church courts as there was 'no instance of degradation [from orders] on record since the Revolution: and if the suit should fail from want of evidence, or even from error in form, the effect would be very mischievous.': Howley to Earl Grey, 15 March 1831, DUL, GRE/B9A/7/6.
[159] Donald Cameron, Circular from SPCK Warwick and Kineton District Committee, 29 December 1830, Warwickshire RO, DR0362/108/1.
[160] SPCK Lewes District Committee minute book, 6 January 1831, CUL, SPCK.MS A38/11, p. 431.

altogether exempt from such a pernicious evil'.[161] On closer inspection, it was found that '[i]n one parish alone (Colton) have any Infidel Publications been discovered & these confined to one individual & to the writings of Cobbett.'[162] Even in Bristol, the scene of anti-clerical rioting late in 1831, the situation was not as bleak as might have been expected:

> [A]ltho' the Committee of this District have received intimation of the clandestine sale of blasphemous & infidel publications in some parts of this City, & even of the existence of an Association formed for the prosecution of these vile & pernicious purposes, yet they do not conceive that any prominent exertions have been made by the Enemies of our Religion in furtherance of their fearful object.[163]

Accordingly, the subscriptions raised for the 1830 anti-infidelity committee's exertions were considerably smaller than those raised from 1819 to 1823, amounting to only around £1,320 by July 1831. Aside from the circulation of new cheap tracts, the committee's principal contribution was a recommendation that the SPCK should intensify its efforts in and around London, 'by means of District Committees, Parochial Lending Libraries, and local Depositories of its Books and Tracts.' Significantly, it felt constrained by its limited remit.[164] While it may have seemed as if blasphemy was the great issue confronting the Church in 1819, by 1832 a more complex issue was perceived, namely the tendency of the popular press to launch forth 'fresh vehicles of ribaldry, of sedition, and of hostility to the established church ... almost daily', as the standing committee complained in 1832. 300,000 cheap magazines were being issued weekly, of which none was 'conducted upon the principle of supporting the Established Religion of the Land.' In consequence of this consideration, the second anti-infidelity campaign was effectively supplanted by a

[161] SPCK Furness District Committee minute book, 13 January 1831, CUL, SPCK.MS A38/6.
[162] John Barton to William Parker and E. J. Burrow, 17 January 1831, ibid.
[163] SPCK Bristol District Committee minute book, 17 January 1831, CUL, SPCK.MS A38/2.
[164] SPCK General Meetings minute book, 5 July 1831, CUL, SPCK.MS A1/40, pp. 183-7.

newly constituted 'General Literature and Education Committee' in May 1832.[165] Several months earlier, at the suggestion of Lord Kenyon, the society began to renew its longstanding efforts to circulate anti-Catholic tracts, signalling a further departure from its previous fixation with irreligion.[166]

The remit of the General Literature and Education Committee represented a drastic deviation from the SPCK's ordinary operations. It was thought that 'vigorous and extraordinary efforts should be made for obtaining and securing to those interests which have always been the special objects of the Society's care, some portion at least of the increasing influence of the Press.' The committee 'were instructed not to confine their operations to such works as would come strictly within the meaning of the words, "*Christian knowledge*", but to extend them to any branch of Literature which they might consider useful in promoting, directly or indirectly, the great designs of the Society.' This was to include religious tracts, schoolbooks, historical works, biographies, '*Scientific works* with a decided bias towards Divine Revelation' and a '*Weekly Magazine* of useful and interesting knowledge, with the same leaning towards Religion and the Church of England that would mark the rest of the publications'.[167] Of these branches of literature, the new committee was most successful in the publication of a weekly magazine entitled *The Saturday Magazine*. This weekly miscellany, mostly containing articles of historical or scientific interest, was intended to rival the secular *Penny Magazine* published by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, and was first printed in July 1832.[168]

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[165] Ibid., 21 May 1832, pp. 283-91; Varley, *Van Mildert*, 102.
[166] SPCK Standing Committee minute book, 2 January 1832, CUL, SPCK.MS A5/6, pp. 225-6; SPCK General Meetings minute book, 3 January 1832, CUL, SPCK.MS A1/40, p. 239. See also SPCK AR (1836), 20-21.
[167] SPCK General Literature and Education Committee minute book, 5 June 1833, CUL, SPCK.MS A15/1.
[168] *Saturday Magazine*, 7 July 1832; A. Fyfe, *Science and Salvation: Evangelical Popular Science Publishing in Victorian Britain* (Chicago, IL, 2004), 48-9, 85-9; R. Ashton, *Victorian Bloomsbury* (New Haven, CT, 2012), 69-70.

The SPCK received frequent complaints that the *Saturday Magazine* was too sophisticated for its intended readership.[169] But those who made these complaints appear to have underestimated the capacities of literate labourers, many of whom had now been educated at National Schools. By 1833, 80,000 copies of the *Saturday Magazine* were circulated weekly, and it was second only to the *Penny Magazine* in its circulation.[170] The Lewes committee stated that 'the Saturday Magazine & other Publications of the Committee of General Literature & Education are well calculated to effect, & are effecting much good by supplying the educated Poor with combined Instruction & Amusement at the cheapest possible rate.' Such publications had 'in many Parishes pre-occupied the ground which would have been otherwise left open to the Trash in the name of Literature which is too often carried to the Cottager's Door by itinerant Vendors of cheap Sedition, Infidelity & Blasphemy, & in others has happily diminished, if it has not altogether superseded the Sale of such dangerous publications.'[171] In 1844, it was claimed that as a result of the circulation of the *Saturday Magazine*, 'the obnoxious publications fell into contempt' while it had been 'the means of conveying light into dark places, of purifying the streams and invigorating the sources of knowledge, and of conducting the inquiring mind through Nature up to Nature's God.'[172]

A Broader Anglican Print Culture?

Though central to the Anglican press throughout this period, the SPCK was far from being the sole means whereby Anglican principles were conveyed to the literate English public. Besides the SPCK, there were three main components of the early

[169] SPCK General Literature and Education Committee minute book, 9 January 1833, CUL, SPCK.MS A15/1, p. 66; 10 April 1833, p. 100; Charles Empson to John Hodgson, 14 March 1833, Northumberland Arch., SANT/BEQ/18/11/8/178-9.
[170] SPCK General Literature and Education Committee minute book, 5 June 1833, CUL, SPCK.MS A15/1.
[171] SPCK Lewes District Committee minute book, 4 July 1833, CUL, SPCK.MS A38/11, p. 468.
[172] *The Saturday Magazine*, 24 (1844), vi.

nineteenth-century Anglican press: publishers, periodicals and newspapers. While the agendas of each Anglican publication enterprise varied according to circumstance, it is possible to identify unifying characteristics which arguably formed a broader Anglican print culture. The constituent parts of this phenomenon will be described and analysed in this section. From this analysis, it is evident that the proliferation of printed material during this period could operate as much in favour of Anglican interests as against them. Anglican publications, whether produced by laymen or clergymen, functioned as a crucial conduit of clerical agency.

As the official publisher to the SPCK from 1765 to 1836, the London publishing house of Rivington's was the Anglican publisher *par excellence*. Successive generations of the Rivington family had been publishing and selling religious literature in St Paul's Churchyard since 1711, and during the period under discussion six male Rivingtons worked for the firm at various points.[173] In 1819 the firm acquired further premises at the more fashionable address of Waterloo Place.[174] A catalogue from 1821 shows the breadth of their publications, which included sermons, theological works, periodicals, histories, schoolbooks, 'Religious and Moral Tracts' (both SPCK and non-SPCK) and pamphlets.[175] According to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, Rivington's was 'uniformly patronized by the Episcopal Bench, and the higher order of the Clergy; innumerable, therefore, are the valuable works on theology and ecclesiastical affairs, that have been published at their expense, or under their auspices.'[176] The firm also had committed lay patrons, such as Sir James Allan Park, a judge and notable supporter of the SPCK and National Society.[177] The religious function of Rivington's accorded with the family's own inclinations. Francis Rivington (d. 1822) was described as having a 'sincere and

[173] S. Rivington, *The Publishing Family of Rivington* (London, 1919), xvi, 3-4.
[174] Ibid., 102-3.
[175] [F. C. Rivington and J. Rivington], *A Catalogue of Books in Various Branches of Literature; including a Large Collection of Sermons, and a copious List of Religious and Moral Tracts; also of Single Sermons and Pamphlets published during the Years 1817, 1818, 1819 & 1820* (London, 1821).
[176] *Gentleman's Magazine*, June 1831, 570.
[177] Rivington, *Publishing Family of Rivington*, 103.

unaffected piety', while Charles Rivington (d. 1831) aspired towards 'strict moral conduct, founded on the soundest religious principles'.[178] This outlook affected their attitude to literature that was critical of the status quo. When in 1831 Whig clergyman Edward Hull sent the firm a work criticising tithes entitled *The Institution and Abuse of Ecclesiastical Property*, 'Rivington refused it as soon as he read the title.'[179]

However, the Rivingtons were not mere ideologues, publishing homiletic literature as an act of piety, but also men of business. In 1820, they opened a second-hand bookshop in the Strand, but this was soon closed when it proved unprofitable.[180] When Whittaker's correspondence with the Jesuits of Stonyhurst was published by Rivington's in 1829, Charles Rivington was concerned to agree a price and print run that would ensure a profit.[181] However, Whittaker's associate W. G. Rhind complained of the tardiness of Rivington's in sending out copies of the work and advertisements: 'the fact is Booksellers feel no interest in these matters[;] like a steam engine, they go a stop when told, but are not self acting.'[182] Attempts to secure the publication of sermons could be a similarly frustrating process for clergymen. In 1830, Charles Goddard, Archdeacon of Lincoln, wrote that he found 'both Rivington & Hatchard so unwilling to print at their own risque [sic] a single sermon … & I can so little afford to print it at my own expense with the enormous charges Booksellers make for advertising etc etc that I must abandon it.'[183]

The mention of Hatchard calls to attention another important player in the Anglican press of this period. The outstandingly successful business of John Hatchard, bookseller and publisher in Piccadilly from 1797, has conventionally been

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[178] *Gentleman's Magazine*, October 1822, 375; June 1831, 570.
[179] Edward Hull to Lord Suffield, 12 April 1832, Norfolk RO, GTN/5/9/10/3/2. Cf. F. Knight, *The Nineteenth-century Church and English Society* (Cambridge, 1995), 151.
[180] Rivington, *Publishing Family of Rivington*, 105-7.
[181] Charles Rivington to John William Whittaker, 4 December 1829, WP(B).
[182] W. G. Rhind to John William Whittaker, 6 December 1829, WP(B). Cf. [John Hume Spry] to Norris, 5 December 1817, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 789, f. 90. See also above, 46.
[183] Charles Goddard to John Kaye, 17 June 1830, Lincolnshire Arch., DIOC/COR/B/5/15. Cf. Rivington, *Publishing Family of Rivington*, 102.

associated with the Evangelical 'party' within the Church of England.[184] While it is true that Hatchard was the publisher of choice for the 'Clapham Sect', his business's religious appeal was much broader than James Laver's description of it as 'a kind of clearing house of the whole [Evangelical] Movement' implies.[185] Hatchard's earliest major publishing success was a political pamphlet entitled *Reform or Ruin* by John Bowdler, a prominent SPCK and National Society supporter who was highly critical of Evangelicalism.[186] Hatchard himself was also a subscriber to the National Society, and published numerous Anglican sermons and charges.[187] Many such publications were jointly sold by Rivington and Hatchard, while in the 1830s Hatchard's clientele included the Duke of Wellington and W. E. Gladstone.[188] As an 1810 catalogue shows, what really distinguished Hatchard's from Rivington's was its eclectic stock, which went far beyond religious literature.[189] Additionally, Hatchard's catered for a more socially elite milieu than Rivington's, whose premises in St Paul's Churchyard and SPCK connections lent it a far more comprehensive character.[190] Nevertheless, Hatchard's success as a bookseller was an important foundation for the dominance of Anglican publishing.

It lies beyond the scope of this chapter to embark on an exhaustive survey of Anglican publishers across England, but the two university presses cannot be overlooked. The copyright for printing the Authorised Version of the Bible and the

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[184] J. Laver, *Hatchards of Piccadilly 1797-1947: One Hundred and Fifty Years of Bookselling* (London, 1947), 11-13; L. Howsam, *Cheap Bibles: Nineteenth-Century Publishing and the British and Foreign Bible Society* (Cambridge, 1991), 152; D. Fallon, 'Piccadilly Booksellers and Conservative Sociability' in K. Gilmartin (ed.), *Sociable Places: Locating Culture in Romantic-Period Britain* (Cambridge, 2017), 85-8.
[185] Laver, *Hatchards*, 13.
[186] Ibid., 12.; [T. Bowdler], *Memoir of the Life of John Bowdler, Esq., to which is added, Some Account of the late Thomas Bowdler, Esq. Editor of the Family Shakspeare* (London, 1825), 177-86, 247.
[187] NS AR (1814), 'Benefactors and Annual Subscribers'; Laver, *Hatchards*, 16.
[188] *British Critic*, November 1811, 524, 535-6; July 1827, 188, 215; January 1831, 206; April 1832, 375; January 1834, 237; Laver, *Hatchards*, 20-22.
[189] [J. Hatchard], *A Catalogue of Books, Ancient and Modern, including Part of a Library of a Gentleman of Distinction lately deceased* (London, 1810).
[190] John Henry Newman to J. W. Bowden, 5 June 1834, in LDN, IV, 264; Laver, *Hatchards*, 20-23; Fallon, 'Piccadilly Booksellers', 85.

Book of Common Prayer was, then as now, vested by the Crown in the monarch's printer and the university presses of Oxford and Cambridge. The provision of bibles and prayer books to the Bible Society and the SPCK constituted the most lucrative line of business for both university presses throughout this period. Accordingly, the number of such volumes produced rose very significantly and their price fell.[191] Additionally, both university presses published numerous Anglican sermons and theological works, primarily for a scholarly readership.[192]

Besides powerful Anglican publishing interests, there also existed a plethora of periodicals with a distinctively Anglican slant. This had not been the case at the outset of the nineteenth century. Though established with the support of the Hutchinsonian clergyman William Jones and the editorship of Robert Nares, a chaplain to the Duke of York, the *British Critic* (first published 1793) in its first guise did not satisfy 'orthodox' Anglican opinion, displaying as it did a tolerance for Unitarians as well as questioning the necessity of episcopal ordination. The *Orthodox Churchman's Magazine*, as its title implied, was more 'orthodox' in outlook but only lasted from 1801 to 1808.[193] In 1809, the tide began to turn with the establishment of the *Quarterly Review*, a publication initially intended as a Canningite 'liberal Tory' response to the Whig *Edinburgh Review*, the circulation of which it soon exceeded.[194] The founders of this influential journal appealed to 'the friends of rational piety', by which was meant adherents of normative, non-Evangelical Anglicanism. Despite a certain reticence to enter into religious controversy, the *Quarterly Review* was perceived as an effective tool for Anglican interests, and carried a significant number of articles by clergymen like Edward

[191] D. McKitterick, *A History of Cambridge University Press, Volume 2: Scholarship and Commerce 1698-1872* (Cambridge, 1998), 269-80, 303-25; A. Flanders and S. Colcough, 'The Bible Press' in S. Eliot (ed.), *The History of Oxford University Press, Volume II: 1780 to 1896* (Oxford, 2014), 357-402.
[192] McKitterick, *Cambridge University Press*, 320; M. Ledger-Lomas, 'Theology, Divinity and Sermons' in Eliot, *Oxford University Press*, 403-34.
[193] Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 193-4.
[194] Ibid., 18-19; J. B. Cutmore, *Contributors to the Quarterly Review: A History, 1809-25* (London, 2008), 1-19.

Copleston, future Bishop of Llandaff, as well as devout laymen like Robert Southey.[195] Charles Lloyd, Bishop of Oxford, credited it with having brought about a sea change in public opinion: 'When the [*Edinburgh Review*] had forestalled the market, & had occupied the whole public mind for many years, the Quarterly being conducted with talent stemmed the torrent and gradually restored order and sound opinions.'[196]

Two further periodicals, both originating among the 'Hackney Phalanx' and published by Rivington's, served to forward Anglican concerns: the new series of the *British Critic* and the *Christian Remembrancer*. The former was acquired by Watson and Norris in 1813 with a view to preventing 'the only decidedly Church review which has not entirely lost its reputation from falling to the ground and in the further hope of restoring it to the rank of a first rate publication'.[197] Among its editors were future bishops Van Mildert of Durham and Middleton of Calcutta, and, according to Phillpotts in 1832, it had 'few readers except among the clergy.'[198] The *Christian Remembrancer*, first published in 1819, was partially intended by Norris to direct the attention of the clergy away from their previous periodical of choice, the *Gentleman's Magazine*.[199] Edited by SPCK and National Society stalwart Frederick Iremonger, the purpose of the *Remembrancer* was 'to maintain the character and pretensions of the Establishment, upon popular arguments'.[200] With its reports of

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[195] S. Bennett, 'Catholic Emancipation, the "Quarterly Review," and Britain's Constitutional Revolution', *Victorian Studies*, 12 (1969), 283-304; J. B. Cutmore, 'A Plurality of Voices in the *Quarterly Review*' in idem. (ed.), *Conservatism and the Quarterly Review: A Critical Analysis* (London, 2007), 75, 81; B. Hilton, '"Sardonic Grins" and "Paranoid Politics": Religion, Economics, and Public Policy in the *Quarterly Review*' in ibid., 47-56.
[196] Charles Lloyd to Norris, 16 April 1828, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 789, f. 167.
[197] Norris to Sidmouth, 21 December 1813, Devon Heritage Centre, 152M/C1813/OE.
[198] S. A. Skinner, 'The British Critic: Newman and Mozley, Oakeley and Ward' in S. J. Brown, P. B. Nockles and J. Pereiro (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Oxford Movement* (Oxford, 2017), 290; Henry Phillpotts to John Wilson Croker, 6 December 1832, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 353, f. 11.
[199] Churton, *Joshua Watson*, 156.
[200] F. E. Mineka, *The Dissidence of Dissent: The Monthly Repository, 1806-1838, under the Editorship of Robert Aspland, W. J. Fox, R. H. Horne & Leigh Hunt with a Chapter on Religious Periodicals, 1700-1825* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1944), 59.

SPCK and National Society meetings, preferments and ordinations, the *Remembrancer* became a semi-official organ of the Church hierarchy. In 1827, George Marriott wrote to Bishop Burgess that 'Bishop Blomfield has espoused that Review warmly … and a proper spirit pervades it.'[201]

Yet the genuine effects of any periodical were limited, given their elite readership.[202] Hence, in an era during which the Church was more than ever concerned to influence the masses, newspapers represented an essential tool. Bishop Lloyd, after hymning the *Quarterly Review*, acknowledged the instrumentality of newspapers: 'So too the John Bull & the Standard, each in its own way, served to shew that a strong & determined resistance from one party would be as powerful & effective as the assault of the other.'[203] The publication of newspapers was an area in which the Church laboured under certain disadvantages, especially during the Queen Caroline Affair. The majority of the London newspapers, and most prominently *The Times*, supported the Whigs and tended towards anti-clericalism.[204] For refusing to take services in a workhouse where a pro-Caroline banner was displayed in 1821, Rotherhithe curate Robert Jones was, as he complained to Sidmouth, subjected to the full venom of the London press. A letter of complaint he had written to the churchwardens, was sent by them to 'Wooler, who in his British Gazette has emptied all his vials of Jacobinism & irreligion upon its Author. Both my letter and that of the Churchwardens have also been inserted by the latter in The Old Times & Public Ledger, & thence copied into most of the Sunday Papers, where of course I am vilified without measure or mercy.'[205] In a vitriolic letter to the Archdeacon of Rochester, an anonymous radical stated, 'Examine the "Times" paper of this week

[201] George Wharton Marriott to Thomas Burgess, 6 February 1827, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 137, f. 86.
[202] J. L. Altholz, *The Religious Press in Britain, 1760-1900* (New York, 1989), 11.
[203] Lloyd to Norris, 16 April 1828, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 789, f. 167.
[204] Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 16-17.
[205] Robert Jones to Sidmouth, 16 January 1821, The National Archives, HO 44/7, f. 57.

and the "Examiner" of next Sunday, and you'll see some good remarks on you and your friends' conduct.'[206]

However, the Queen Caroline Affair also initiated an Anglican counter-attack which severely dented the Whig dominance of the national press. As Lloyd hinted, the publication from December 1820 of the Sunday newspaper *John Bull*, edited by the humourist Theodore Hook (brother of the Archdeacon of Huntingdon), represented a decisive turning point. *John Bull* lambasted Queen Caroline and her supporters, and was widely believed to have turned public opinion against the Queen.[207] Yet it also developed an uncompromisingly Anglican religious agenda, attacking Evangelicals, Roman Catholics and Latitudinarians alike.[208] This agenda extended to support for the SPCK, whose tracts it defended as 'patrimonial relics of former piety' produced by 'men of *principle*, not like the religionists of the present day, mere creatures of *impulse*.' It further questioned the motives of Evangelical SPCK members: 'The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge is still coldly

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[206] [William Epps ?] to John Law, [1820], The National Archives, HO 33/2, f. 205. Following a parliamentary debate on the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in 1828, Bishop Copleston complained that though the 'ecclesiastical speakers were heard with the most silent attention … in the Times paper … there is no representation whatever of their sentiments – while the tedious, incoherent, motley harangue of Lord Holland occupies several columns.': Edward Copleston to Bruce Knight, 18 April 1828, in R. L. Brown (ed.), *The Letters of Edward Copleston, Bishop of Llandaff, 1828-1849* (Cardiff, 2003), 63. In 1831, during the Reform crisis, Charles Greville wrote, 'The press strain every nerve to produce excitement, and the "Times" has begun an assault on the bishops, whom it has marked out for vengeance and defamation for having voted against the Bill.': Diary of Charles Greville, 14 October 1831, in C. C. F. Greville, *The Greville Memoirs 1814-1860*, ed. L. Strachey and R. Fulford (8 vols., London, 1938), II, 208.

[207] Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 26; W. F. Newton Dunn, *The Man who was John Bull: The Biography of Theodore Edward Hook 1778-1841* (London, 1996), 117-44.

[208] Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 207, 209, 213, 220, 222-3, 242. Josef Altholz claims that *John Bull* was 'a "Church newspaper" but too scurrilous and political to be called a religious newspaper.': Altholz, *Religious Press*, 23. But this may be a false distinction. Sir James Allan Park, the judge and dedicated patron of Rivington's, wrote to George Marriott, a magistrate of a similar persuasion, in 1825: 'Who has written that capital article respecting the Episcopal Ch[urch] of Scotland in last Monday's John Bull? Art *thou* the man?': James Allan Park to Marriott, [1825], Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 140, f. 36. This, together with Bishop Lloyd's acknowledgement of the newspaper's role, seems to indicate that *John Bull* was not beneath the notice of the same elite Anglican readership which sustained the *Christian Remembrancer* and the *British Critic*.

supported by some of the Evangelicals for prudence sake, and because they hope to get the management of it – which God in his mercy forbid! – into their own hands.'[209] In 1834, an editorial asserted that '[t]he great mass of the people, including an immense majority of the education and intelligence of the country, is attached to the Church of England, and truly estimates the blessings of a system which … combines, in a degree unknown to any other age or country, the blessings of universal toleration, with a scriptural purity of discipline and doctrine.'[210] *John Bull* claimed to represent this Anglican majority, and hence adopted a populist tone.

Together with another Tory publication *The Age*, *John Bull* was the 'most successful of all Sunday newspapers of whatever political stripe in the 1820s.'[211] From 1827, it was joined by the daily *Standard*, which became 'the leading ultra publication in the United Kingdom'.[212] Founded in opposition to Canning's ministry, the *Standard* professed 'English and Protestant principles and inflexible integrity and resolution in maintaining them'.[213] It inveighed against Catholic emancipation until 1829 and championed the Conservative party in the 1830s.[214] Two London newspapers with lower circulations, the *St James's Chronicle* and the *Morning Post*, towed similar lines.[215] The former was an outlet for the influential anti-Catholic letters of George Stanley Faber, while the latter frequently contained anonymous letters on political topics from George Griffin Stonestreet, a fervently Tory chaplain

[209] *John Bull*, 19 January 1829, 22.
[210] Ibid., 3 March 1834, 69.
[211] Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 17-18. Lord Lowther claimed in 1821 that *John Bull* was 'read in all the public-houses': A. Aspinall, *Politics and the Press c. 1780-1850* (London, 1949), 29. However, its circulation had declined by the 1830s: J. J. Sack, 'Wellington and the Tory Press' in N. Gash (ed.), *Wellington: Studies in the Military and Political Career of the First Duke of Wellington* (Manchester, 1990), 163.
[212] Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 246.
[213] D. Griffiths, *Plant here the Standard* (London, 1996), 42.
[214] Ibid., 44-54.
[215] Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 151, 216. Francis Rivington wrote in 1833, 'the only Newspapers which are not ministerial & have any circulation are the Morning Post, St James Chronicle & Standard': Francis Rivington to John Henry Newman, 24 July 1833, in L. N. Crumb, 'Publishing the Oxford Movement: Francis Rivington's Letters to Newman', *Publishing History*, 28 (1990), 7.

to the Duke of York.[216] By the early 1830s, there were strong indications that the Anglican counter-attack begun among the London newspapers was spreading to the provinces. In 1831, the clergyman George Gleig suggested to the Duke of Wellington that 'a subscription should be quietly set on foot for the purpose of establishing at least one Tory newspaper in every county.' In his own county of Kent, he attempted 'to obtain the command of even *one* paper, but I have found the proprietors stubborn, because the Tories as usual seem afraid to speak their sentiments.'[217] Greater success attended the efforts of Northamptonshire rector Francis Litchfield, who was instrumental in the publication and writing of the *Northampton Herald*. This newspaper was established in the aftermath of the Tory defeat in the general election of 1831 to counter the pro-reform *Northampton Mercury*. Under Litchfield's guidance, the *Herald* became a stern advocate of Anglican exclusivity, proclaiming, 'For the King, the Church and the Farmer we are prepared to brave every breeze and battle – with them we stand – with them we fall!'[218]

However, while Toryism predominated among the clergy, the increasing junction between Anglicanism and the press was not a uniquely Tory phenomenon. Bishop Bathurst had a friendly rapport with Richard Mackenzie Bacon, the editor of the Whig *Norwich Mercury*, a newspaper which he admired for its 'good sense, and liberal principles'. In 1827, the bishop sent Bacon a pro-emancipation 'Appeal to the People of England' by a Roman Catholic named Wise, and paid for its insertion in

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[216] G. S. Faber, *The Rev. G. S. Faber's Four Letters to the Editor of "The St. James's Chronicle," on Catholic Emancipation* (London, 1829); album of George Griffin Stonestreet, East Sussex RO, ACC 10959/1/1/1. On Faber's letters, see Thomas Rennell to Norris, 12 March [1829], Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 789, ff. 186-7; George Stanley Faber to Burgess, 23 June 1829, Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 135, ff. 28-29a; John William Whittaker to Sarah Whittaker, 29 April 1835, WP(B); John William Whittaker to Sarah Whittaker, 18 July 1836, ibid.

[217] A. Aspinall (ed.), *Three Early Nineteenth Century Diaries* (London, 1952), lix-lx.

[218] R. L. Greenall, 'Parson as a Man of Affairs: The Rev. Francis Litchfield of Farthinghoe (1792-1876)', *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, 8:2 (1990-91), 125-6. In Bristol, the editors of two newspapers printed SPCK reports in their publications 'gratuitously': SPCK Bristol District Committee minute book, 10 June 1830, CUL, SPCK.MS A38/2.

the *Mercury*.[219] Cambridge clergyman Peter Fraser wrote editorials for *The Times*, while the propensity of Whig clergymen to express their sentiments in letters to newspapers has already been noted.[220] Nevertheless, there can little doubt that the expansion of Anglican interests in the newspaper press operated largely in favour of Tory and Conservative causes. In 1833, William Palmer, then engaged in setting up his new 'Association', suggested to the editor of the *Standard* 'a series of articles designed to encourage the friends of the Church, by showing the numerical weakness of the Dissenters'. This was 'most admirably pursued by the Standard, and its good effects became instantly visible'. Palmer considered the *Standard* of 1834 to be 'our steady friend and coadjutor in defence of the Church'.[221] In the same year, the leaking to the *Standard*, possibly by Phillpotts, of King William IV's speech to the bishops expressing apprehensions about Whig Church reforms further aided Conservative feeling.[222] Whittaker, alluding to newspaper philippics against the alleged efforts of Whig statesmen to '*repeal [the] Reformation*', perceived 'symptoms of public indignation rising against them & if it come to a head, they will soon have more work on their hands than they will find pleasant.'[223]

[219] Henry Bathurst to Richard Mackenzie Bacon, 16 January 1827, CUL, MS Add 6241, f. 3; Henry Bathurst to Henry Bathurst Jr, 8 February 1827, in H. Bathurst, *Memoirs of the Late Dr. Henry Bathurst, Lord Bishop of Norwich* (2 vols., London, 1837), I, 247-8. See also Henry Bathurst to Bacon, 29 December 1819, CUL, MS Add 6243, f. 20; Henry Bathurst to Bacon, 17 January 1820, ibid., f. 16; Henry Bathurst to Bacon, 23 January 1820, ibid., f. 19.
[220] S. R. C. Harratt, 'A Tory Anglican Hegemony Misrepresented: Clergy, Politics and the People in the Diocese of Lincoln, c. 1770-1830' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Lancaster, 1997), 51; see above, 155.
[221] W. Palmer, *A Narrative of Events connected with the Publication of the Tracts for the Times, with Reflections on Existing Tendencies to Romanism, and on the Present Duties and Prospects of Members of the Church* (Oxford, 1843), 16.
[222] *The Standard*, 29 May 1834, 2; Diary of Greville, 1 June 1834, III, 43; 29 August 1835, III, 247.
[223] John William Whittaker to Sarah Whittaker, 29 April 1835, WP(B).

The Disintegration of Anglican Publishing

By the mid-1830s, the position of the Church of England vis-à-vis the press was immeasurably stronger than at the beginning of the century. The SPCK had established networks for distributing its publications in every locality, and responded energetically to the threats it perceived from radical and irreligious literature. Such growth had been mirrored in the development of strong Anglican interests in the publishing industry, periodicals and newspapers. In many respects, therefore, the Anglican portion of the English press reflected the Church's unity and strength. According to Palmer, none of the publications which he and his fellow promoters of the 'Association' encouraged 'alluded to party differences', while Hugh James Rose, in founding a new Anglican periodical named the *British Magazine*, 'resolved to keep clear of questions which had divided the Church'.[224] Yet, by the end of the decade, such unanimity of purpose had collapsed. This section will examine the causes and effects of this dramatic process of Anglican unravelling, which was eventually to undermine many of the Anglican successes described throughout this study.

As mentioned above, the SPCK was not the exclusive province of the self-consciously 'Orthodox', and encompassed a sizeable minority of Evangelicals among its membership. All tracts published by the society had to be approved at general meetings, lending the society a quasi-democratic character which could subvert episcopal and parliamentary jurisdiction over the Church. This led to the occasional skirmish, most notably in 1816 when a tract on baptismal regeneration was censored by a ballot engineered by the Evangelical clergyman Daniel Wilson.[225] Such tactics were redoubled in the 1830s, apparently under the leadership of the Evangelical Vicar of Harrow, J. W. Cunningham. The SPCK thereby became a prime forum for debate and dissension akin to a limited degree to the then dormant

[224] Palmer, *Narrative*, 18.
[225] Pereiro, *'Ethos' and the Oxford Movement*, 74.

convocations. The Tractarian A. P. Perceval complained to John Henry Newman, then the secretary of the SPCK's Oxford committee, in March 1834 that the society was 'exercising the functions of a Synod by putting Bishops and clergy on their trial for heterodoxy and heresy … they are now actually sitting in judgement upon Bishop Gray of Bristol and the late Bishop Heber'.[226] This roused Newman to action, and he replied that he intended to be 'at the Meeting of the S.P.C.K., on April 8, and have told Rose, as I now tell you, you may do what you will with me in the way of voting etc.'[227] In letters to John Keble, Newman stated that this meeting would be 'a most important one' with '[m]embers … going up on both sides', and that he expected 'a battle'.[228] He further complained that '[t]he state of the Christian Knowledge Society … is the most miserable of our miseries', as '[t]he Evangelicals have taken advantage of the difficulties of the Church to push; but we do not mean to be beaten.'[229] Encouraging like-minded clergy to attend, he joked that he was pushing for 'the final expulsion of the Bishop of London, the Rector of St Giles and Co and of Mr Cunningham, etc, etc'.[230] In the event, the meeting of 8 April was in Newman's opinion 'very sad' and 'most ludicrous', and a newspaper report noted the presence of 'the *new men*'.[231] According to J. F. Christie:

> The clamour, noise, want of deference [to the] chair stamping and haranguing [were] indescribable. One fellow got up and declared that in all the tracts of the Society there was not one word of that blessed doctrine which our Reformers taught. However the Evangelicals were beat dreadfully, not so bad however but that they will try again.[232]

[226] Arthur Philip Perceval to Newman, 10 March 1834, in LDN, IV, 200.
[227] Perceval to Newman, 18 March 1834, in ibid., 213.
[228] Newman to John Keble, 24 March 1834, in ibid., 217; Newman to Keble, [27 March 1834], in ibid., 218.
[229] Newman to R. F. Wilson, 31 March 1834, in ibid., 227. Cf. Newman to Bowden, 1 April 1834, in ibid., 228.
[230] Newman to R. F. Wilson, 3 April 1834, in ibid., 232.
[231] Newman to Keble, c. 9 April 1834, in ibid., 234.
[232] Ibid., 235.

Having showed resistance to Evangelical influence within the SPCK, the Tractarians' next line of attack was against the efforts of the General Literature and Education Committee. In the opinion of certain Tractarians, the publications of this committee were barely less objectionable than the 'infidelity' they sought to counteract.[233] The Tractarians managed to stall a grant of £2,000 to the committee, but 'were beaten in the S.P.C.K. monthly meeting by about 2 to 1' in July, when the General Literature and Education Committee was 'permanently joined to the Society'.[234] Such partisan wrangling persisted and reached fever pitch in 1836, when arguments concerning the content of the SPCK's tracts spilled over into a pamphlet war.[235] William Rowe Lyall, Archdeacon of Colchester, despaired at Evangelical critiques of the tracts in a letter to Norris:

> Why, if Cunningham & his clique had entered into a cunning conspiracy to induce the Standing Committee to "write themselves down 'Asses'" they could not have devised a more subtle invitation. […] [I]f I were sure that they did know what they mean, & meant what their actions would imply, I would take my name from the Stand[in]g Committee, to-morrow, and if I thought their sentiments were those of the Society itself, I would leave it & give to the Bible Soc[iet]y as the least objectionable of the two.[236]

From an Evangelical point of view, however, there seemed to be a concerted attempt to undermine the non-partisan Anglican foundations upon which the SPCK had

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[233] Henry Wilberforce to Newman, 25 March 1834, in ibid., 222; Newman to Bowden, 5 June 1834, in ibid., 264.
[234] Bowden to Newman, 4 June 1834, in ibid., 265; Newman to Mozley, 11 July 1834, in ibid., 301.
[235] E. Bickersteth, *Remarks on the Progress of Popery, including Observations on its True Character, the Causes of its Present Progress, its Final Fall, and the Difficulties and Duties of Protestants in these Days* (London, 1836); W. B. Barter, *Observations on a Work by Mr. Bickersteth, entitled, "Remarks on the Progress of Popery;" and an Answer to his Attack on the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge* (London, 1836); [C. J. Heathcote], *A Means for the Termination of the Present Contests in the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; respectfully suggested to the Members of that Society, by one of their Number* (London, 1836); H. Robinson et al., *Two Memorials addressed to the General Meeting of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, on the alleged Corrupt Character of some of its Publications* (London, 1837).
[236] William Rowe Lyall to Norris, 27 February [1836], Bodl., MS. Eng. lett. c. 790, ff. 65-6.

hitherto rested. Hastings Robinson complained to Whittaker in 1837, 'It is rather too bad that the Sprys, & Roses, & Norris's, & Watsons of the age should be the sole depositories of Christian doctrine as far as the Society is concerned, and that the body of clergy throughout the country, who wish to derive benefit from the society for their schools &c. should be compelled to bow the knee to such doctrines as an ever varying committee may think fit to set up.'[237] Such fears were exacerbated in 1838, when the Tractarians succeeded in wresting control of the tracts from the SPCK's membership and placing it in the hands of a committee appointed by bishops. This resulted in the publication of tracts of a more Tractarian character, but the censoring of these by non-Tractarians on the committee led to further recriminations.[238] The SPCK as it existed at the outset of the Victorian period was a body which satisfied neither Tractarian nor Evangelical opinion, but which had become indelibly associated with both factions. Consequently, its position as a broad focus for Anglican activity was compromised.

If the SPCK was weakened by the Oxford Movement, so too was Rivington's. Newman initially had little regard for this, or indeed any other, Anglican publishing house of note. Writing of a plan to publish patristic literature with Rivington's, he cautioned Edward Pusey against making it seem like 'speculation': 'Men in business are ready enough to catch up the idea, that godliness is literally gain'.[239] He also described one of the younger Rivingtons as 'a great fop.'[240] Yet Newman saw an instrumental value in Rivington's. The *Tracts for the Times* were printed in Oxford but distributed from December 1833 by London agent John Turrill, who quickly entered into negotiations with Rivington for their wider circulation.[241] In April 1834, Newman reported to Keble that 'Rivington has taken the Tracts on himself', calling

[237] Hastings Robinson to John William Whittaker, 23 October 1837, WP(C), 13/16.
[238] Pereiro, *'Ethos' and the Oxford Movement*, 21-5.
[239] Newman to E. B. Pusey, 6 September 1836, in LDN, V, 350.
[240] Newman to Bowden, 10 June 1834, in LDN, IV, 266.
[241] Crumb, 'Publishing the Oxford Movement', 5; Newman, 'Fragmentary Diary', 6 December 1833, in LDN, IV, 11-12; Newman to Bowden, 9 February 1834, in ibid., 189; Newman to Henry Wilberforce, 10 March 1834, in ibid., 201; Newman to Bowden, 1 April 1834, in ibid., 228.

Turrill 'a stupid, puzzle headed churl.'[242] By this time, Rivington's status as the SPCK's official publisher was looking precarious. A motion was proposed in June to terminate Rivington's contract and employ an in-house agent, thereby saving £2,000.[243] This pleased Newman, who speculated as to 'whether his taking our Tracts in hand has anything to do with this prospect.' Newman envisaged using Rivington's to compete with the SPCK: 'We would write and get written all sorts of popular Tracts, if there was so good an opening for them.' He asked John Bowden to suggest to one of the Rivingtons, if he was 'cast off', 'the possibility (without anything of an improper collision with the Society) of making our Tracts serve his purpose instead.'[244] This clearly did not seem like a lucrative opportunity for Rivington, who in November gave Newman 'something like warning that he might give up perhaps the Tracts'.[245] The Rivingtons nonetheless persevered, even though in July 1835 Francis Rivington (d. 1885) stated that 'the sale is much too limited to afford us any prospect of continuing the Series without loss, scarcely 200 copies being sold in the Numbers.'[246] The tracts sold better from 1836, the year in which Rivington's ceased to be SPCK bookseller.[247] This, combined with Francis Rivington's personal sympathy for the Tractarians' aims, ensured that Rivington's continued to publish the series until its discontinuation in 1841.[248]

Having in some measure taken control of the SPCK and Rivington's, Newman set his sights on *The British Critic*. Dissatisfied with the normative Anglican approach of its 'Hackney Phalanx' contributors and having established a working relationship with Rivington's, Newman successfully negotiated the inclusion of several

[242] Newman to Keble, c. 9 April 1834, in ibid., 234.
[243] Bowden to Newman, 4 June 1834, in ibid., 265.
[244] Newman to Bowden, 5 June 1834, in ibid., 264.
[245] Newman to Bowden, 6 November 1834, in ibid., 351.
[246] Francis Rivington to Newman, 30 July 1835, in Crumb, 'Publishing the Oxford Movement', 10.
[247] Francis Rivington to Newman, 6 January 1836, in ibid., 11; Francis Rivington to Newman, 11 January 1836, in ibid., 11; Francis Rivington to Newman, 2 May 1836, in ibid., 11; Francis Rivington to Newman, 21 September 1836, in ibid., 12.
[248] Ibid., 6; Rivington, *Publishing Family of Rivington*, 129-32.

Tractarian contributions to the periodical in 1835. The following year, the *British Critic* was running at a loss of around £100 each quarter, and Newman saw his opportunity to seize it. He first offered to supply articles gratis, which, as Simon Skinner writes, 'introduced a Trojan horse into Hackney'. By various stratagems, which included striking and writing articles critical of the Ecclesiastical Commission, Newman managed to have himself installed as editor in January 1838. The *British Critic* was henceforth a Tractarian journal until it was discontinued, possibly at Bishop Blomfield's behest, in 1843.[249] While to his supporters Newman's successive coups inaugurated a new era of Anglican renewal, to those who had been engaged in forwarding this object for the past four decades such upheaval was dispiriting. Edward Churton wrote of the *British Critic*, 'It was a pity that, after a good half-century, during which the trim old vessel had been successfully piloted by Nares and Van Mildert, caulked and careered by Charles Lloyd, manned by an orthodox crew … it should have come to such an unworthy close.'[250] Rivington's quickly lost its reputation as the foremost Anglican publisher, and, with Newman's conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1845, was 'left high and dry – some of its friends gone over to the Church of Rome, others looking askance at them on account of their former connections, the Broad Church party going to other publishers, the Evangelical of course avoiding the name of Rivington, and the Rivingtons themselves deeply affected, personally, by the shock of events.'[251]

Conclusion

The emergence of Tractarianism and factionalism more generally was therefore a destructive coda to what had been a period of immense success for the SPCK and the Anglican press. For most of the early nineteenth century, the SPCK provided a focus for Anglican bible, prayer book and tract distribution activity and the co-ordination

[249] Skinner, 'The British Critic', 291-9.
[250] Churton, *Joshua Watson*, 274-5.
[251] Rivington, *Publishing Family of Rivington*, 142.

of efforts to promote normative Anglicanism through its expanding organisational structure. Though it came to avoid political controversy, the society nevertheless put forward a strong critique of irreligious and anti-clerical tendencies in the popular press and, in its tracts and the *Saturday Magazine*, produced formidable counterweights to such trends. That such efforts met a genuine demand and benefited the Church in practical terms was clear. For instance, it was reported from Ewell in Surrey in 1818 that 'the purchase of Prayer Books, at the Committee's prices, has been followed by more regular attendance on the service of the Church'.[252] For all his alarm at the Tractarian takeover of the society, Hastings Robinson believed it to be 'capable of being made a very great spiritual blessing to the country, which indeed, as far as the distribution of the S[cripture]s & Liturgy is concerned, she long has been'.[253] Bishop Burgess's biographer, John Harford, wrote that the foundation of the SPCK's district committees had resulted in 'a vast augmentation in its income, in its energies, and in the extent and efficiency of its exertions'.[254] Rivington's was crucial to such success and, through its own independent publishing business, provided further printed materials to increase the Church's influence over the press and literate public. Additionally, Hatchard's, the *Quarterly Review*, *John Bull* and the *Standard* became conspicuous elements of an English print culture that, to a far greater degree than at the beginning of the period, was saturated with Anglicanism.

The existence of a strong and unitary Anglican press was a basic precondition for the active agency of the Church of England described throughout this study. The functioning of National Schools was dependent in no small part on a constant and inexpensive supply of books from the SPCK, while print was frequently the medium whereby clergymen made effective interventions in political debate. Moreover, the provision of cheap bibles and prayer books was necessary to the maintenance of the tradition of lay Anglican piety described in the first chapter, which, as the responses of district committees to the SPCK's anti-infidelity campaigns demonstrated, proved

[252] SPCK AR (1818), 38.
[253] Robinson to John William Whittaker, 9 May 1837, WP(C), 13/15.
[254] Harford, *Thomas Burgess*, 274.

very resilient. Yet if print was a connecting thread in the Church of England's engagement with the society around it, it also became a potential source of fragmentation. The publication of the *Tracts for the Times* and Newman's editorship of the *British Critic* introduced a note of discord which had been hitherto absent from Anglican publishing, with the exception of the SPCK's debates concerning its tracts. This prefigured the division of the Church of England into rigid and conflicting parties, a process that was all but complete by the 1850s.[255] The degree to which this development diminished the SPCK's influence during the remainder of the nineteenth century remains to be investigated.

Unsurprisingly, Victorian assessments presented the old order of things with condescension. To publisher Charles Knight, the SPCK had been 'the representative of what was supine, timid, and time-serving in the Church … Over their collection of dry bones the orthodox publisher, Messrs. Rivington, presided.'[256] Gladstone marvelled at how the SPCK had once had the temerity to put forth 'scandalous' tracts critical of Evangelical preaching.[257] Yet the SPCK and Rivington's were crucial components of a distinctively Anglican print culture that had garnered a large measure of support and influence. In the absence of detailed studies of the work of the SPCK and other successful Anglican publishing ventures, historians' ruling assumption has long been that secular utilitarianism and Evangelicalism were, as George Kitson Clark put it, '[t]he typical creeds of the early nineteenth century.'[258] This assumption cannot be sustained in light of the evidence presented here of the vast extent of normative Anglican publishing activity throughout England. As with politics and education, the Church of England was a primary agent in the development of print culture, and thus shaped much of its character.

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[255] J. Wolffe, 'British and European Anglicanism' in R. Strong (ed.), *The Oxford History of Anglicanism, Volume III: Partisan Anglicanism and its Global Expansion, 1829-c. 1914* (Oxford, 2017), 25-8.
[256] C. Knight, *Passages of a Working Life during Half a Century with a Prelude of Early Reminiscences* (3 vols., London, 1864), I, 241-2.
[257] W. E. Gladstone, 'The Evangelical Movement: Its Parentage, Progress and Issue' in idem., *Gleanings of Past Years, 1843-78* (7 vols., 1879), VII, 216-8.
[258] G. Kitson Clark, *An Expanding Society: Britain 1830-1900* (Cambridge, 1967), 34.

Conclusion

In a charge of 1842, Bishop Blomfield stated, 'It will not, I think, be denied, that the Church of this country, in point of energy, power, and usefulness, is, by God's goodness, at this moment progressive'.[1] As this study has shown, Blomfield's observation was well founded. Despite political and social circumstances which were at times adverse, the Church of England dramatically increased its external activity and influence throughout England from the beginning of the nineteenth century to Queen Victoria's accession. Assisted by a coherent and unitary worldview, the Church maintained the allegiance of the majority of the English population, enabling the clergy to exercise considerable agency in developing new and extensive means to further Anglican interests. Blomfield continued, 'strange, that at this very time complaints should be uttered of [the Church] wearing the chains of an ignoble thraldom'.[2] This paradox lies at the heart of Anglican history. Overton expressed it thus in 1894: 'When the Church was doing next to nothing, it was popular enough; when it began to do something, it was unpopular because it was supposed to be doing nothing.'[3]

A fuller acknowledgment that the Church of England 'began to do something' must alter the way in pre-Victorian English society is understood. Many historians, most notably Halévy, have speculated as to why England did not experience a revolution in an age of revolutions, often attributing a significant role to Evangelicals and Methodists in preserving stability.[4] But if a religious explanation is sought for

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[1] C. J. Blomfield, *A Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of London at the Visitation in October, MDCCCXLII* (London, 1843), 38.
[2] Ibid., 38.
[3] J. H. Overton, *The English Church in the Nineteenth Century (1800-1833)* (London, 1894), 10. At the same time, Overton believed that 'this odium against the Church' was 'more apparent than real, or, at any rate … it only existed among a small but noisy body in certain great centres, and did not reflect the general feeling throughout the country, which, when at last called forth, showed itself most strongly in favour of the National Church.': ibid., 14.
[4] E. Halévy, *England in 1815*, tr. E. I. Watkin and D. A. Barker (New York, 1961), 424-8; E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (3rd edn, Harmondsworth, 1980), 888-99; I. R. Christie, *Stress and Stability in Late Eighteenth-century Britain:*

England's avoidance of revolution, this would seem to lie not in the comparatively small phenomena of Evangelicalism and Methodism, but in the unstinting assertiveness of its established church. Anglican boldness was all the more remarkable given the constraints and limitations which were placed upon the Church. As has been shown throughout this thesis, clerical interventions were often intended as a response to a multitude of perceived or actual threats to the Church and frequently met with a negative response from laypeople. The early nineteenth century was a time in which the number of dissenters was increasing, when radical critiques of the Church were gaining currency in many quarters and some statesmen were becoming less willing to accede to the clergy's wishes. At every stage, the normative, SPCK-supporting mainstream of the Anglican clergy met with significant opposition, be it from anti-clerical peers and MPs, the Whig and radical press, the British and Foreign School Society or the Bible Society. In consequence, the considerable agency of the Church of England was exercised in a constant tension with competing societal forces. Moreover, the Church could place limited reliance on its legal position in maintaining and extending its reach over society.

This state of affairs made the active efforts of the clergy paramount to Anglican success. This thesis has traced the varieties, stages and extent of such efforts and has contended that they should be seen not simply as reactionary ripostes to socio-political developments which clergymen deprecated but rather as manifestations, however constrained, of the agency of the clergy in effecting the transformations in English society which they desired. The varieties of clerical activity described here encompassed the direct involvement of the bishops in the legislative process in Parliament, the less direct involvement of the clergy in the affairs of the House of Commons through their multifarious political campaigning and the extensive influence which clergymen came to exert in the fields of education and print culture

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Reflections on the British Avoidance of Revolution (Oxford, 1986), 183-214; E. Royle, *Revolutionary Britannia?: Reflections on the Threat of Revolution in Britain, 1789-1848* (Manchester, 2000), 164-8; J. Neuheiser, *Crown, Church and Constitution: Popular Conservatism in England, 1815-1867*, tr. J. W. Neuheiser (New York, 2016), 1-5, 264.

through associational means. Though further research is required to determine this, to these in all probability can be added the church building movement, the Church's part in the Napoleonic Wars and its participation in local government. Such clerical activities were changeable according to local circumstance, but not so much that they cannot be considered together. Clergymen usually had the same aim of entrenching Anglican dominance in view and consistently evinced a conviction that only by a sustained intervention in political life could the Church of England succeed. The result of their activities was a church which, more than ever, impinged upon public affairs. This constituted nothing short of the politicisation of the Church of England.

Contemplating the prominent facets of this process, a series of turning points may be traced. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Church exhibited a static reliance on existing patronage networks, established law and custom and the venerable but ineffective Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) in the projection of its political and social influence. Though the process of politicisation which followed was gradual and in many instances inconsistent, five particular events during the period under discussion marked significant stages in the process. In 1807, the dismissal of Lord Grenville on account of the Catholic question brought the SPCK determinedly into the political arena and cemented the breach between Grenville's coalition and his client-bishops on this issue which was to be so formative in the development of episcopal politics. In 1810, the initiatives of forming the National Society and SPCK district committees began to assume a practical form, affording the Church powerful extra-diocesan structures for its attempts to influence society at large. The Queen Caroline Affair of 1820, with its loyal addresses and clerical demonstrations, helped to equip the clergy for the political struggles which lay ahead. Furthermore, the sense of betrayal felt by many clergy at the passage of Catholic emancipation by Wellington's government in 1829 encouraged them to rely to a greater extent on their own political efforts. Finally, the formation of Peel's Conservative party with widespread clerical support in 1834 formalised many modes of Anglican politicisation which had emerged over the past three decades. While external pressures had an inescapable impact on these stages of

politicisation, clergy collectively determined its form at each stage. Hence the Church was not simply a victim of events, as many accounts have tended to suggest. Clergymen actively intervened in ways which influenced the course of events.

Indeed, the politicisation of the Church of England materially altered the nature of English society. If a lack of revolution was arguably – though by no means demonstrably – the most important outcome of the clergy's increasing influence, the measurable outcomes of the Church's exercise of political agency should not escape our attention. In the House of Lords, unequal patronage relationships were broken by the bishops' increasing unwillingness to do the bidding of statesmen, while the bench's continual invocation of public opinion contributed to the widening of the parliamentary sphere. This had a significant effect on the question of Catholic emancipation in particular, even if the outcome of this debate was not as the majority of clergy had wished. In local political life, the clergy proved just as disruptive, rebelling against patronage networks and embracing new modes of participation through petitions, political societies and preaching. This was an important factor in the establishment of the Conservative party and the confessional conflicts which persisted in England throughout the nineteenth century. In other spheres the Church's influence was more decisive. Through the National Society and the SPCK, the clergy did more than any other profession to extend and mould working-class education and literacy. National Schools effectively made up a national education system long before the state embarked on such a project, while the Anglican press of which the SPCK was the focal point reached a growing readership. In many respects, the nature of English society was changing because of the Church, not in spite of it.

As Jeremy Gregory has recently conjectured, 'Perhaps a more accurate description of the Church's situation is not as a central plank of a confessional state so much as an Anglican hegemony which was buttressed by its establishment status.'[5] Establishment was an essential component of Anglicanism; it allowed the

[5] J. Gregory, 'Introduction' in idem. (ed.), *The Oxford History of Anglicanism, Volume II: Establishment and Empire, 1662-1829* (Oxford, 2017), 8.

Church to exert a degree of political and social influence which would otherwise have been impossible. But the Church's dominance was based on more than this. In the early nineteenth century, clergymen took an independent initiative in extending their influence in a multiplicity of spheres. Mark Goldie's category of 'voluntary Anglicans', while in some respects helpful, does not convey the full import of such activity, for it implies that Anglicanism was a form of Georgian voluntary sociability like any other.[6] But, in reality, the Church of England had unique advantages as an institution. Its legal privileges, when combined with an enormous base of lay support and powerful new modes of socio-political activism, enabled it to shape English society in the orderly, loyal and conservative fashion clergymen tended to prefer.

This re-interpretation has significant implications that extend well beyond the study of English ecclesiastical history. The purpose of this account is not to offer yet another critique of the Victorian view of the long eighteenth-century Church, nor to divert attention from the many blemishes which the Church undoubtedly exhibited. Neither has it been concerned with the struggles of Anglican 'parties', however these are defined. Rather, its purpose is to suggest that the early nineteenth-century Church of England was an institution with agency beyond its church and parsonage walls, and that any broader study of English society in this period should, at the very least, take account of this influence. Of course, Anglican influence was in competition with other, occasionally more powerful, political, social and religious influences. The clergy seldom achieved all or most of what they set out to achieve. But in this particular respect the Church of England was no different from its rivals. The key consideration is that the Church of England was not displaced by the socio-political changes of the early nineteenth century; on the contrary, it expanded its engagement with various areas of English life in which its influence had been hitherto relatively insignificant. Consequently, the theory of a 'constitutional revolution' of 1828-32 resulting in the displacement of the Church's political role to which historians still have recourse does not offer an adequate framework for understanding this era.

[6] M. Goldie, 'Voluntary Anglicans', *Historical Journal*, 46 (2003), 977-90.

As the last chapter hinted, the partisanship of the Tractarians was one of the main factors which hindered the maintenance of Anglican influence after 1837. The bitter controversy surrounding Tractarianism would, alongside other factors, have the effect of dividing the Church into rigid parties unable to agree common beliefs or aims. This drained popular support for the Church; the inadvertent contribution of Tractarianism to the secularisation of England is a process which still awaits full investigation. But, so far as the early nineteenth century is concerned, the Church was successful in garnering an increasing measure of popularity and influence. This success was due to clergy who believed, as Chester curate George Pearson wrote in 1820, that 'if by exertion good can be done it is impossible to sit still.'[7] In politics, education and print, the effects of their exertions were abundantly evident.

[7] George Pearson to John William Whittaker, 18 January 1820, WP(C), 12/4.

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KIR 28: Papers of John Kirby.

PAR 236/43/1: SPCK Hastings District Committee minute book.

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