

**STRATEGY, MISSION AND PEOPLE IN A RURAL DIOCESE
A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE DIOCESE OF GLOUCESTER
1863-1923**

BRIAN KNIGHT

A thesis submitted to
the University of Gloucestershire
in accordance with the requirements of the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities

August, 2002

Strategy, Mission and People in a Rural Diocese
A critical examination of the Diocese of Gloucester
1863-1923

Abstract

A study of the relationship between the people of Gloucestershire and the Church of England diocese of Gloucester under two bishops, Charles John Ellicott and Edgar Charles Sumner Gibson who presided over a mainly rural diocese, predominantly of small parishes with populations under 2,000.

Drawing largely on reports and statistics from individual parishes, the study recalls an era in which the class structure was a dominant factor. The framework of the diocese, with its small villages, many of them presided over by a squire, helped to perpetuate a quasi-feudal system which made sharp distinctions between leaders and led. It is shown how for most of this period Church leaders deliberately chose to ally themselves with the power and influence of the wealthy and cultured levels of society and ostensibly to further their interests. The consequence was that they failed to understand and alienated a large proportion of the lower orders, who were effectively excluded from any involvement in the Church's affairs.

Both bishops over-estimated the influence of the Church on the general population but with the twentieth century came the realisation that the working man and women of all classes had qualities which could be adapted to the Church's service and a wider lay involvement was strongly encouraged. The Great War proved to be a major catalyst, both in breaking up class barriers and in confirming the estrangement of the masses from the Church and its message. Throughout the period, the Church's efficiency was impaired by having to operate through an archaic parochial system in which a large proportion of rural priests were considered by their bishops to display a high level of lethargy.

Published work on this topic has hitherto been confined to some of the major industrial cities. This study offers an insight into an area of the country and at a period which has not previously received much attention.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I must first express my thanks to the University of Gloucestershire for the grant of the bursary that made this thesis possible. Within the University, the Reverend Dr Nigel Scotland, my First Supervisor, has guided me during all the stages of its preparation and the staff of the Research Administration Office have been helpful throughout. I am also grateful to my Second Supervisor, the Right Reverend Dr Geoffrey Rowell, the Bishop in Europe, for his strong words of encouragement.

I have also to thank the staffs of the Gloucestershire Record Office which houses the Diocesan Archives, the Gloucestershire Collection at Gloucester Central Library, Cheltenham Central Library and the Librarian of Pusey House, Oxford for their ready assistance in obtaining the materials on which this study has been based.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. In discussing Bishop Ellicott, I have drawn on some of the sources used in my dissertation submitted as part of an M.A. degree awarded jointly by the Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education and Trinity College, Bristol in 1995. Otherwise, no part of the thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in the thesis are my own and in no way represent those of the University.

Signed

.....Date 27-02-03

Strategy, Mission and People in a Rural Diocese
A critical examination of the Diocese of Gloucester
1863-1923

Contents

Introduction	6
Chapter 1	
The County, the Diocese and the Parish Churches	11
The Origins of Gloucester and Bristol Dioceses	13
Population Increases	16
Diocesan Boundaries	18
Ratio of Parishes to People	22
Church Accommodation	26
Church Patronage	28
Parish Church Building	37
The "Triple Division" of the County	55
The County at Work	61
Clergy Income	64
Appendix : Church Accommodation Compared to Population in Selected Parishes	74
Chapter 2	
Two Bishops In Contrast	76
The Office of Bishop	78
Bishop Ellicott	80
Bishop Gibson	104
Chapter 3	
The Clergy of the Diocese	117
The Country Clergy	119
Long-Serving Clergy	132
The Churchmanship of the Clergy	142
The Clergy and Nonconformity	148
Intra-Church Disputes and Divisions	155
Clergy Qualifications	159
Appendix 1: Ordinations in the Diocese of Gloucester and Bristol, 1869-1896	165
Appendix 2: Ordinations in the Diocese of Gloucester, 1897-1922	166
Chapter 4	
A Question of Social Class	167
A Classless Church?	168
Politics and the Clergy	177
Freemasonry and the Church	180
The Failings and Vices of Society	183
The Diocesan Conference	192
Parishioners and Parish Priests	202
Case Study1: Wick Rissington	212
Case Study 2: Cheltenham Parish Church	214
Changing Attitudes	217
Appendix A: The Bishops' Nominees to the Diocesan Conference	224
Appendix B.1: Prayer Book Revision; Gloucester Diocese Response	225
Appendix B 2: Prayer Book Revision; Manchester Diocese Response	226

Chapter 5	
A Woman's Place: In Society and the Church	227
The Implications of Scripture	228
The Missionary Women	228
Women, Marriage and the Home	230
Women in the Congregation	238
Females and Confirmations	240
Church Care for Young Women	244
The Importance of Clergy Families	246
Women and Sunday Schools	248
District Visitors	253
'Rescue and Preventive' Work	255
Women as Spiritual Leaders	257
Appendix: Annual Confirmation Tables	
1: Diocese of Gloucester and Bristol, 1868-1896	260
.2: Diocese of Gloucester, 1897-1922	261
Chapter 6	
A Mission to Gloucester	262
Parochial Missions and Mission Rooms	263
The Diocesan Mission is Established	264
The Diocesan Mission at Work	268
The National Mission of 1916	272
Appendix: A Summary of Gloucester Diocesan Mission Activities, 1895-1914	277
Chapter 7	
The Level of Church Commitment by the Laity of Gloucester Diocese in 1921	278
Introduction	279
Rationale and Methodology	280
Discussion	285
Details	290
Conclusion	303
Chapter 8	
The Diocese and the First World War	304
The Clergy and the War	305
The Church Lads' Brigade	309
The War's Effect on the Diocese	310
The Reasons Why	319
The Church and the Fighting Men	320
The Fighting Men and the Church	325
Chapter 9	
Conclusion	334
Bibliography	345

ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS

Plates

1 Gloucester Cathedral and Tewkesbury Abbey	14
2 Two Cotswold Vicarages	33
3 Cotswold "Wool" Churches – 1	38
4 Cotswold "Wool" Churches – 2	39
5 Travel in the Cotswolds	57
6 The Bishops of Gloucester	77
7 Thomas Hodson	118
8 Leading Laymen of the Diocese	169
9 Church Army Van	266

Maps

1 The Diocese of Gloucester Showing the City and the County Towns	12
2 19 th Century Church Building in the Forest of Dean	49

Strategy, Mission and People in a Rural Diocese

A critical examination of the Diocese of Gloucester 1863-1923

Introduction

The history of the Church of England has to be parochialism in the best and literal sense of the word. Generalisations based on a national viewpoint melt into meaningless at parish level. The Church was like a honeycomb, built up of individual parishes, all seeming alike from a distance, but each distinct on closer examination. The truism that local regional histories lie at the heart of national history could be no better exemplified than in this book.¹

This is a study of the parishes which comprised the diocese of Gloucester in the later Victorian and the early twentieth century which questions whether the religious, political and social milieu in which the Church of England operated enriched or vitiated its work. Three limitations, of date, location and denomination, have been imposed on the study. The dates chosen are not arbitrary but mark the oversight of the diocese of two bishops, Charles John Ellicott (1863-1905) and Edgar Charles Sumner Gibson (1905-1922).² Bishop Ellicott's episcopate was of such an unusual duration that it was felt important to discover whether he had so stamped his own personality on the diocese during that period as to render it impervious to change. The extension of the study into the period of Bishop Gibson's supervision also permitted consideration of the relevance to local Church life of developments of major international and national importance. Respectively, these were the War of 1914-1918 and the enfranchisement of women and the extension of male suffrage. In the ecclesiastical sphere, the encouragement of lay

¹ Edward Royle, Department of History, York University, reviewing Frances Knight's *The Nineteenth Century Church and English Society*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995, in *Journal of Regional and Local Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 1996 p.41.

² Bishop Gibson retired at the end of 1922. His successor arrived at Gloucester in the following year. The study has been extended into 1923 so that it encompasses 60 years.

participation in Church government and the introduction of Electoral Rolls as a new measure of Church allegiance were also of major consequence.

The second limitation is that the survey mostly disregards the union of Gloucester diocese with that of its more southerly neighbour of Bristol which lasted from 1836 to 1897, and thus partly intrudes into this work. With certain reservations, 'Gloucester diocese' is treated throughout as though it were always a separate entity. However, an absolute and rigid exclusion of any evidence from the Bristol area was considered to be artificial and impractical. Bishop Ellicott, in dealing with the Ritualists, did not distinguish between their locations and when issues of the day were discussed at the Diocesan Conference, the contributions of the Bristol delegates were often as apposite and important as those from colleagues from the Gloucester archdeaconries. Nevertheless, in the context of this study, Bristol as a major industrial city and its environs were *sui generis*. Many Gloucestershire clergymen gave heartfelt thanks to God that He had not called them to minister in the large cities but in the countryside where they could live and work amidst the glorious manifestations of nature.³ The emphasis therefore has been on the 320 or so parishes, predominantly small, rural and agricultural, which were again separated from Bristol in 1897. Finally, it is emphasised that this is foremost a focus on the Church of England in the area and not on Christianity in general. The Free Churches mostly remain in the shadows, filtered through the opinions of their Anglican brethren, who were usually inclined to dismiss their contribution to the religious picture or, at best, to view them as crypto-Anglicans,⁴ ready to return to their Mother Church when she began to exhibit the marks of holiness. Numerically at least, the

³ See Chapter 1

⁴ Ellicott, C.J., *Progress and Trials*, London, Longman, 1867, pp. 51-52

Roman Catholics of Gloucestershire were of even less account. However many were the problems which they posed to the Established Church at national level, in Gloucestershire they were not numerous enough to cause much concern.

It is submitted that this study covers ground which has not previously been well explored. If there is general agreement that the Victorian Church of England failed to evangelise the masses in the country's large cities,⁵ it seemed pertinent to enquire to what extent it was successful in the rural areas. Frances Knight, as her title implies, confines her work to the nineteenth century. It also concentrates on rural central England, particularly Lincolnshire, and as she points out, she is intentionally "attempting to compensate for what appears to be an overly urban approach in nineteenth century history, which ignores the fact that, until 1850, more people lived in the country than in the town."⁶ James Obelkevich has examined the religious scene in Victorian Lincolnshire⁷ but his study ends approximately where this one begins. Furthermore, if Edward Royle is correct in suggesting that parishes all look different under a microscope, the observation must be equally true of the dioceses in which they are situated. This work is therefore offered as a contribution to the whole picture.

It is divided into an Introduction, eight chapters and a Conclusion. The first chapter discusses the structure of the diocese and its geographical setting, noting particularly the changes in population and the constraints which the geography of certain areas placed upon both normal and church life and how developments in transportation, such as trains, motor vehicles and even the bicycle were able literally to widen the

⁵ Inglis, K.S, *Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963

⁶ Knight, *The Nineteenth Century Church in English Society*, *op. cit.*, p. x.

⁷ Obelkevich, J. *Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey, 1825-1875*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1976

horizons of both priests and people. Then follows an examination of the episcopates of Bishops Ellicott and Gibson, illustrating how their religious predilections impacted upon the diocese. The chapter also points out that, although both were accurately described as 'High Church,' there were nevertheless enough contrasts between their beliefs and actions to indicate the wide interpretation which the term can bear. The chapter also shows that while Ellicott seemed content to leave the structure of the diocese unchanged, his successor grasped the nettle of anomalies in clergy deployment whereby the countryside was relatively well served by clergy to the detriment of the urban areas.

The third chapter looks more closely at the parish priests, what their bishops expected of them and what they achieved. The chapter is closely associated with the next which introduces the laity and, in particular, examines the sources of lay influence and power in Gloucestershire life. Inevitably, this raises the issue of the class structure of contemporary society and the position of the clergy in relation to that structure. There is evidence that, at least at one period, the Gloucestershire clergy were strongly advised that the effectiveness of their ministry required them to ally themselves with the upper and educated classes, with whom they in any case had affinities through ties of education, culture, family and marriage.

The fifth chapter examines the role of women in the diocese and traces how their advancement in the political and educational fields over a half-century was ultimately mirrored by an official recognition of their role as spiritual teachers, within the limits of the historic ministerial orders of the Church. The following chapters investigate the effectiveness of the Church of England in the diocese. One chapter examines the impact of parochial missions and is followed by a profile of the level of church commitment by

the laity in a sample year. The penultimate chapter explores how the diocese responded to the Great War, not simply through the effect upon church activities but in responding to the questions of theology and theodicy which were raised by that conflict.

Although it would not be accurate to state that every parish of the diocese differed from its neighbours, there is sufficient parochial diversity to discourage broad generalisations. For that reason, numerical tables have been introduced into the text whenever it has been felt they provide a more exact expression of the facts. Even so, the data on which most of these have been based are in themselves incomplete. The diocesan archives contain comprehensive parish statistics only from 1903. Before that date, the deposits are fragmentary, providing a somewhat uncertain base on which to take measurements. If the numerical tables mostly appear weighted towards the early twentieth century, this is an inevitable consequence of archive holdings.

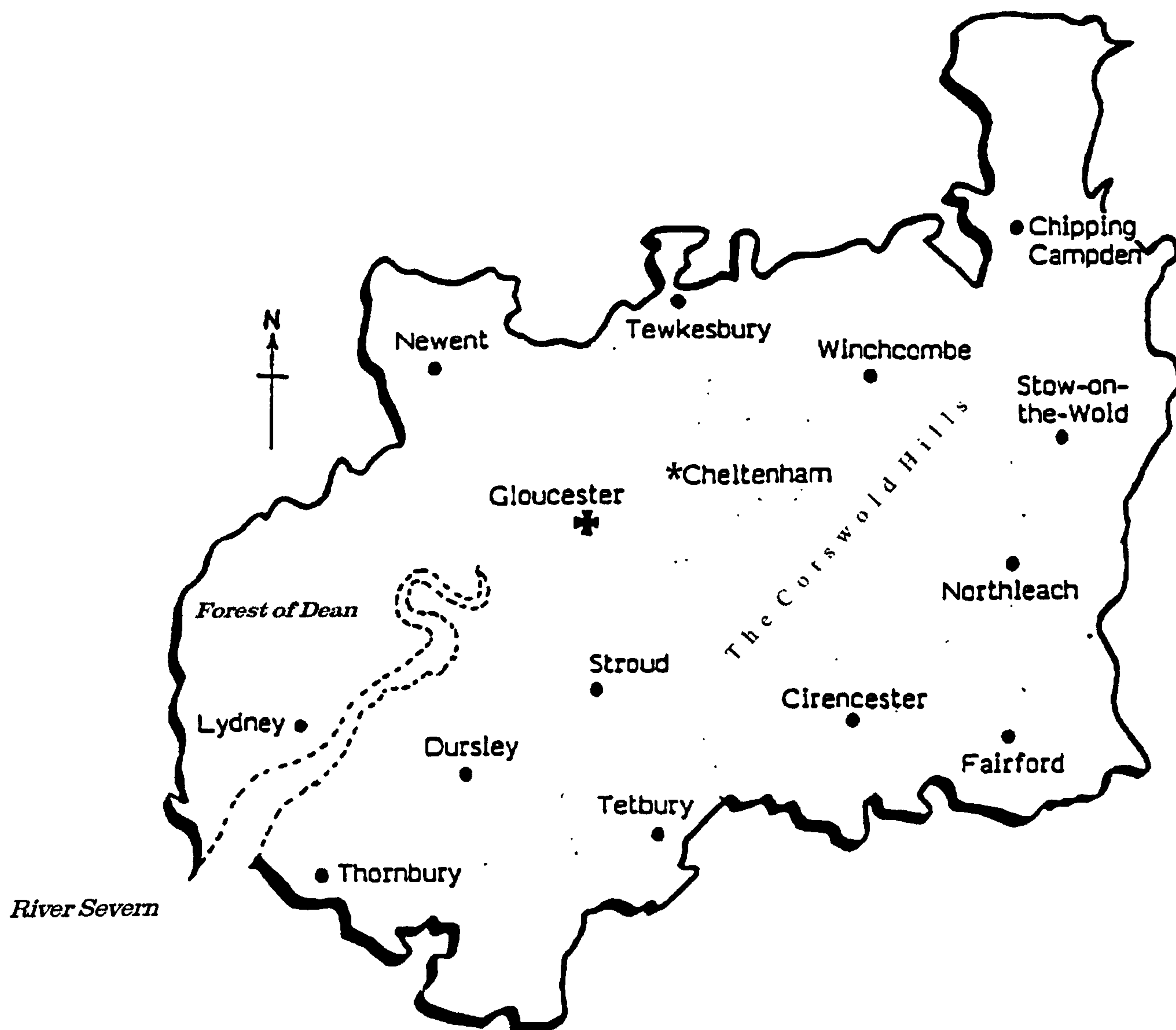
Chapter 1

**The County, the Diocese and
the Parish Churches**

Map 1

The Diocese of Gloucester

showing the City and the County Towns



Edited from a map in the *Diocese of Gloucester Directory, 1999/2000*

The Origins of Gloucester and Bristol Dioceses

The diocese of Gloucester was created in 1541 out of the diocese of Worcester, one of five dioceses newly founded during the English Reformation.¹ The Abbey Church of St Peter at Gloucester was transformed into the Cathedral for the new see and given an additional dedication to “The Holy and Indivisible Trinity.” However, the Forest of Dean area of Gloucestershire was allocated to the Archdeaconry of Hereford where it remained until 1836. In that year, Gloucester diocese was united with its southern neighbour of Bristol, itself a product of the Reformation period. The two dioceses were again separated in 1897.

There was both some geographical and secular justification for the 63-year long ecclesiastical union between Bristol and Gloucester. The city of Bristol was originally part of southern Gloucestershire but in 1373, together with neighbouring areas of Somerset, it was granted the status of a separate county although for administrative purposes its county status was often ignored.² Neither was Bristol unaccustomed to ecclesiastical boundary changes. Throughout the Middle Ages, that part of Bristol north of the River Avon was included in the diocese of Worcester, while the area south of the river was in Bath and Wells diocese. When the diocese of Bristol was formed in 1542 the whole city formed the nucleus of the new diocese which also incorporated a number of parishes in south Gloucestershire, Somerset and

¹ The others were Peterborough and Chester (both 1541) and Bristol and Oxford (both 1542).

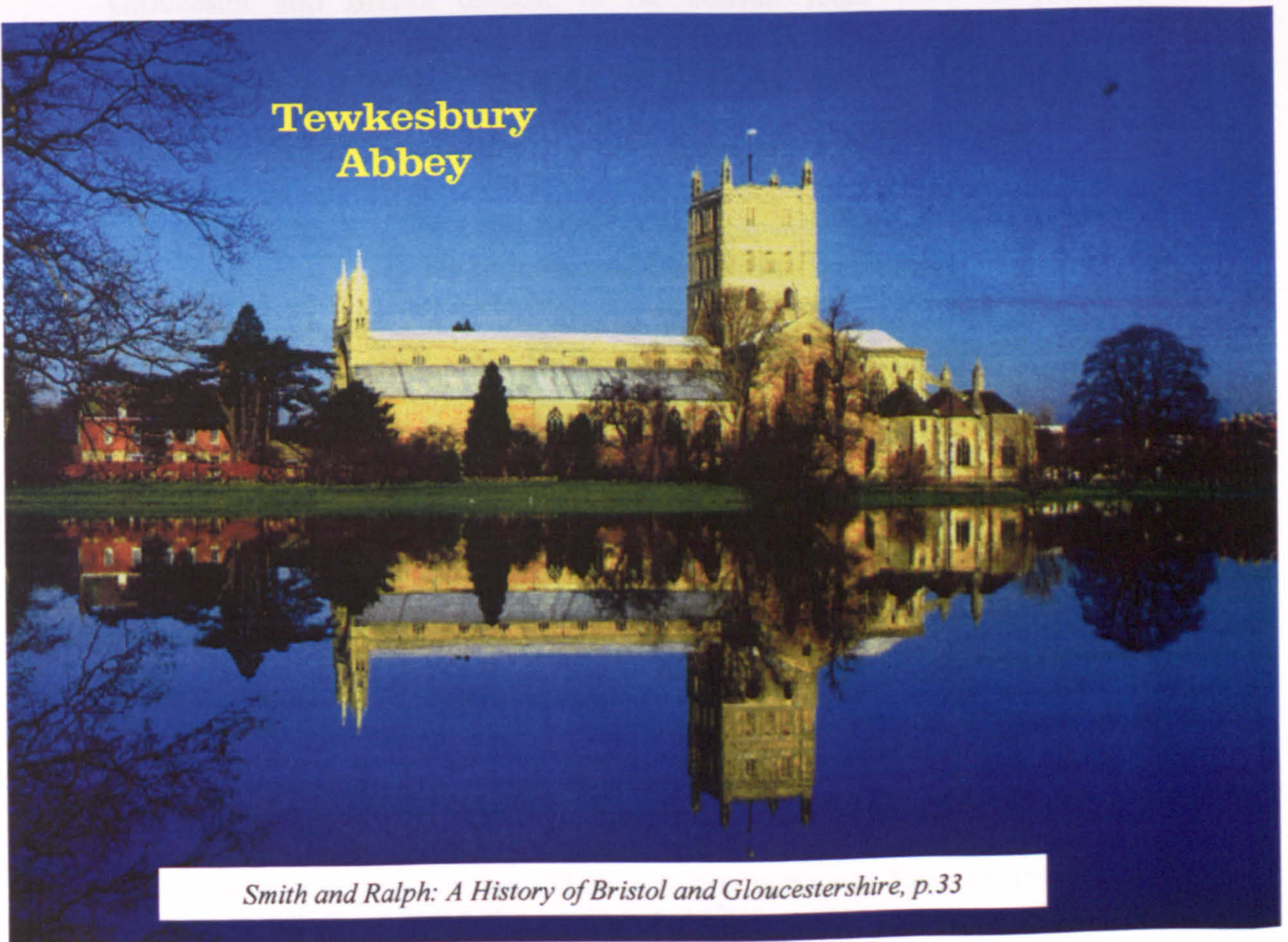
² Smith, B. S. and Ralph, E., *A History of Bristol and Gloucestershire*, Chichester, Phillimore, 1996, p. 13. However, Census Reports for the nineteenth and early twentieth century include Bristol and Clifton under the “Administrative County of Gloucestershire”, and grouped with “West Midland Counties” while the Bedminster area of Bristol is placed with Somerset within the “South-West Counties.”

**Gloucester
Cathedral**



Gloucestershire County Guide, p. 35

**Tewkesbury
Abbey**



Smith and Ralph: A History of Bristol and Gloucestershire, p.33

all of the county of Dorset, an arrangement which has recently been described as “curiously-constituted and administratively-impossible.”³

Further changes to the Bristol diocese came with the union with Gloucester in 1836 when the Dorset parishes were returned to Salisbury diocese and certain deaneries in north Wiltshire transferred from Salisbury to Bristol.⁴ As a result of these changes of diocesan borders, from 1836 to 1897 the combined dioceses of Bristol and Gloucester covered an area centred on the whole of the administrative county of Gloucestershire plus parishes in the neighbouring counties. Most of the latter were in either north Wiltshire or Somerset, but parishes, or parts of parishes, in Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Warwickshire were transferred into or out of the combined diocese from time to time.

The following table shows the distribution of population in the combined Gloucester and Bristol diocese in the census years 1861 to 1891. A notable development is a steady increase in the Wiltshire component, a reflection of the late nineteenth century growth of the town of Swindon.

**Table 1.1 The Diocese of Gloucester and Bristol, 1861 to 1891
Distribution of Population by County**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Glos.</i>	<i>Wilts.</i>	<i>Som.</i>	<i>Warwk.</i>	<i>Herf'd.</i>
1861	568,574	485,770	*82,804	*		
1871	637,028	534,475	69,555	32,843	155	
1881	695,952	572,197	77,867	45,123	103	602
1891	744,757	599,402	89,392	54,506	806	651

5

In 1861, the Somerset and Wiltshire totals were combined

³ Bettey, J., (editor) *Historic Churches and Church Life in Bristol*, Bristol, Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, 2001, p. 105.

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ Figures are from relevant editions of the *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, (an annual publication) viz. 1867, p.67, 1875 p. 2, 1884, p. 50 and 1896, p. 66 respectively. In 1861, the Somerset and Wiltshire totals were combined. There is an error in the total figure for 1881 which, if the sub-totals are correct, should be 695,892, a reduction of 60.

Whatever the strength of the case for combining the two dioceses in 1836, it had lost much of its force by the end of the century. Bishop Gibson, in his first Charge to Gloucester diocese in 1907, declared that the earlier union had been “a false step”⁶ and his predecessor took a similar view. In 1883, Bishop Ellicott described the Act of 1836 which had united Gloucester and Bristol as “a great wrong” to the city of Bristol and to the Church of England⁷ and he was greatly in favour of a return to separation because of his conviction that the combined diocese had become too large for effective supervision.⁸ He said that he “would fain soon see another diocesan Bishop — not a suffragan — taking his portion of the now united dioceses”, while he “might hope to be strong enough to administer efficiently the portion which would remain.”⁹ He was so persuaded of the desirability of smaller dioceses that he advocated a reduction in salaries and lifestyle among the existing episcopate in order to fund their implementation¹⁰ and was willing to set an example by offering a reduction of his personal salary from £5,000 to £4,500 and by a further sum if other bishops did the same.¹¹

Population Increases

The growth of population in the major towns and cities of the diocese during the nineteenth century in itself provided sufficient impetus for separation. The population of the administrative county of Gloucestershire grew from 387,398 in 1831

⁶ Gibson, E.C.S., *The Diocese and the Parishes* (Charge of 1910) Minchin and Gibbs, Gloucester, 1910, p.15

⁷ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1883, p. 16. This was an annual report on the Gloucester and Bristol dioceses from 1868 to 1896 and on the Gloucester diocese from 1897 to 1902. Various publishers.

⁸ In 1889 he told the Diocesan Conference that “a Bishop who could give his whole time to Bristol and the associated deaneries would quicken and promote Church work in a manner much beyond that which is now possible.” *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar* 1890, p. 156

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar* 1887, p. 151, Ellicott, *Spiritual Needs in Country Parishes*, London, S.P.C.K., (1887?) p. 40

¹¹ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar* 1890, p.160

to 634,729 in 1901.¹² Additionally, the development of Swindon (in the Bristol diocese but not in Gloucestershire) as a major railway town resulted in an eighteen-fold increase of population there in the sixty years from 2,459 in 1841 to 44,996 by the end of the century which placed it at about the same level of population as Gloucester and Cheltenham.¹³

Gloucester's population had increased because of its importance as an inland port with access to the Bristol Channel and overseas markets and as a rail junction, linking the Midlands to the West country and to South Wales. During the nineteenth century, the population of Cheltenham outstripped that of Cirencester, previously the second largest town in the county, as it acquired and developed a reputation as a health resort and educational centre.¹⁴ George III's endorsement of the town¹⁵ thereby attracted to it many of the more affluent, cultured and educated elements of society. The wealthy businessman John Dearman Birchall, who brought his family from Leeds to settle at Upton St Leonards in 1868, listed among the major advantages of his new home that it was only eight miles from Cheltenham which promised "good masters" and "more congenial society" than Leeds for his daughter Clara, then six years old.¹⁶ In 1821, Gloucester's population was 9,744 and Cheltenham had 13,396 residents. By 1921, those figures had increased to 51,330 and 48,430 respectively.¹⁷

¹² *Census of England and Wales, County of Gloucester*, London, H.M.S.O., 1902, p.4

¹³ Silto, J., *A Swindon History, 1840-1901* Swindon, privately published, 1981, p. 85

¹⁴ Briggs, A., *Victorian Cities*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1963, p.365 considers Cheltenham's rate of growth in the first half of the nineteenth century (more than eleven-fold from 1801 to 1851) as one of the most remarkable in the country.

¹⁵ George III's decision to spend five weeks in the town with his family in 1788. Smith and Ralph, *A History of Bristol and Gloucestershire*, *op. cit.*, p.101

¹⁶ Verey, D. (editor), *The Diary of a Victorian Squire*, Gloucester, Alan Sutton, 1983, p. 6. For those seeking to improve their position in society, Cheltenham offered teachers not only in academic subjects but in such social accomplishments as callisthenics, dancing, drawing, drill, music, riding and singing. See, for example, *Kelly's Directory of Gloucestershire*, 1897, London, Kelly's Directory Ltd., pp. 82-102

¹⁷ *Victoria County History of Gloucestershire*, Vol. ii., *op.cit.*, pp.171,177.

Neither Gloucester, Cheltenham nor Swindon, however, could compare in population growth with the city of Bristol. Although nineteenth century Bristol was often compared unfavourably with Liverpool in terms of its importance as a port and was subject to periodic depressions in trade,¹⁸ the city could rank among the major industrial cities of the Kingdom. Its population of 137,000 in 1801 had increased to 339,000 in 1851 and to 397,000 in 1901.¹⁹ More significantly, perhaps, as a large Victorian industrial city, Bristol had no real counterpart elsewhere in the diocese. There was, observed a clerical speaker to the Diocesan Conference of 1888, a “vast difference between the Cotswolds and the city of Bristol”²⁰ Contemporaries would also have been well aware that the Theological College which Bishop Ellicott established in 1869,²¹ although located at Gloucester and drawing on many of the city’s resources, existed primarily to provide curates for Bristol.²² After the separation, the number of students at the college declined²³ and it was closed soon afterwards.

Diocesan Boundaries

The decision to separate the two dioceses can be understood in the context of a more general aim within the Church of England towards the end of the nineteenth century to create smaller, more manageable dioceses.²⁴ Owen Chadwick places the separation of Gloucester and Bristol within that context.²⁵ But although population growth was an important factor, the reversion to separate dioceses also owed much to

¹⁸ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress* 1884, p.5. Briggs, *Victorian Cities, op. cit.*, pp.365,366

¹⁹ Cole, G.D.H. and Postgate, R., *The Common People, 1746-1946*, Methuen, London, 1961 edition, p.451. According to Cole and Postgate’s figures, in 1901 Bristol was the ninth largest city in the whole kingdom.

²⁰ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1889.p. 160

²¹ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress* 1869, p.13

²² Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress* 1893. p.9, 1896, p.9

²³ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress* 1897.p.8

²⁴ St Albans and Truro (both 1877), Liverpool (1880), Newcastle (1882), Southwell (1884) and Wakefield (1888) had already come into being and Southwark and Birmingham (both 1905) were to follow.

the influence of local feeling. The loss of distinct diocesan status in 1836 was very unpopular in Bristol and in the succeeding years many attempts were made to reverse the process. In 1861, even before Bishop Ellicott had been appointed to the see, Bristol citizens unsuccessfully petitioned the Queen in Council to restore the Bristol diocese and the movement received fresh impetus in later years, thanks to the energy of John Pilkington Norris, successively a Bristol incumbent, rural dean, canon of the Cathedral and finally Archdeacon of Bristol. It was Norris who persuaded Gladstone to introduce the Bishopric of Bristol Act of 1884 which provided the legal basis for the recreation of the diocese and he instigated the Bristol Bishoprick Fund in the same year to raise money for a new bishop.²⁶ As has been noted above, the venture had the sympathy and support of Bishop Ellicott who paid tribute at the Diocesan Conference of 1889 to the Archdeacon's efforts.²⁷

The principle of seeking to correlate the size of a diocese to the density of population being accepted, the question then arose where its boundaries were to be drawn. In 1887 Bishop Ellicott expressed his conviction that a diocese should be approximately the same size as a county: "We must either facilitate an increase of suffragan Bishops, or call into existence such a number of diocesan Bishops as would rarely leave more than the oversight of a single county to any individual Bishop."²⁸ A year or so later, a Committee of the House of Laymen for the Province of Canterbury agreed on the principle "that as far as possible the Diocese and the County should be co-terminous."²⁹ This axiom was accepted³⁰ by a Committee appointed by the Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Conference to consider an increase of the episcopate

²⁵ Chadwick, O. *The Victorian Church, Part II*, London, Adam and Charles Black, 1970, p. 347

²⁶ Bettey, *op. cit.*, p.203

²⁷ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1890, p. 155

²⁸ Ellicott, *Spiritual Needs in Country Parishes*, *op. cit.*, p. 32. The bishop was much opposed to the use of suffragans.

²⁹ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar* 1890. p. 159

and Bishop Gibson's first Charge to the clergy of Gloucester in 1907 expressed his satisfaction that "the diocese is confined to a single county and that the cathedral city is also the civic centre."³¹

That statement was not strictly accurate. The diocese of Gloucester, as reconstituted in 1897, did not fall precisely within the county boundaries of Gloucestershire because it incorporated a small number of parishes from the neighbouring counties of Wiltshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Herefordshire, a situation which persisted well into the twentieth century.³² In his next Charge to the clergy, in 1910, the bishop acknowledged the presence of these neighbouring parishes and his slightly amended description portrayed the diocese as being "more favourably placed than many. It is (practically) confined to a single county, is of reasonable size, the Cathedral is conveniently situated and there is good railway communication."³³

Probably in order to preserve as much as possible the county/diocese boundary relationship, Gloucester diocese was reluctant to cede to neighbouring dioceses parishes in the county of Gloucestershire. The creation of the new diocese of Coventry in 1918 provided such a challenge. At a meeting of committees appointed by the Bishops of Worcester and Gloucester to consider possible boundary changes, the Worcester team favoured the transfer of nine parishes from Gloucester's Campden deanery to Coventry but the Gloucester committee demurred, advising "very strongly

³⁰ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar* 1890 p. 161

³¹ Gibson, *Standards and Practice*, Gloucester, Minchin and Gibbs, 1907, p. 15. The bishop obviously excluded Bristol from the definition of Gloucestershire but see the following footnote.

³² The *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar* for 1923, p. 33 thus described the extent of the diocese: "The county of Gloucester (excluding the Rural Deaneries of Bristol, Bitton, Stapleton and parts of the parishes of Broughton Poggs, Ilmington, Overbury and Ruardean), the parishes of Marston Meysey, (Wiltshire), parts of the parishes of Welford, and Weston on Avon, (Warwickshire), parts of the parishes of Linton and Lea (Herefordshire) and parts of the parishes of Cutsdean, Chaceley, Aston Magna, Blockley, Evenlode and Honeybourne (Worcestershire)." In the period from 1897 to 1923, some Wiltshire parishes within the Gloucester diocese were administratively incorporated into Gloucestershire county. The inference at the beginning of the above description that Bristol was part of Gloucestershire rather than a county in its own right follows the convention of the Census Reports but is at variance with the statement made by Bishop Gibson.

on keeping civil and ecclesiastical boundaries identical.”³⁴ Their argument was supported by Bishop Gibson who explained in the *Diocesan Magazine* that

If so transferred, the whole district would still remain in the county of Gloucester and for all civil purposes (including school matters) the parishes would still look to Gloucester, and though for some of them Stratford on Avon would certainly be convenient as a local centre, yet I am afraid that they would find this Cathedral city of Coventry less accessible than Gloucester, to which they turn for many other purposes.
35

The proposed transfer did not take place.

Diocesan boundaries were of more than an academic importance because a number of charitable institutions had terms in their charters which precluded giving assistance outside carefully defined areas. As a result, parishes within the diocese but outside the county were at times excluded from some of the benefits enjoyed by their neighbours. For example, the Warneford Ecclesiastical Charity, a Trust for “promoting the building, rebuilding, enlarging and repairing churches, chapels and parsonage houses of the Established Church of England” was restricted to “that part only of the present diocese of Gloucester and Bristol which comprised the ancient diocese of Gloucester immediately prior to its union with the see of Bristol.”³⁶ A related organisation, the Warneford Clerical Trust, set up “for assisting the Widows and Orphans of Necessitous and Deserving Clergymen, also Clergymen and their Families,”³⁷ was restricted to the same area. Similarly, one Sylvanus Lysons of Hempsted, left provision in 1831 (*i.e.* before the union with Bristol) for the poor widows of “clergymen who died incumbent in the diocese of Gloucester and not

³³ Gibson, *The Diocese and the Parish* (Charge of 1910), Minchin and Gibbs, Gloucester, 1910, p.4

³⁴ *Meeting of Archdeacons and Rural Deans*, Gloucester Diocesan Records, (G.D.R.) A8/1, Sept.12 1918.

³⁵ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine* 1918, Minchin and Gibbs, Gloucester, p.115. The magazine was a monthly publication, bound into yearly volumes.

³⁶ *i.e.* the diocese before 1836. *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1864.p. 67

³⁷ *ibid.*, p.68

within the Forest Division”,³⁸ the incorporation of the Forest of Dean into the diocese not having taken place by that date.

The Warneford Trust was prominent throughout the period in assisting Gloucestershire churches and clergy. For instance, it contributed £360 to the restoration of Tewkesbury Abbey at the end of the nineteenth century³⁹ but it was not able to assist a parish such as Sutton under Brailes, Warwickshire which accomplished a complete restoration of the church in 1879 despite, as Bishop Ellicott noted, being “in another county and so separated from many sources of help.”⁴⁰

Ratio of Parishes to People

Figures presented to the Diocesan Conference of 1892⁴¹ showed that in the then combined diocese, some 60 per cent of the parishes were in the Gloucester and Cirencester Archdeaconries, ministering to about 45 percent of the total population. In the Bristol Archdeaconry, the remaining 40 per cent served 55 per cent of the population. The result was that the average size of a Bristol parish (1,910) was nearly twice that of its Gloucester counterpart (1,019). At the split, 176 parishes were allotted to the revived Bristol diocese and 323 to Gloucester.⁴² As part of the settlement, Gloucester acquired 22 more parishes, mainly from the former Bristol deanery of Hawkesbury in the south of the county of Gloucester, whose 19 parishes were transferred *en bloc*. However, as shown below, the new Gloucester diocese continued to have a relatively favourable ratio of parishes to people.

³⁸ *ibid*, p. 71

³⁹ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, August, 1899

⁴⁰ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1879.p. 4

⁴¹ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar* 1893, p.165. The actual figures were: Gloucester and Cirencester - 301 parishes serving 306,588 people; Bristol area - 199 parishes ministering to 380,177 people.

⁴² Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1897, p.1

Table 1.2 Parishes and Populations in Gloucester Diocese 1897-1921

	1897	1901	1911	1921
Population	320,597	320,924	328,779	329,950
Parishes	323	324	319	319

43

Notionally, therefore, the average parish in the Gloucester diocese contained about one thousand people. This was better than what seems to have been a target figure for in 1905 the District Secretary of the Additional Curates Society told a Cotswold audience that “the lowest estimate should be one clergyman to 1,200 people”,⁴⁴ a target which had not been achieved in many parts of the land. By that standard, the diocese of Gloucester was very fortunately situated.

In the following table the parishes of Gloucester diocese have been grouped according to population size, in each Census year.⁴⁵

Table 1.3 Diocese of Gloucester: Number of Parishes per Size of Population

Population Size	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921
Over 10,000	1	1	-	1	1
9,000 to 9,999	-	-	-	-	-
8,000 to 8,999	-	-	1	1	-
7,000 to 7,999	1	1	1	2	2
6,000 to 6,999	1	1	5	3	3
5,000 to 5,999	2	5	4	1	1
4,000 to 4,999	9	7	6	7	11
3,000 to 3,999	7	11	13	13	12
2,000 to 2,999	23	21	12	14	18
1,000 to 1,999	36	38	45	44	42
500 to 999	64	60	58	62	58
100 to 499	157	164	165	159	160
Under 100	13	15	14	11	11
Total	314	324	324	318	319

Clearly, Gloucester was predominantly a diocese of small parishes, the majority of which had a resident incumbent, and in 1905 some 78 per cent of the diocese's

⁴³ Figures are taken from the relevant editions of the *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*.

⁴⁴ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, (monthly publication) March 1905, G.D.R., P317

⁴⁵ The figures for 1881 and 1891 anticipate the subsequent division of the combined diocese and relate to the parishes of Gloucester diocese after 1897. The data for 1861 and 1871 has not been included because the populations of Gloucester and Cheltenham parishes were not then published and to have excluded them from the survey might have distorted the conclusion.

parishes fell within the ratio of one parish per 1,200 people quoted above while between 85 and 87 per cent of parishes had populations of fewer than 2,000.

The distribution of priests to people implied in these statistics could not fail to make an impression on those diocesan clergy whose ministry had been in the larger cities of the country. Archdeacon John Sinclair of Cirencester, who came to the diocese in 1898 as Vicar of Cirencester from the London borough of Fulham, told the Diocesan Conference in 1909 that in Fulham 30 clergy served 150,000 inhabitants, one for every 5,000. Yet from the church tower at Cirencester he could see 14 parishes with a total population of 3,290, ministered to by 15 clergy, one priest for 240 people. His conclusion was that some country parishes were “grossly overmanned” while town suburbs were “grossly undermanned.” How, he asked rhetorically, could one man know or minister to 5,000; was it any “wonder that the Church” was “losing her hold over large masses of people” who were “rapidly lapsing into indifference.” This speech was a prelude to a motion which he then moved “that the best interests of the Church demand that a considerable number of benefices of small population and of not inconvenient extent, should be united with others that are adjacent.”⁴⁶

The motion had the backing of Bishop Gibson. As Vicar and Rural Dean of Leeds from 1895 to 1905, he claimed in his Charge that same year that his ten-year ministry in the Yorkshire city had given him the cure of 18,000 souls, not to mention the various civic duties he had been called on to perform.⁴⁷ Some at the Conference were resistant to change but, in view of the stance taken by the bishop and both archdeacons, it was clear that a new mood for a more efficient use of resources was motivating the hierarchy. The bishop expressed it thus:

⁴⁶ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar* 1910, p. 242

The Church must become a business concern, to put it very bluntly, if it was to carry with it the enthusiastic support of the laity. It could not be a business concern while they were setting men down to look after these very small parishes and there were these enormous parishes unmanned.

48

A committee was set up to progress the matter but the naturally slow pace of ecclesiastical change⁴⁹ and the coming of the Great War in 1914 meant that little happened until the next decade. In 1920, Bishop Gibson informed the diocese that Parliament had passed an Act permitting the union of small benefices on a much larger scale than had hitherto been envisaged. Under this scheme, “wherever possible parishes with a population of under 300 should cease to exist as separate parishes and also that (again wherever possible) no incumbent should have a stipend of less than £400.”⁵⁰

In Gloucestershire, nothing nearly so radical took place and when Arthur Cayley Headlam, Bishop Gibson’s successor, announced diocesan reforms in 1929 he disclosed that, by combining small parishes, the number of benefices in the diocese had been reduced from 320 in 1921 to 309 in 1927, with a consequent improvement in average clergy stipends from £359 to £392.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Gibson, *The Diocese and the Parishes*, *op. cit.*, p.33. The bishop omitted to add that at Leeds he had the support of some half-dozen curates.

⁴⁸ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar* 1910, p. 247

⁴⁹ “Things move slowly in the Church of England,” observed Bishop Gibson in 1921, “but yet they do move.” *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, August, 1921, p. 55. He was referring to delays in progress of the ministry of women but his words could be applicable to a range of ecclesiastical topics.

⁵⁰ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1920, p.26. If that population limit of 300 had been adopted throughout the diocese, approximately one third of Gloucester’s parishes would have been combined and the diocese reduced to about 250 parishes.

⁵¹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine* 1929, p.4. The latest (2001) figures show that the trend has continued. Gloucester Diocese has 327 parishes and 398 churches but only 161 benefices. *Church of England Year Book*, 2001.

Church Accommodation

In 1901, a speaker at the Gloucester Diocesan Conference criticised the unsystematic way in which parishes seemed to have been created, “almost as if a blind man had been given a map of England” so that one could find “churches that would accommodate a thousand persons, while perhaps there were not a hundred residents in the parish.”⁵² In 1894, Arthur Heber Browne, a former Vicar of Northleach, (and later Bishop of Bermuda) drew on his experience in the area to assert that on the Cotswolds “not seldom the church was far away from the village” and that “it was commonly the case that the church was large enough to hold more than the whole population, babies and cripples included.”⁵³ A similar point was made by a Bristol incumbent in 1886 who remarked that Fairford “had a noble church that would seat half the town.”⁵⁴ Two of these statements are factually unreliable. No parish church in the diocese with a population measured in hundreds could accommodate a thousand worshippers and it would have been more accurate to claim that Fairford church could seat a third, not half, of the town.⁵⁵ But there was more substance in Heber Browne’s assertion. An analysis of church accommodation and parish population figures for 1903,⁵⁶ listed at Appendix A.1 has identified 56 parishes where the parish church could accommodate either all or all but 30 of the population. Typically, they were small parishes of under 300 inhabitants. They were also relatively poor in terms of the gross value of the living. 29 had incomes between £30 and £190 per year, ten between £200 and £299 and only six over £300.⁵⁷ From this

⁵² *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1902, p. 163

⁵³ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar* 1895, p. 184

⁵⁴ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar* 1887, p.169

⁵⁵ The church had a seating capacity of 500 and its population in 1881 was 1,525 and 1,463 in 1891. *Summary of Church Work and Church Finance in the Diocese of Gloucester* (normally referred to as *Diocesan Statistics*, G.D.R., A4

⁵⁶ *Diocesan Statistics*, *op. cit.* 1903 has been selected as the sample because it is the first year for which full Diocesan statistics are available.

⁵⁷ In 11 cases the income was not disclosed.

list of 56, ten (but only three in the Cotswolds) might be said to illustrate Mr Heber Browne's point:

In only eight parishes did communicants occupy more than one third of the building at Easter 1903. One figure, however, demands further comment. From a population of 100, 92 communicants made their Easter Communion at Sudeley, Winchcombe, a church with seats for only 80. This may well indicate an exceptional level of devotion by the parishioners. It may, however, be relevant that the church is located within the grounds of Sudeley Castle, around which the life and work of the community revolved, so the possibility of some special factor being in operation that year, such as the exertion of employer pressure, cannot be entirely excluded, especially as this level of attendance was not sustained throughout the period under review.⁵⁸

Appendix A.2 shows that 16 parishes had seats for 800 or more worshippers. All were located in towns which, with one exception, contained 2,000 or more inhabitants. Nearly all had gross incomes of over £250 per year; only two fell below that line. The preponderance of Cheltenham town parish churches is a notable feature of the selection, although only at All Saints would it have been necessary to hold more than one service that Easter Day in order to accommodate the communicants. In relation to the available seating, the attendance at St. Paul's and in the churches of St Mary and St Matthew could be described as unimpressive. One explanation might be that the churchmanship of the majority of Cheltenham's town churches was Evangelical which lays less stress on the importance of the sacraments than churches which have a Tractarian emphasis such as All Saints and St Stephen. That this is not

⁵⁸ In the period from 1906 to 1922, the average number of Easter communicants at Sudeley was about 30, despite small increases in population, (123 in 1911 and to 143 in 1921). *Diocesan Statistics, op. cit.* for the appropriate years.

the sole explanation is shown by the high position occupied in the above table by Christ Church which was also Evangelical.

Church Patronage

The predominance of Evangelicalism in Cheltenham was chiefly a consequence of the type of the patronage exercised over the town's churches. As at 1897, the Simeon Trustees⁵⁹ held direct patronage of three central Cheltenham parishes (St Mary/St Matthew, Holy Trinity, St John) and indirect patronage, through the Rector of Cheltenham, of three more (St James, St Luke, St Paul). In addition, Christ Church and St Mark were under the patronage of parish Trusts with an Evangelical emphasis. Of the remaining town churches, St Peter's was under a private Trust and the Bishop held the patronage of All Saints' and St Stephen's. In being mostly under the control of Evangelical patrons, Cheltenham was in marked contrast to Gloucester where Bishop was patron of the majority of city churches, the remainder minority coming under the patronage of either the Lord Chancellor or the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral. The Simeon Trustees were also patrons of the village church at Woodchester, near Stroud and another Evangelical society, the Church Association, held the patronage of one parish, (Marston Meysey) in Fairford deanery. The Church Patronage Society, a High Church counterpart, was patron of only two parishes, Kingswood, in Dursley deanery and Littledean in the Forest.

As at 1897, in the whole diocese, the Bishop's patronage extended to 71 churches but by far the majority (130) had private patrons. Most of this latter group of parishes were located in rural areas, 110 of them in parishes with populations of under 1,000. The value of livings in this group varied greatly. They included six parishes

⁵⁹ Founded by Charles Simeon (1759 to 1836) to promote the securing of Church patronage according to his Evangelical principles.

with gross income over £700 a year and 17 with less than £100, although in some of this latter group the incumbent held more than one living:

Table 1.4 Parishes in Private Patronage with High Incomes

<i>Parish</i>	<i>Incumbent 1897</i>	<i>Patron 1897</i>	<i>Population 1901</i>	<i>Gross Income 1903</i>
Bishops Cleeve	T. Jesson	T. Jesson and W.H. Bagnall	1,790	£1,331
Hempstead	Hon. C.A. Sinclair	J. Higford Burr	494	£1,108
Tetbury	W. Thomson	Col. Scurfield	2,894	£920
Leckhampton	R.E. Trye	H. Norwood Trye	1,059	£893
Bibury	Hon. F.G. Dutton	Lord Sherborne	794	* £817
Yate	J.M. Ford	Revd. A. Pontifex	1,270	£730

60

* No 1903 figure is available; the 1906/07 figure is substituted

Table 1.5 Parishes in Private Patronage with Low Incomes

<i>Parish</i>	<i>Incumbent 1897</i>	<i>Patron 1897</i>	<i>Population 1901</i>	<i>Gross Income 1903</i>
Colesbourne	C.H. Wilson +	H.J. Elwes	204	£99
Great Witcombe	J.F. Cornwall	W.F. Hicks-Beach	126	£95
Syde	W.W. Woollcombe	Misses Ramsbottom	49	£92
Whitminster	F.B. Teesdale	H.A. Palmer	300	£90
Ebrington	C.E. Hornby	Lord Harrowby Hon. H.T. Ryder	491	£88
Pebworth	G.W. Phillips	T.S. Shekell	539	£81
Cold Salperton	H.K. Adkin	T.B. Brown	120	£75
Hawling	J.E. Alcock +	Mrs Hope	154	£71
Woolstone	G.G. Coventry +	Lord Coventry	157	£65
Weston on Avon	J. Davenport +	Lord Sackville	112	£62
Oxenton	G.G. Coventry +	Lord Coventry	103	£60
Lemington	A. Williams +	Lord Redesdale	66	£47
Great Washbourne	C.R. Covey +	Miss Covey	85	£36
UpHatherley	W.H. Cotes	Mrs Gretton	113	£30
Toddington	W.D. Stanton +	Lord Sudeley	202	£25

61

+ after the incumbent's name denotes that he had charge of more than one parish.

In many parts of the country, private patrons believed that their involvement in the patronage process was, and ought to be, part of the natural order of society. A speaker at the Church Congress of 1867 asked rhetorically: "How is a man of property with no patronage of his own, who happens to have a son of good disposition, of

steady and approved life — how is that man to place his deserving son except by purchase of a living?"⁶² In the same spirit, a clergyman was appointed to a Kent parish in 1864 on the understanding that he would resign if either of the patron's two sons should be ordained.⁶³

More altruistic motives, however, could prevail. In at least three Gloucestershire parishes, Prestbury, Elmstone Hardwicke and Kemerton, Oxford Movement principles were protected by private patrons related to the incumbent. John de la Bere's defiance in 1880 of a deprivation order by Bishop Ellicott for Ritualistic practices (see Chapter 2) was doubtless bolstered by the fact that his father was patron of the living,⁶⁴ and events at Kemerton in Tewkesbury deanery at the beginning of the twentieth century provide a good illustration of how private patrons could use the patronage system to the advantage of church parties. During the nineteenth century, patronage of the living was held by St Bartholomew's Hospital, Gloucester. The church, however, had a Tractarian tradition, started by Archdeacon Thorp of Bristol.⁶⁵ and maintained by Jerome John Mercier, who was installed as Rector in 1877. But when he died in 1901, the Hospital presented the living to one of its chaplains, George Mallet, who had Low Church convictions. Mr Mallet soon encountered opposition within the parish and when he died in the following year, Mrs Anne Mercier, the widow of the former Rector and prominent in her own right in diocesan circles,

⁶⁰ Compiled from *Diocesan Kalendar*, 1897 and *Diocesan Statistics*, *op. cit.*, 1903/04

⁶¹ *ibid.*

⁶² Quoted in Haig, A., *The Victorian Clergy*, Beckenham, Croom Helm, 1984, p. 258

⁶³ Quoted in Hinton, M., *The Anglican Parochial Clergy: A Celebration*, London, S.C.M. Press, , 1994, p. 149

⁶⁴ *Victoria County History of Gloucestershire*, Vol. viii., (ed. C.R. Elrington), Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1968, p. 79

⁶⁵ John Keble is said to have preached there and it is claimed that the choir was the first in the country to wear surplices. *Victoria County History of Gloucestershire* , Vol. viii., *op. cit.*, p.218

bought the advowson and placed her son, (also Jerome Mercier) in the living. On her death in 1917, he inherited the patronage and held the living for the next 30 years.⁶⁶

The case of Kemerton also demonstrates that tendency mentioned above for some private patrons to look within their own families to fill a clerical vacancy. At the national level, it was a pattern which had long attracted criticism from reformers. One such censured the practice in 1863 thus: "It is hard to say whether the Church is more hurt when she has nothing to give, or when what she has to give is bestowed not on hard work, long service and fitness, but from nepotism, or favouritism, or caprice."⁶⁷

In a number of Gloucester cases, there was a strong family relationship between the patron and the incumbent. Prestbury, Kemerton and Elmstone Hardwicke have been discussed above. At Stow, the Revd. Robert Hippisley, following a family tradition,⁶⁸ was both Patron and Rector of the parish from 1844 to 1899, resigning his responsibilities in his 81st year. The advowson was then bought by a Captain Titus Evans of Fishguard⁶⁹ who installed his son John, as Rector of this fairly well endowed parish.⁷⁰ The latter remained at Stow until 1935 when the patronage passed to the Diocesan Board.⁷¹

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, p. 218. Mrs Mercier's work in the diocese is discussed at more length in Chapter 5.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p. 253. See also Chadwick, *The Victorian Church, Part II, op. cit.*, pp. 207-214

⁶⁸ John Hippisley was patron of the parish in 1719 and the advowson remained in the family's hands until the end of the nineteenth century. *Victoria County History of Gloucestershire*, Vol. vi., (ed. C.R. Elrington), Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1965, p. 159. For the best part of some 150 years, the living was held by members of the family. Richard Hippisley was Rector from 1744 to 1765 and John Hippisley from 1765 to 1822. After a hiatus from 1822 to 1844 when Richard Vavasour was Rector, the family connection was restored by Robert Hippisley.

⁶⁹ "A staunch and loyal member of the Church which he dearly loved." *Stow Deanery Magazine*, January 1915. The Evans family seems to have been of some distinction in Pembrokeshire because when John Evans' son died in infancy in 1904, he was taken to Fishguard to be interred in "the family vault." *Stow Deanery Magazine*, April 1904.

⁷⁰ The gross income in 1903 was £400. *Diocesan Statistics, op. cit.*, 1903/04, although it declined in later years and did not recover to the £400 mark until 1913.

⁷¹ *Victoria County History of Gloucestershire*, Vol. vi., *op. cit.*, p. 159.

The dominance of the Hippisleys at Stow was replicated in the nearby parish of Upper Slaughter where one family occupied the Rectory for 150 years.⁷² The last of the clerical Witts had been “in waiting” as curate of Dumbleton and Vicar of Temple Guiting and Norton, until the vacancy occurred at Upper Slaughter. He died in 1913 but the family has retained its patronage of the living up to the present.⁷³ Both Mr Hippisley and Mr Broome Witts occupied clergy houses fit to stand comparison with any of the grand houses to be found elsewhere in the county. G.M. Trevelyan has used the Stow rectory as an illustration of a type of house inspired by the Gothic Revival.⁷⁴ A number of clergy, especially in rural areas, were accustomed to living in a grand style. At Chipping Campden, the Revd. Canon Kennaway, the rector from 1832 to 1873, employed nine living-in servants, including a footman and a governess.⁷⁵

But by the time that Bishop Gibson was nearing retirement, this old order was passing. In 1919 the Revd. Ernest Smith, relinquishing his large vicarage at Tewkesbury for a more modest home, thanked God that the time had passed “when the parson was necessarily a man of large means” and quoted G.K. Chesterton as having said that “the greatest danger of the Church of England” was “the possession of an aristocratic clergy.”⁷⁶ Two years later, a speaker at the Diocesan Conference maintained that the style of clergy houses often misleadingly implied that their

⁷² The Revd. Ferdinando Tracy Travell, who arrived there in 1763, was the incumbent for 45 years. On his death, he was succeeded by his nephew, Francis Edward Witts, who was followed in turn by his son Edward Francis Witts (1854) and grandson Francis Edward Broome Witts (1886).

⁷³ Mr F.E.B. Witts currently shares with the Bishop the patronage of the united benefice of Upper Slaughter and Lower Slaughter with Eyford and Naunton. *Diocese of Gloucester Directory, 2001-2002*, Gloucester, Gloucester Diocesan Board of Finance, 2001, Foreword and p. 54.

⁷⁴ Trevelyan, G.M. *Illustrated English Social History, Volume 4, The Nineteenth Century*, London Longmans, 1960, pp. 61,152. The author does not seem to admire the style.

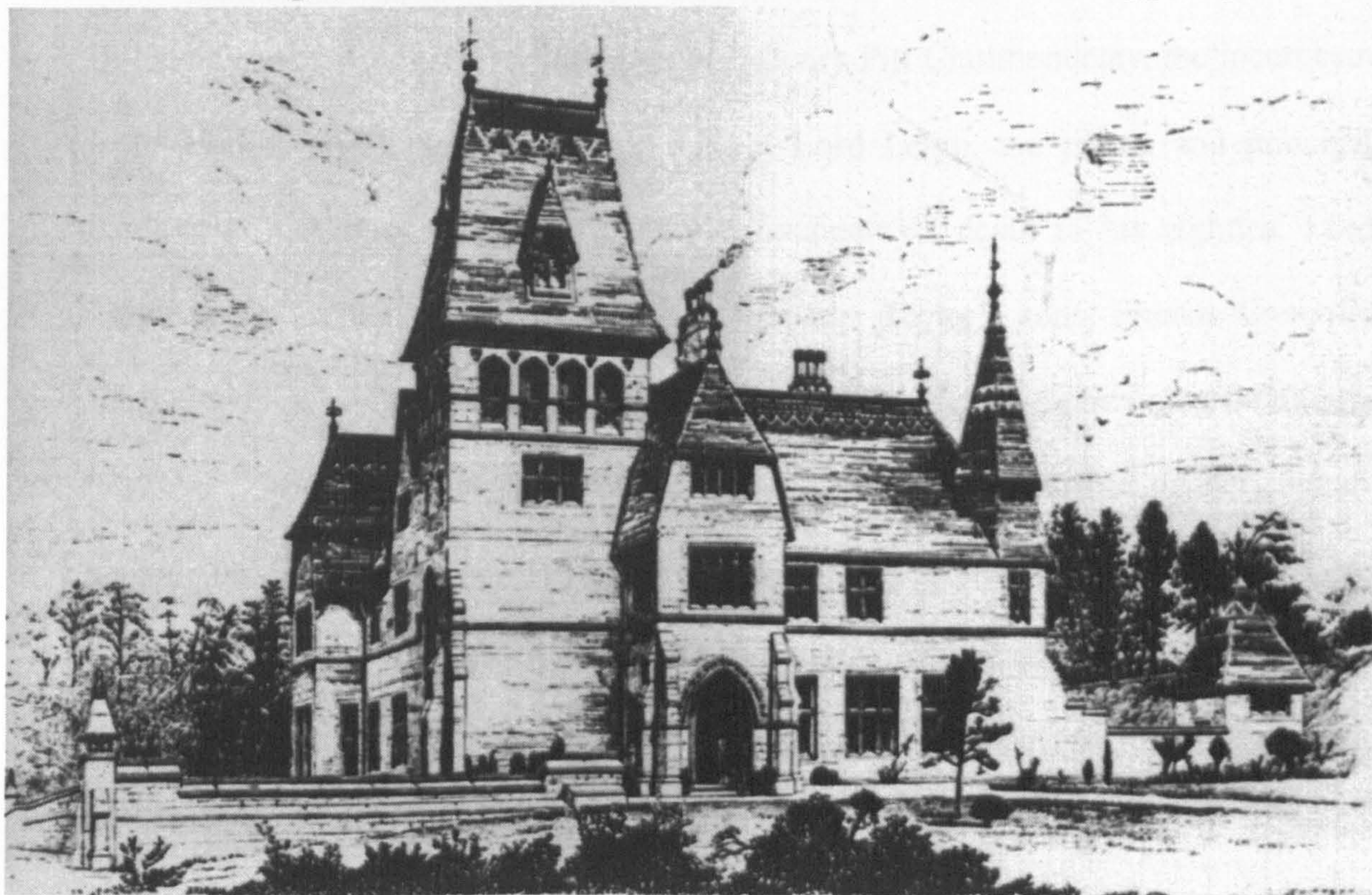
⁷⁵ In contrast, a leading local farmer had one living-in maid and the owner of Belmont House and a local doctor each had only three indoor servants. Geoffrey Powell, *The Book of Campden*, Buckingham Barracuda Books, 1982, p. 61

⁷⁶ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, September 1919

Plate 2

Two Cotswold Vicarages

The Vicarage built at Stow on the Wold for the Revd. Robert Hippisley



G.M. Trevelyan: *Illustrated English Social History*, Vol. IV, Illustration 61

The Witts' family Vicarage at Upper Slaughter

David Verey: *The Diary of a Country Parson*, p. 154

occupants were affluent, whereas the truth was that “there were clergy who, with the best of intentions, camouflaged their poverty.”⁷⁷

Other cases where the maintenance of a family tradition appears to have been the primary motive, illustrate the involvement of the landed gentry in patronage. At Broadwell with Adlestrop in Stow deanery, Henry Pitt Cholmondeley, the incumbent from 1852 to 1905, was the son in law of Lord Leigh, the patron and principal landowner.⁷⁸ Within weeks of Canon Cholmondeley’s death in his eighties, Lord Leigh had presented the living to one of the late Rector’s sons, Francis Grenville Cholmondeley, Vicar of Leek Wooton, Warwickshire,⁷⁹ thus maintaining the family tradition.⁸⁰ A similar instance can be found at Bibury in Fairford deanery where Canon the Honourable Frederick Dutton, the younger brother of the patron Lord Sherborne, was Vicar from 1874 to 1916 and, while still an incumbent, inherited the title, becoming the Fifth Baron Sherborne. The title also carried with it patronage of the parish of Sherborne, the family home.⁸¹ After Canon Dutton’s death in 1920, the patronage of both Bibury and Sherborne passed to the Sixth Lord Sherborne. Tables

⁷⁷ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1922, p. 156

⁷⁸ Another family member, his brother in law the Hon. J.W. Leigh, the Dean of Hereford, officiated at the late Rector’s funeral in 1905. *Stow Deanery Magazine*, May, 1905. It would appear that the Leigh family acquired an interest in Adlestrop as a result of the dissolution of the monasteries. Adlestrop Park, formerly a possession of Evesham Abbey, had been owned by the Leigh family since 1553 and members of the family were long-serving Rectors of the parish over the centuries. Before Henry Pitt Cholmondeley, there were Theophilus Leigh, 1718 to 1762, Thomas Leigh 1762 to 1813 and Lord Saye and Sele (connected by marriage) 1825-52. *Victoria County History of Gloucestershire*, Vol vi., *op. cit.*, p. 10. There are a number of memorial tablets to members of the family in the church. David Verey and Alan Brooks, *The Buildings of England, Gloucestershire I: The Cotswolds*, London, Penguin Books, *op. cit.* p.132.

⁷⁹ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, June 1905

⁸⁰ The present Lord Leigh is one of four patrons of what is now the united benefice of Broadwell, Evenlode, Oddington, Adlestrop and Westcote with Icomb and Bledington. *Diocese of Gloucester Directory*, 2001-2002, p. 52.

⁸¹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1920, p. 20. The parish of Sherborne in Fairford Deanery had been the home of the Dutton family since the 16th century and they held an acknowledged high position in society. John Dearman Birchall recorded in his diary for December 1886 attending a party at Hatherop Castle to which Canon Dutton had brought the Maharana of Sarawak, Borneo. Verey, *Diary of a Victorian Squire op. cit.*, p.192. Hatherop Castle, Fairford, was the home of a Mr Gardner Bazley, another leading layman in the diocese. Verey, *The Buildings of England; Gloucestershire I: The Cotswolds, op. cit.*, p.406.

1.14 and 1.15 contain further examples of family associations and some instances relating to Painswick are described more fully in Chapter 3.

In addition to lay patrons, the diocese in 1897 included 26 parishes under clergy patronage. The role of the Rector of Cheltenham as a proxy patron for the Simeon's Trustees has been mentioned above, but eight more country parishes had a neighbouring incumbent as their patron, although there is no evidence in these cases that the patron was intent on promoting a church party line. Exceptionally, the Vicar of Painswick controlled two neighbouring parishes, Sheepscombe and Slad. Parishes where the patron was a clergyman in another parish typically had incomes under £200 and in 1911, because it had proved difficult to attract clergy to Sheepscombe, the Vicar of Painswick decided, with the Bishop's agreement, to take charge of the smaller parish himself.⁸² In 14 more parishes the incumbent was himself the patron. These were wealthy by comparison with those where the clerical patron was not resident and included one of the wealthiest in the diocese, Bishop's Cleeve, which had a gross income in 1903 of £1,332. When Thomas Jesson, the Rector and part Patron⁸³ of the parish, appointed his son as curate from 1909 to 1917 the family influence there was fortified.⁸⁴

As was recognised by diocesan authorities, the existence of private patronage presented an obstacle to any centralised schemes for a more rational deployment of clergy resources. In the decade before the Great War, there was optimism in Gloucester circles that any obstacles to diocesan planning thus posed could be overcome either by consent or force. In a Diocesan Conference debate in 1907, Lord

⁸² *Painswick Valley and Great Witcombe Magazine*, January 1911

⁸³ The patronage was shared between Mr Jesson and a Mrs Bagnall of Cheltenham. A previous Rector of the parish, William Lawrence Townsend, held the patronage of the living from at least 1870 to 1879. *Victoria County History of Gloucestershire*, Vol. viii., *op. cit.*, pp. 20-21.

⁸⁴ The son, also Thomas Jesson, left Bishop's Cleeve when his father did to become Vicar of Hucclecote, near Gloucester. *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1917

St Aldwyn, “speaking as a former patron”, bluntly advocated the union of small benefices, “whether the patron likes it or not”⁸⁵ but at a later Conference discussion on the same subject, Archdeacon Sinclair of Cirencester adopted a more conciliatory and optimistic tone. Private patronage, he predicted, would not be a major obstacle to reform because most patrons would want to do what was best for the parish and, where any resistance was shown, “we can always fall back on the system of alternate patronage.” The best solution, said the Archdeacon “would be for patrons in such cases to surrender their rights to the Bishop or to the Diocesan Board.”⁸⁶ However, in Bishop Gibson’s last year of office (1923) there was only a small shift of emphasis from the 1897 figures with the Bishop controlling 78 parishes and 124 remaining in private hands.⁸⁷

In some parishes, the involvement of wealthy donors could have harmful consequences for the integrity of the Church. When the Revd. Percy Waller arrived from Birmingham in 1894 to take charge of Holy Trinity, Cheltenham, he found a church which

had been built on an incredibly bad system, whereby the donors of large sums obtained the legal right to claim interest in the distributions they had made. Towards the end of the nineteenth century the feeling was often expressed that this plan through which the House of God was turned into a money-gaining concern, had been a hateful anachronism.

⁸⁸

It was held to Mr Waller’s credit that he had worked to remove the debt so that Holy Trinity became a parish church instead of a proprietary chapel. However, even in the

⁸⁵ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1908, p. 240

⁸⁶ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1910, p. 244

⁸⁷ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1923, *passim*, The alternate patronage mechanism was employed at Elmstone Hardwicke in 1922, when it was united with Swindon Village. Mrs Bayfield Roberts, the former patron of Elmstone Hardwicke, then shared the patronage of the united benefice with the Bishop. *Victoria County History of Gloucestershire*, Vol. viii, *op. cit.*, p.58., Anthea Jones lists *inter alia* the following figures for the patronage of benefices in Gloucester diocese in the years 1551, 1835 and 1987. Bishop — 9, 23, 45; Private layman [and, presumably, laywoman]— 114, 142, 16. *A Thousand Years of the English Parish*, , Moreton in Marsh, The Windrush Press 2000, p. 237

⁸⁸ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1922, p. 18

post-War years, the belief that certain parishes offered scope for entrepreneurs had not been totally eradicated. At the 1921 Diocesan Conference Bishop Gibson expressed his outrage over a recent advertisement in *The Times* offering the advowson of a living in Gloucestershire which was described as “a profitable investment.” It was, he said,

... hard to see that it could suggest anything but a wholly illegal transaction whereby some unworthy priest should commit simony and either directly or indirectly purchase from the patron the responsibility for the cure of souls of the parishioners, and then deliberately commit perjury by solemnly and publicly declaring that he had not received the presentation in consideration of any money directly or indirectly given or promised by any person to his knowledge or with his consent.⁸⁹

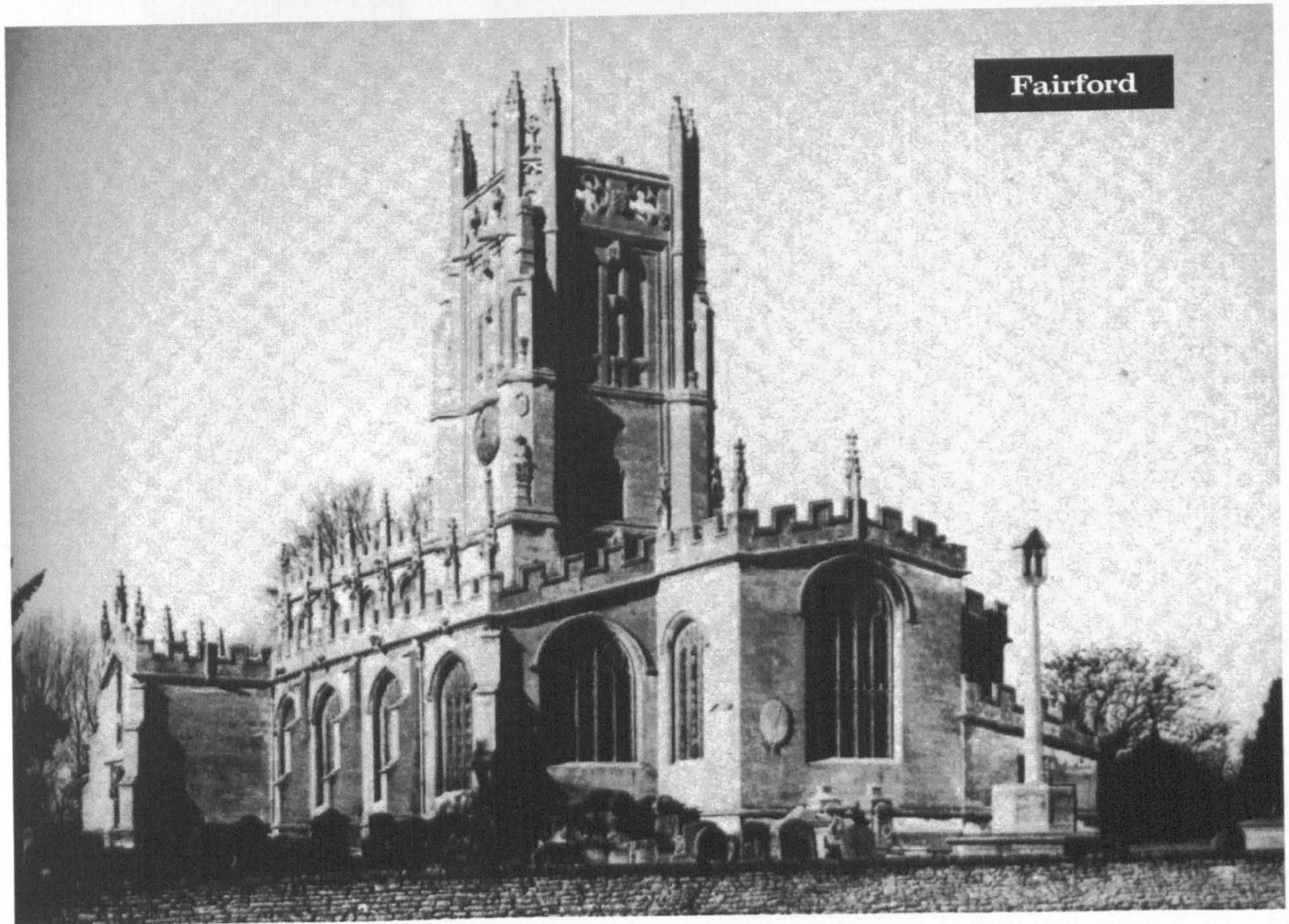
Parish Church Building

The majority of Gloucestershire’s parish churches were built before the Reformation. These included the large impressive churches at Cirencester, Winchcombe, Fairford, Northleach and Chipping Campden, the so-called “wool churches” because they were funded from the profits of the medieval woollen trade in the county.⁹⁰

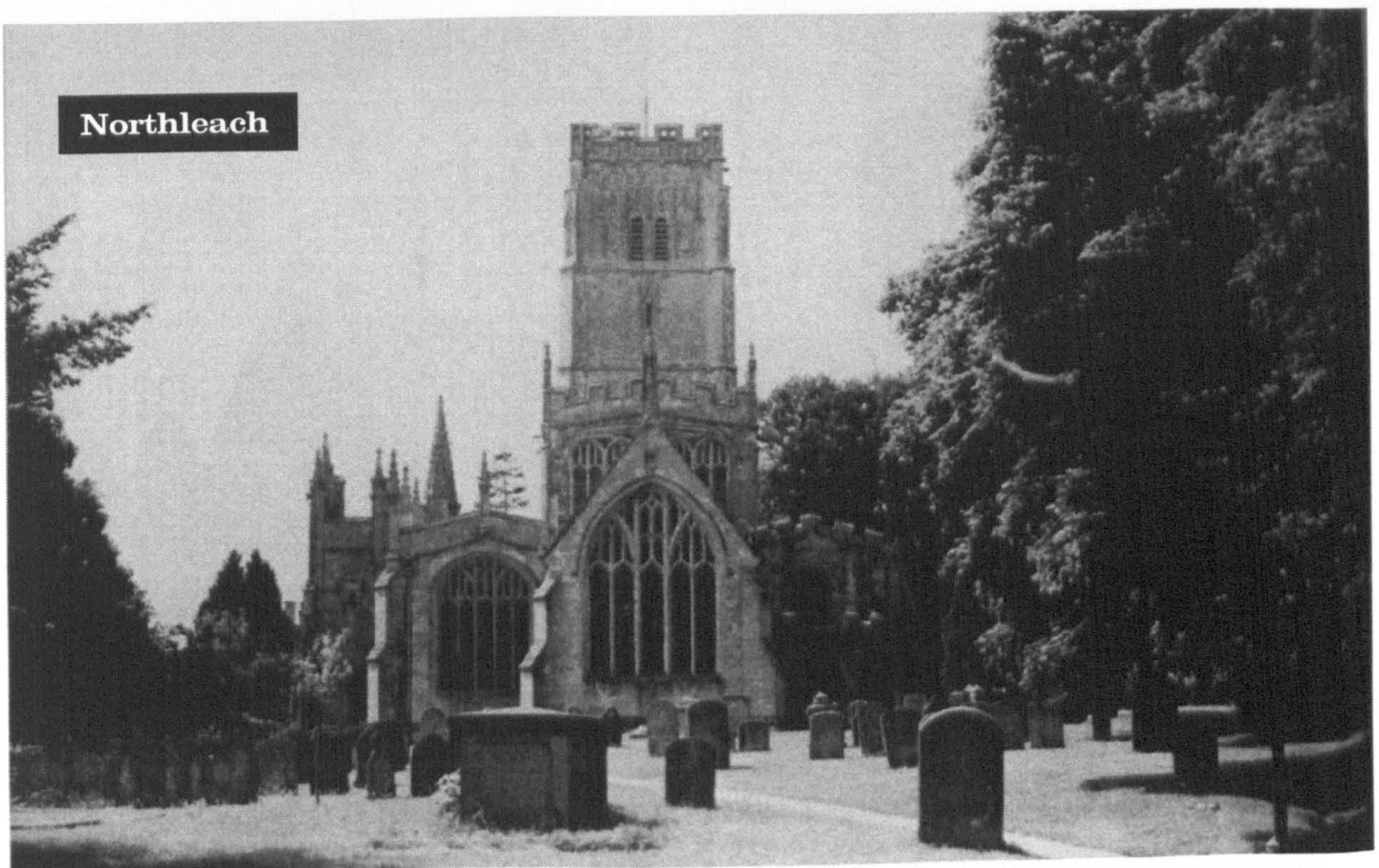
⁸⁹ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1922, p.143

⁹⁰ Eileen Power in *Medieval People*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1939, pp. 132-134 discusses the importance of Cotswold towns such as Northleach in this trade.

Cotswold "Wool" Churches - 1



Gloucestershire County Guide, pp. 33, 44

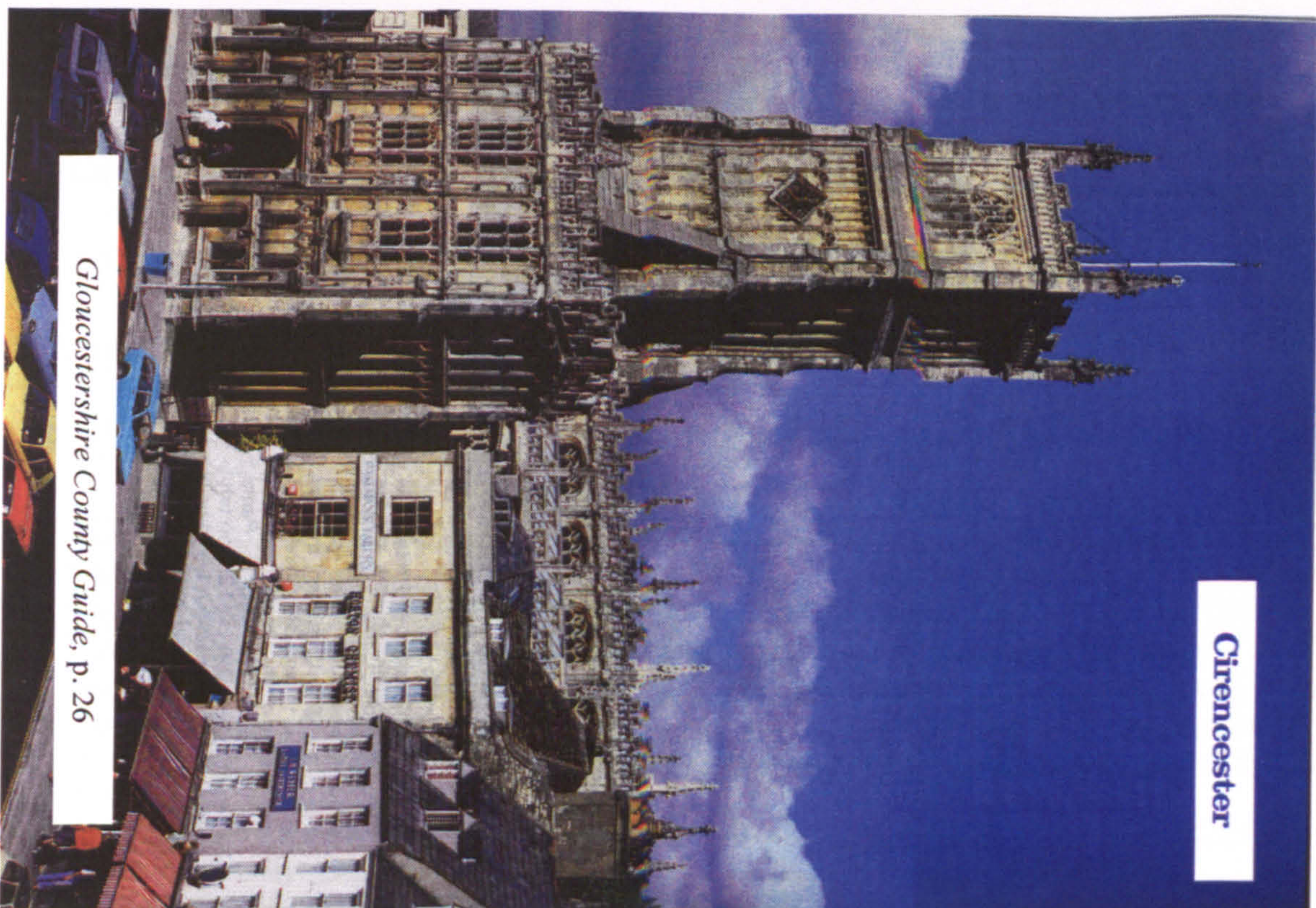


Chipping Campden



Robin Whiteman and Rob Talbot: *The Cotswolds*, p. 20

Cirencester



Gloucestershire County Guide, p. 26

Cirencester Parish Church, “one of the grandest parish churches in England”⁹¹ was probably too large to be indebted to any one individual or family and owed its construction to the combined efforts of the townsfolk, merchants and the Augustinian Abbey there.⁹² Similarly, it was a combination of “the bailiffs, burgesses and commonalty” of the town which preserved for posterity Tewkesbury Abbey, arguably the most attractive large parish church in the county.⁹³ In 1923, the Abbey claimed to have a maximum seating capacity of 2,500. Since Cirencester Parish Church’s declared maximum was 1,600, the Abbey’s capacity was greater than any other parish church in the diocese.⁹⁴ It could be the source of both pride and affection. Ernest Smith, the Vicar from 1914 to 1930, highly valued the Abbey’s atmosphere and found it

inconceivable how anyone who has the chance to worship in so beautiful a House of God can choose to worship anywhere else: the very majesty of the building is an added cause for joy and thankfulness; you feel instinctively with David, that the House of the Lord should be ‘exceeding magnificent’ [*sic*] and, with Mary of Bethany, that the costliest ointment is not too good to be lavished on His Sacred Feet.⁹⁵

And a former native of Tewkesbury who emigrated to Canada to work on the Canadian Pacific Railway wrote home in 1911: “if there is one thing I miss, it is the Abbey; you cannot realise the beauty of the services until you go to some other church.”⁹⁶

⁹¹ Verey and Brooks, *op. cit* p.57

⁹² Verey and Brooks, *op. cit* p.57

⁹³ At the Dissolution of the Monasteries, the Abbey was threatened with demolition but in 1542 the townspeople received a grant on the building in return for the payment of £483 to Henry VIII. *Victoria County History of Gloucestershire*, Vol. viii. *op. cit.*, p. 156. Since the nave of the Abbey Church was excluded from the terms of the grant, it has been assumed that it was already in use as the parish church.

⁹⁴ A congregation estimated at 4,000 attended a special Memorial service for Queen Victoria in the Abbey in February, 1901. *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, Feb 1901

⁹⁵ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, October, 1915

⁹⁶ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, December 1911

But Ernest Smith at least of the Abbey's incumbents sensed an incongruity between the size of the town of Tewkesbury (about 4,000 to 5,000 in the period 1861 to 1921) and the presence of a quasi-cathedral in its midst: "Though Tewkesbury Abbey has not the status, it has all the dignity of a Cathedral."⁹⁷ Renovation and maintenance costs for such a building were correspondingly higher than for less imposing churches and the congregation's contribution to these and the many other demands made on it was often deemed incommensurate with the Abbey's status. In 1917 Smith opined that "such a Church" was "more suited for a big centre of population than for a tiny little town like ours."⁹⁸ He was often obliged to pay church bills out of his own pocket⁹⁹ and considered it "a sheer disgrace" that "the parishioners of Tewkesbury" contributed "little more than one-third of the amount necessary to light, heat, clean and care for their church and to maintain its services."¹⁰⁰ Comparing the number of worshippers with the number of coins in the collections showed that "at least half the congregation" gave "nothing at all"¹⁰¹ and "the two or three rich families" in the town were "not conspicuously generous in their support of the House of God or any other religious causes."¹⁰²

Between the Reformation period and the nineteenth century, only a few new churches were built in the diocese, one in the seventeenth century and eight in the following century. When Bishop Benson conducted a survey of his diocese in about 1750¹⁰³ there were 310 churches, although there was no record of services in 43 of them and in only one were Saints' days observed.¹⁰⁴ The nineteenth century,

⁹⁷ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, January, 1915

⁹⁸ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, July 1917

⁹⁹ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, April, 1919

¹⁰⁰ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, October 1920

¹⁰¹ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, December, 1914

¹⁰² *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, November 1917

¹⁰³ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1906, p. 215

¹⁰⁴ Gibson, *Standards and Practice*, *op. cit.*, p. 10. The exception was at Batsford where the incumbent was meeting the conditions of a small endowment.

however, witnessed an appreciable growth in church building throughout the country. Between 1823 and 1903, 41 new parish churches were built in Bristol.¹⁰⁵ and the pattern was repeated in other dioceses, with new parishes emerging to such an extent that Bishop Jackson of London commented in 1877 that “no man went to bed at night knowing whose parish he might wake up in.”¹⁰⁶

In the Gloucester diocese, church building reached its peak between 1830 and 1870, as shown in the following table:

Table 1.6 Church Building in the Diocese of Gloucester 1800-1900

<i>Decade</i>	<i>Churches Built</i>	<i>Decade</i>	<i>Churches Built</i>
1800-09	-	1850-59	14
1810-19	6	1860-69	23
1820-29	6	1870-79	9
1830-39	12	1880-89	8
1840-49	24	1890-99	6

The trend was most evident in Gloucester and Cheltenham, the two major centres of population in the diocese:

¹⁰⁵ John Kent in Morris, R.J. and Rodger, Richard, (editors), *The Victorian City, A Reader in British Urban History, 1820-1914*, London, Longman, , 1993, p. 325

¹⁰⁶ Chadwick; *The Victorian Church Part II, op. cit.*, p. 239

Table 1.7 Church Building in Gloucester and Cheltenham ¹⁰⁷

Year	Gloucester	Cheltenham
1822	Christ Church	
1823		Holy Trinity
1829		St. John
1830		St. James
1831		St. Paul
1840		Christ Church
1841	St James	
1847	St Mark	
1849	Mariners' Chapel	St. Peter
1854		St. Luke
1867	St Catharine	St. Mark
1868	St. Luke	All Saints
1873		St. Stephen
1875	All Saints	
1879		St. Matthew
1883	St. Paul	
1895	St. Stephen	
1900	St. Luke the Less	
1915	St. Catharine	
1916	St. George	

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, the normal pattern was one parish church for each town or village. For instance, in 1801 the town of Cheltenham, with just over 3,076 inhabitants and the neighbouring village of Prestbury with 485 ¹⁰⁸ were each served by a medieval building of similar proportions. The sole exception to the general rule was Gloucester where the medieval churches of St Mary de Crypt, St Mary de Lode, St Michael and St Nicholas had been augmented in the eighteenth century by those of St Aldate and St John the Baptist. A seventh Gloucester parish, St Catharine's, existed more on paper than in reality. ¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ The Mariners' Chapel at Gloucester was not a parish church but built to serve the spiritual needs of those who worked the waterways around Gloucester, including foreign seamen who stopped at Gloucester while transporting cargo to and from the city. James Hollins, one of the first ministers of the chapel, published in 1857 his account of work there under the title of *Pastoral Recollections or Gleanings from a Diary of Upwards of Six years' Work among the Seamen and Watermen at the Port of Gloucester*. London, Hatchards, Hamilton, Adams and Co., 1857

¹⁰⁸ *Victoria County History, Gloucestershire*, Vol. ii., *op. cit.*, pp.177,178. By 1861, Prestbury's population (1,297) had approximately doubled in size while Cheltenham's (39,693) had risen over twelve-fold.

¹⁰⁹ At the start of the century, St Catharine's was a parish without a church. The nominal vicar was a pluralist, who held the both title and chaplaincy of the Poor Law Union, received the stipend and burial fees, but lived in the Cotswolds. Tithes collected in the parish were sent to the Chapter of Bristol Cathedral. *Gloucestershire Notes and Queries*, London, Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton and Kent, Vol. iv., p. 485

It was not until 1867 that a new church was erected. However, at the start of the twentieth century this proved inadequate for the growing district in which it was situated. Furthermore, the diocesan authorities contended that upon the erection of a new church depended “the rectification of the boundaries of the other parishes in the city.”¹¹⁰ Consequently, in 1913 the foundation stone was laid at a different site for a new building which was consecrated in 1915.¹¹¹ Bishop Gibson summed up the extent of church building in the city by announcing in 1911 that “between 1840 and 1900 no fewer than seven churches and two mission churches had been erected in Gloucester.”

112

But the Victorian building effort had proceeded in an uncoordinated manner with little heed to the wider needs of the diocese. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the diocesan authorities had acknowledged that the parish boundaries within the city of Gloucester were “extremely ill-arranged and inconvenient for all practical purposes”¹¹³ and in 1906 Bishop Gibson appointed a Commission “to inquire into and report upon the existing and prospective needs and resources of the Church” in the city.¹¹⁴ In this move can be seen an attempt to impose order, at least in a limited area, on what had been for centuries a somewhat random and arbitrary system of creating parish churches. The Commission’s principal recommendations were to “reconstruct” St Catharine’s and to create new churches in the parishes of St. Luke’s, St Paul’s and St James.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1911, p.218

¹¹¹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1912, p. 126

¹¹² *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1911, p. 71. The Bishop presumably discounted the Mariners’ Chapel at the Docks which did not have the status of a parish church. See footnote 105 above.

¹¹³ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1906, p. 24

¹¹⁴ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1906, p.39

¹¹⁵ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1907, p. 28. According to the 1901 Census, the populations of three of the city’s parishes were unusually large compared with the rest of the diocese. St Luke’s had 6,350 inhabitants, St. James’ 6,868 and St. Paul’s, Tuffley 8,450.

An Order in Council for the formation of a new parish of St Luke the Less [sic] out of St Luke's parish was promulgated in 1910, whereupon the Vicar of St Luke's decided to resign his incumbency and become the Vicar of the new parish.¹¹⁶ Similarly, after an old school room had been adapted as a temporary church at Tuffley in 1907 and a curate in charge appointed for a Conventional District of some 2,000 souls,¹¹⁷ a new Ecclesiastical District with a Mission church was formed in 1916.¹¹⁸ However, action on the Commission's recommendation for a Mission Room at St. James was deferred because the parish's schools needed a large expenditure.¹¹⁹ and by 1923, when the population had grown to 7,615, it was admitted that St James' parish was still awaiting "extension".¹²⁰

In parallel with this activity in Gloucester, parishes in some of the other towns or larger villages of the county were also being sub-divided, as shown in the table below, where the 1921 Census figure is used in the population column. In five of the examples, the new building could accommodate more worshippers than the original parish church. This was especially evident with the new church of St Matthew, Cheltenham, a proverbial stone's throw from the historic St Mary's church:

¹¹⁶ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine* 1910, p.19. The new church was larger and in a more attractive location. The name 'St Luke the Less' was not intended to imply the existence of an apostle of that name but to indicate that it was "junior" to St Luke's church. It was subsequently rededicated to St. Stephen.

¹¹⁷ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1907, p.175

¹¹⁸ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1916, p.174

¹¹⁹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1909, p.204

¹²⁰ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, June, 1923

Table 1.8 Sub-divisions of Parishes in Gloucester Diocese 1837-1908

<i>Date</i>	<i>1921 Pop.</i>	<i>Parish Church</i>	<i>Seats</i>	<i>Additional Church</i>	<i>Seats</i>
1837	4,704	Tewkesbury Abbey	2,000	Holy Trinity	600
1839	8,466	Stroud: St Lawrence	1,048	Holy Trinity	800
1851	7,422	Cirencester: St John Baptist	1,500	Holy Trinity	430
1870	3,863	Leckhampton: St Peter	400	Ss Phillip and James	800
1871	5,829	Charlton Kings	570	Holy Apostles	671
1879	5,510	Cheltenham: St Mary	630	St. Matthew	1,386
1890	7,955	Cinderford: St John	500	St Stephen	600
1898	1,825	Barnwood: St Lawrence	250	Holy Trinity	100
1908	1,234	Slad: Holy Trinity	252	All Saints	380

The inclusion of Tewkesbury in the above table is an illustration of the point that population expansion was not the sole motive for building additional churches within a parish. A modern historian of the town's explanation that Holy Trinity was built at Tewkesbury because the Abbey was considered "remote and awe-inspiring" and the new church was "more accessible"¹²¹ does not encompass the full facts. Its construction was occasioned chiefly by party strife within the Church of England and it was conceived as a visible and practical counter to perceived Catholic trends at the Abbey. In fact, for several decades, the Town Council opposed the formation of a new ecclesiastical parish at Tewkesbury and the stipends of Holy Trinity's ministers were partly paid by two charities. It was not until 1893, nearly sixty years after it had been built, that it given separate parish status.¹²²

That the newer church was not considered to be justified by population increases is shown by the rejection by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1884 of one of the periodic applications by Holy Trinity for recognition as a separate ecclesiastical district. The Commissioners pointed out that the population of

¹²¹ Jones, A., *Tewkesbury*, Chichester, Phillimore, 1987, p. 134. In her later work, *A Thousand Years of the English Parish. op. cit.*, p. 267, Anthea Jones has drawn attention to St. George's, Stockport which was built for much the same reason, a counter to High Church practices at the town's St Thomas' church.

¹²² *Victoria County History of Gloucestershire* Vol. viii. *op. cit.*, p.156, *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, March, 1893

Tewkesbury was just over 5,000, that the Abbey could accommodate 3,000¹²³ and that many of those who had petitioned in favour of the proposed new District “would not be resident within its limits.”¹²⁴

An animus towards the Abbey by Edward Cosens, Holy Trinity’s Vicar, can be detected from an exchange of letters he had with W.F. St John Kaye, Archdeacon of Lincoln in 1882. Mr Cosens had apparently sought the Archdeacon’s sympathy and support for a change in his church’s status, complaining that his young adult worshippers were drifting away to the Abbey, presumably when they were free of parental influence. The Archdeacon’s reply, which sought to encourage Mr Cosens, incidentally revealed the gulf between the Evangelical and Catholic approaches to worship:

It is painful to see your young people, as they grow up, leaving you for what is more attractive; but this may happen under any circumstances whether you have a District or not. But do not let this distress you. Your course is to instil into their minds what you deem the Scriptural principles, as regards worship and the right use of the Sacraments, and to guard them against *the snares of what is sensuous and exciting in the services of religion* [my italics]... Do not be betrayed into any rivalry, as regards business and what the world calls influence; you must be prepared for what the world calls failure.¹²⁵

When Mr Cosens, “an active and leader of the Evangelical party,”¹²⁶ died in 1910, the Abbey’s Vicar penned an obituary notice for the Diocesan Magazine commending his former colleague’s “earnest, holy life.” He added that “with him there was no standing still, but he was ever pressing on to the heart of his high calling in Christ Jesus.”¹²⁷ However, in his own parish magazine, while commending Mr Cosens for “his unflinching courage, his undaunted faith” and “his strenuous life” he admitted that it was

¹²³ This figure is much larger than those quoted after 1900.

¹²⁴ G.D.R., P329/2/IN3/1

¹²⁵ *ibid.*,

¹²⁶ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1910, p.28

...no secret that many of our methods at the Abbey were opposed to some of Mr Cosens' most cherished and earnest convictions and that he felt it his duty at times to condemn and even oppose us. ... the sincere conviction that he was doing right prevented his co-operation with us when we were on neutral ground ¹²⁸

Similarly, at Charlton Kings Holy Apostles, "a middle of the road church," was built to cater for those parishioners "who did not care for the High Churchmanship of St Mary's," the parish church, ¹²⁹ although there is no evidence there of the clerical antagonism which appears to have existed at Tewkesbury.

New churches were also built in many of the larger villages of the county during the nineteenth century, particularly in the Forest of Dean where the Established Church became for the first time a visible presence as it attempted to respond to the increase in population tabulated below:

Table 1.9: The Population of the Forest of Dean: 1801-1921

<i>Year</i>	<i>Population.</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Population.</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Population.</i>
1801	3,325	1841	10,692	1891	22,404
1811	4,073	1851	13,566	1901	23,155
1821	5,535	1861	17,801	1911	25,164
1831	7,014	1871	20,861	1921	26,624
		1881	22,198		

130

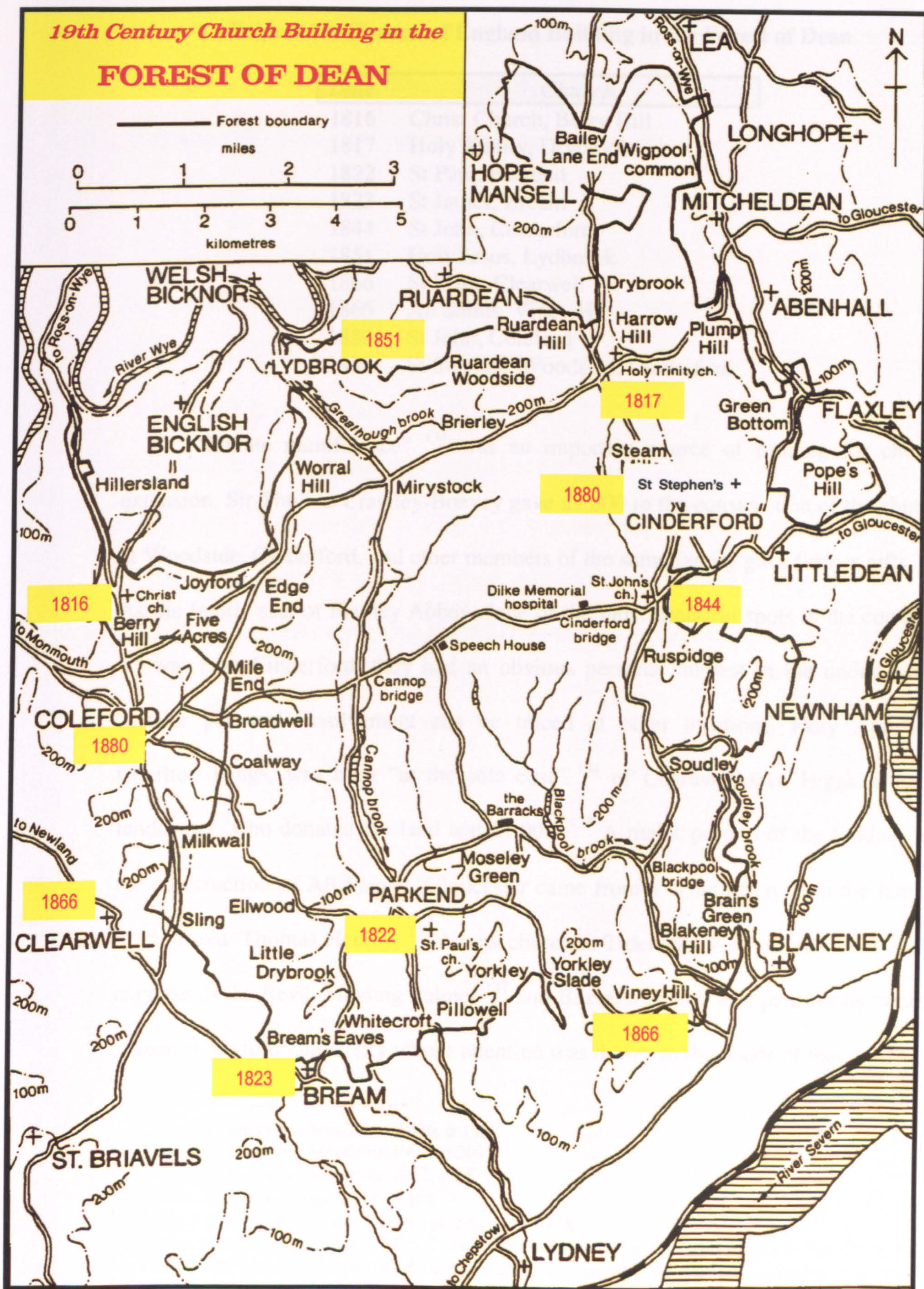
As at Gloucester, a Dean Forest Church Extension Committee was formed (1863) to direct the work when most of it had been completed.

¹²⁷ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, February, 1910

¹²⁸ At Prestbury, opposition to ritual practices at the village church resulted in 1866 in the building of a Congregational chapel in the village. According to the new church's statement of principles: "The Committee have no desire to become the judges of other men's consciences, or to utter anathema in regard to other men's mode of worship. But, believing as they do, that the ritualism which now obtains in many of the Churches is nothing short of Popery, exercised in the midst of Protestantism, they feel grateful to God that they have been privileged to afford to true-hearted Protestants the opportunity of worshipping in accordance with their own principle." Florence E Jackson, *A Portrait of Prestbury*, Shipton on Stour, Drinkwater, 1987, p. 17.

¹²⁹ Paget, M., (Editor), *A History of Charlton Kings*, Gloucester, Gloucestershire County Library, 1988, p. 131

¹³⁰ *Victoria County History of Gloucestershire*, Vol. v., (ed. N.M. Herbert) p.303



An annotated version of a map in the *Victoria County History of Gloucestershire*.

Table 1.10: Church of England Building in the Forest of Dean

<i>Date</i>	<i>Church</i>
1816	Christ Church, Berry Hill
1817	Holy Trinity, Drybrook
1822	St Paul, Parkend
1823	St James, Bream
1844	St John, Cinderford
1851	Holy Jesus, Lydbrook
1866	St Peter, Clearwell
1866	All Saints, Viney Hill
1880	St John, Coleford
1880	St Stephen, Woodside, Cinderford

“Private munificence”¹³¹ was an important source of funding for church extension. Sir Thomas Crawley-Boevey gave £1,000 to the construction of the church at Woodside, Cinderford, and other members of the same family gave further gifts.¹³² As the family seat of Flaxley Abbey, “one of the most beautiful spots in the county,”¹³³ was near Cinderford, they had an obvious personal interest in the undertaking. Similar personal involvement can be traced at other locations. Holy Apostles, Charlton Kings, was built “at the sole cost”¹³⁴ of Charles Cooke Higgs, a local landowner, who donated the land and £1,000.¹³⁵ A major portion of the funding for the construction of All Saints’, Gloucester came from a benefaction from the family of the Revd. Thomas Hedley.¹³⁶ A new church at Tidenham was “wholly built at the expense of the Revd. Fielding Palmer¹³⁷ and Bussage church was paid for by twenty *alumni* of Oxford University whose attention was drawn to the needs of that parish by

¹³¹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1906, p.192

¹³² *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine* 1906, p.209

¹³³ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine* 1912, p.55

¹³⁴ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress* 1871, p.6

¹³⁵ Paget, *A History of Charlton Kings*, *op. cit.*, pp. 44,128

¹³⁶ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress* 1875. p. 7, *Victoria County History of Gloucestershire*, Vol. IV. p. 312. Thomas Hedley was the first perpetual curate of St. James’ parish, out of which All Saints’ was created

¹³⁷ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress* 1888, p. 4. From 1850, a school room in the village was licensed for services and Mr Palmer had conducted services there for a number of years. *Victoria County History of Gloucestershire* Vol. x. (ed. C.R. Elrington) Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1972 p. 75

Isaac Williams, curate to Thomas Keble at nearby Bisley.¹³⁸ Occasionally, private patronage seems to have been proffered for relatively trivial reasons and it has been alleged that the church at Edge, consecrated in 1865, was inspired “because the corn merchant who built Harescombe Grange did not wish to walk across the fields to Harescombe church.”¹³⁹

Private donations comprised one of the three main sources of funding for the building effort in the diocese at large, the others being grants from charities which had church building among their specific objects, such as the Warneford Ecclesiastical Charity and from the Diocesan Association.¹⁴⁰ This latter organisation existed to collect donations from parishes and to distribute them according to need throughout the diocese.¹⁴¹ Established in 1858, the Association’s report for 1865 disclosed that by that date it had made grants of over £10,000 for the following purposes:

Table 1.11 Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Association Grants, 1858-1864

Grants totalling £10,084 were given for:

Provision of 9,166 sittings for the poor
 Provision for the education of 5,605 children
 Assistance for the erection of 10 new churches
 Assistance for the restoration of 62 existing churches
 Enlargement of 66 schools
 Provision of 21 glebe houses
 Endowment of 11 poor benefices

142

¹³⁸ Verey and Brooks, *The Buildings of England, Gloucestershire, I. The Cotswolds*, op. cit. p. 207

¹³⁹ Verey, *Cotswold Churches*, p. 172. Edge lies two to three miles south-east of Harescombe.

¹⁴⁰ Later more explicitly titled the ‘Bishop’s Church and School Fund’, *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, op.cit., 1895, p.169

¹⁴¹ As stated in one of its annual reports, the Association’s object was “to assist in raising [the poor of the population] from their dark and degraded condition; to carry the light of God’s truth to every dwelling; to encourage the exertions made to diffuse scriptural knowledge; to provide scriptural education; and by the moderate aid which our funds enable us to grant, to stimulate local efforts made for the extension of the Kingdom of our Redeemer. *Report of the Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Association*, 1865, G.D.R. A16/5/2, p. 14

¹⁴² *ibid.*

However, the Association's contribution, though valuable, was rarely the major portion of church building expenditure, as can be seen in the following extract from one of its reports, showing grants for the construction of new churches:

Table 1.12: Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Association Contribution to the Building of New Churches, September, 1858 to October 1864

143

<i>Date</i>	<i>Parish</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Free Seats</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Grant as % of Cost</i>
1858	King's Stanley	619	200	£1,500	£75	5.0%
1859	St Luke, Bedminster	6,000	600	£5,700	£100	1.75%
1859	Stoke Bishop	600	136	£3,300	£30	0.9%
1860	Arle and Alstone Cheltenham *	1,050	338	£2,350	£125	5.3%
1860	St James, Bristol	3,000	250	£3,100	£125	4.0%
1860	The Dings, Bristol	2,000	250	£1,050	£125	11.9%
1862	St James the Less, Bristol	10,325	181	£1,000	£100	10.0%
1862	Corsham	3,196	290	£1,350	£125	9.25%
1863	Whelford, Kempsford	268	120	£556	£80	14.4%
1864	The Edge, Painswick	400	200	£600	£120	20.0%

The range of projects supported by the Association, as listed above, is a reminder that the same period which saw the emergence of new churches on the landscape also witnessed in the diocese a widespread effort, mainly in the latter half of the century, of restoring and renovating existing churches. In many cases, a fine line existed between the argument for restoring or rebuilding. Bishop Ellicott remarked in 1898 that "extensive additions to an existing building are frequently found to cost as much, if not more, than a totally new structure."¹⁴⁴

To describe all of this activity as a programme would be to imply a methodical approach which did not seem to exist; rather the work seemed to rely upon local initiatives. These might well depend on the incumbent, the patron of the living, or a local landowner, sometimes a combination of two or three groups. Local resistance to such enterprises seems to have been comparatively rare. In 1871, Bishop Ellicott noted that restoration of the chancel at Childswickham in Winchcombe deanery had

¹⁴³ *ibid.* Columns 1 to 6 were in the original Report. The last column has been interpolated. "Arle and Alstone" is almost certainly the present St Mark's church where building commenced in 1862.

¹⁴⁴ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1898, p. 4

not been completed because the landowner, who was responsible for it, would not “share” in the work.¹⁴⁵ Presumably, that obstacle was later overcome since he announced three years later without comment the chancel’s restoration.¹⁴⁶ At Bourton on the Hill in Stow deanery in 1914, the announcement of a successful restoration was accompanied by praise for those whose labour had been so richly rewarded and a rebuke for the “evil prophets at the time who said that the money spent on restoration was being wasted”.¹⁴⁷

Where wealthy individuals were not available and recourse to the whole congregation was needed, despite the efforts of the Diocesan Association, the outcome inevitably depended on the nature of the parish concerned. In the wealthy parish of Ss Phillip and James, Leckhampton, an appeal in 1906 for funds to cover essential roof repairs raised in a fortnight more than the £353 required¹⁴⁸ whereas in the following year St Mary de Lode, Gloucester had to extend outside the parish its appeal for £400 to buttress the crumbling eleventh century tower because “the parishioners, who are mostly poor, have done what they can.”¹⁴⁹ Similarly, in 1923, an appeal was made to the whole diocese to raise £700 of the £2,500 required to rebuild Nympsfield Rectory, “hopelessly dilapidated and dangerous to dwell in” because the village was small and poor.¹⁵⁰ On the other hand, at Ruardean in 1890, 470 donors could be found to share in the cost of £200 worth of restoration work.¹⁵¹

Whatever the source of funding, the net effect was that restoration work in the diocese was thorough. In 1875, Bishop Ellicott, confining his observations to projects costing £500 or more, observed that since 1840 about one million pounds had been

¹⁴⁵ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress* 1871, p7

¹⁴⁶ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress* 1874, p. 5

¹⁴⁷ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, January, 1914

¹⁴⁸ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1906, p.18

¹⁴⁹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine* 1907, p. 190

¹⁵⁰ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1923, p. 10

spent in the diocese on restoration and building.¹⁵² In 1889, he announced that since his arrival in the diocese, 310 churches had undergone full restoration and improvements.¹⁵³

The movement had his full support. He described the improvements as “tokens of the continuous interest that is felt by the worshippers” in the “outward aspect and adornment” of their churches¹⁵⁴ but a particular concern of his seemed to be the type of seating introduced, since he considered that when he conducted Confirmation services “high-pewed” churches were intrinsically unsatisfactory. They emphasised separation within the congregation and encouraged irreverence among the candidates for confirmation. In an early (1868) annual Report to the diocese he explained that

No pains beforehand, no arrangements at the time, can ever do away with the bad effect produced by the separate seating of the children in high pews. The difference between the Confirmation in the restored and unrestored church cannot be over-estimated; in the one it is communion and edification; in the other it is effort and anxiety.”¹⁵⁵

Ellicott was not the only Victorian bishop to be troubled by irreverence and misbehaviour at Confirmation services. Owen Chadwick states that in Lancashire “vast confirmations, with occasional irreverence, continued at least until the end of the eighties.”¹⁵⁶ Ellicott, too, experienced large numbers of candidates. At Clifton Parish Church in 1868, he confirmed 275 candidates and gave two addresses in a service lasting just under two hours.¹⁵⁷ In time, he began to notice a welcome change in the behaviour of those being confirmed. In 1870 he reported that they were becoming “increasingly serious, earnest and often devout.”¹⁵⁸ The following year he

¹⁵¹ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress* 1890, p.4

¹⁵² Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress* 1875, p.7

¹⁵³ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress* 1890, p.2. The figure included churches in the diocese of Bristol but still represented over 60 per cent of the 500 parishes. That proportion is greater when it is considered that the latter figure included new churches which presumably required little or no restoration.

¹⁵⁴ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress* 1893, p.3

¹⁵⁵ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress* 1868, p.12

¹⁵⁶ Chadwick, *The Victorian Church, Part II, op. cit.*, p.343

¹⁵⁷ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1869, p.9

¹⁵⁸ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1870, p.10

remarked on “the continual and even increased reverential earnestness of the candidates, and the thorough Christian sympathy evinced by the gathered congregation.”¹⁵⁹ Similarly, in 1872, he was “heartened” by “the reverent demeanour and apparent earnestness of the candidates,”¹⁶⁰ a feature which persisted until at least 1880.¹⁶¹ Presumably, the behaviour of the candidates after that date continued to be satisfactory because any anxieties about their conduct are absent from his later reports.

The “triple division” of the County

It is a common observation that the county of Gloucestershire falls geographically into three sections, the Severn Vale, the Cotswolds and the Forest of Dean.¹⁶² Particularly in the last two, geographical factors had a strong bearing on church life at the time.

Difficulty of movement between parishes was the constant obstacle to both church and normal life for those living in the Cotswolds, the range of hills stretching from Bath to the edge of Oxfordshire and running along the eastern side of Gloucestershire. Clergy and parishes were often isolated from their neighbours, especially in the winter months. Some of the clergy could afford personal coachmen¹⁶³ but there is insufficient evidence to determine whether this was normal or exceptional among the Cotswold clergy.

¹⁵⁹ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1871, p. 10

¹⁶⁰ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1872, p. 11

¹⁶¹ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1880, p.5

¹⁶² “A triple division into vale, wold and forest” is the description in *Victoria County History of Gloucestershire*, Vol. ii, *op. cit.*, p.127. Cf. also Map 1.

¹⁶³ Thomas Harris was employed in that capacity for over 40 years by Francis Broome Witts, the Rector of Upper Slaughter *Stow Deanery Magazine*, February, 1907 and Abraham Newman of Adlestrop similarly served the Rector of his parish *Stow Deanery Magazine*, March 1914. When he

At least before the First World War, the coming of motorised transport probably had little appreciable impact in the area. Owen Chadwick has asserted flatly that “no village parson of the Victorian age possessed a car.”¹⁶⁴ Nothing has been found in the source material to suggest that Gloucestershire was an exception.¹⁶⁵

In the latter part of Victoria’s reign, the railways transformed Cotswold village life to some extent and it became commonplace for annual church outings to take the train to London or the south coast.¹⁶⁶ The extent to which church life had come to depend on the railways was demonstrated in 1912 when a “dislocation of the railways” disrupted the Diocesan Mission’s programme of Lent and Holy Week addresses.¹⁶⁷ The rail network also had a direct bearing on changes to archdeaconry boundaries implemented in 1918. The archdeaconry of Cirencester, which had been created in 1883, was reconstituted under the new title of the archdeaconry of Cheltenham, a move which was believed to be advantageous to a number of deaneries, as explained by Bishop Gibson in a letter to the diocese:

Cheltenham itself is far more acceptable than Cirencester for the deaneries of Winchcombe, Campden and Stow, which *are directly connected to it by convenient lines of railway*, [my italics] whereas they have no natural connection with Cirencester and can only get to it by a cross country and awkward journey.¹⁶⁸

By the end of the nineteenth century, a humbler form of transport, the pedal cycle, extended the travel range for many individuals. Cycling became fashionable in

died in his 97th year, Mr Newman also had the distinction of having left 39 grandchildren and 39 great grandchildren. *Stow Deanery Magazine*, March 1914

¹⁶⁴ Chadwick, *The Victorian Church, Part. II, op. cit.*, p. 170

¹⁶⁵ Bishop Gibson and Oswald Wardell-Yerburgh, the Vicar of Tewkesbury owned cars by 1913 but the latter was riding on horseback through his parish in 1913 when he suffered a fatal seizure. *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, December, 1913

¹⁶⁶ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, August 1904 provides some examples. Down in the Severn Vale, Tewkesbury Abbey choirboys were even more adventurous. In 1909, they went by rail to Llandudno (*Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, August, 1909) and to Plymouth in 1914, reaching there before breakfast. (*Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, August, 1914) In both cases, they did not arrive home until the early hours of the following morning.

¹⁶⁷ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1912, p.79

¹⁶⁸ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1918, p.138

Travel in the Cotswolds



A typical Sunday School outing with farmers' waggons pressed into service

June Lewis: *The Cotswolds: Life and Tradition*, pp. 72., 156

The bicycle gave individuals freedom of movement



Britain in the nineties.¹⁶⁹ At the Diocesan Conference of 1896, in a debate on the efficient deployment of the clergy, one speaker complained that no one priest could effectively cover the area involved if he were to be responsible for a group of parishes. This assertion was met with a rejoinder by another speaker that one clergyman “could minister to three or four small parishes, especially as he could have the use of a cycle.”¹⁷⁰ Although the extent of clergy use is not known, there are occasional glimpses in the available documents of Gloucestershire clergymen using a bicycle for parish work,¹⁷¹ mostly in the Severn Vale. However, the railways served only limited areas and a parson had to be wealthy or fit to make use of cars or cycles. So in general it remains true that until well into the twentieth century the geography of the Cotswolds imposed restrictions on movement.¹⁷²

Geography and the weather contributed to the isolation experienced by many rural clergy. According to Chadwick, Victorian bishops in general worried about the morale of their country clergy.¹⁷³ Bishop Ellicott certainly did so. In 1887 had concluded that the natural consequence of clergy isolation was “apathy and downheartedness.”¹⁷⁴ In some areas, it was apparently difficult for them to meet even at a ruri-decanal level and the bishop suggested that “it would greatly improve the aggregate attendance” of such meetings and “so quicken the spiritual life of the

¹⁶⁹ Trevelyan, *Illustrated English Social History*, Vol IV., *op. cit.*, p.100 A decade earlier, John Dearman Birchall from his home at Upton St. Leonards had begun exploring the county for miles around on a tricycle, covering 36 miles in one day and being undeterred by the occasional fall or mechanical breakdown. Verey, *The Diary of a Victorian Squire*, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-162

¹⁷⁰ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1897, p. 186. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, there were some 50 cycle dealers in Gloucestershire, 13 of them in Cotswold towns or villages. Cf “Cycle Agents” in *Kelly’s Directory of Gloucestershire*, 1906

¹⁷¹ A visiting preacher at Tewkesbury Abbey in 1903 was commended for having cycled from Fretherne in the pouring rain. *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine* May, 1903. Fretherne lies about 25 miles south west of Tewkesbury and the route is not always level. In 1914 the unfortunate Wyndham Allen Chaplin, Vicar of Hill, fell from his cycle into the Severn canal and was drowned.

¹⁷² Cf. Chapter 6 on the movements of the Church Army evangelistic van.

¹⁷³ Chadwick, *The Victorian Church, Part II*, *op. cit.*, p.167

deanery” if meetings were to be held at two separate centres within its boundaries. “There would be two hearts instead of one, but at each a fuller flow of life.”¹⁷⁵

In such areas, a road journey of a few miles was no light undertaking.¹⁷⁶ The Rector of Bourton-on-the-Water was also responsible for the neighbouring parishes of Clapton and Lower Slaughter and in 1902 it was announced that a lady from Bourton had been appointed as District Visitor for Clapton, because it was thought to be “a considerable distance from the residence of him who is responsible for its spiritual welfare.”¹⁷⁷ The war years intensified the problem. In 1917, Canon Edward Jennings, Rector of Whittington, resigned as Rural Dean of Cheltenham “owing to the distance of Whittington from the town and the curtailment of trains” and his duties were then entrusted to the Rector of Cheltenham.¹⁷⁸

The problem was most evident in the Cotswolds but the Forest of Dean clergy also encountered travel difficulties. The Revd. Arthur Doherty, the Rector of Preston, was unable to attend as many meetings of the North Forest Clerical Society as he wished because of “his isolated position”¹⁷⁹ and at the Diocesan Conference of 1898, a proposal to meet the following year at Cheltenham instead of Gloucester was rejected, partly because, as the Archdeacon of Gloucester explained, “the clergy from the Forest would have a difficulty in getting to Cheltenham.”¹⁸⁰

But the isolation of the clergy of the Forest, where mining, quarrying and iron making were the main occupations, had less to do with geographical factors than with the work and character of their parishioners. “From their having been for so many

¹⁷⁴ Ellicott, *Spiritual Needs in Country Parishes*, *op. cit.*, p. 51

¹⁷⁵ *ibid.*, p.52

¹⁷⁶ A Sunday School outing in 1906 from Lower Guiting in the Stow deanery to the ruins of Hailes Abbey, near Winchcombe, “a distance of quite five miles,” as the report put it, involved the transport of 78 children and 30 adults by horse-drawn wagons. *Stow Deanery Magazine*, September, 1906

¹⁷⁷ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, January 1902. Clapton is two to three miles from Bourton.

¹⁷⁸ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1917, p.21. Whittington is about four miles east of Cheltenham.

¹⁷⁹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1912, p. 197

¹⁸⁰ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1899, p. 165

generations an isolated and peculiar people," wrote H.G. Nicholls in 1858, drawing on his personal experience,

most of them are ignorant of the rest of the world, and have of course a correspondingly exaggerated idea of their own importance. ... What they chiefly lack is more generosity and candour towards strangers, and a clearer understanding of their duties as protectors of the national property, in respect of the crops of timber which grow around them." ¹⁸¹

A more modern judgement also finds the Foresters guilty of unconventionality and insularity, at least by Gloucestershire standards:

The Foresters' origins as illegal squatters and their struggle to defend their commoning and mining rights gave them a strong sense of community, as well as a reputation for surliness and suspicion towards outsiders. Characteristics shared with other British coalfields, such as devotion to sport, the central role of miners' clubs, and the formation of brass bands, also helped to create a distinct identity. ¹⁸²

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Church of England appears virtually to have neglected the Forest, a situation which may have been exacerbated because of its peculiar position, located in the county of Gloucestershire but the ecclesiastical responsibility of Hereford diocese. Nicholls claimed that "no sustained effort to impart religious instruction to the inhabitants of the Forest was made until 1803" but at that time there seems to have been a genuine desire on the part of the Foresters for religious guidance. ¹⁸³ The Church's response, in terms of church construction, has been tabulated in Table 1.10. However, the ultimate beneficiaries of a quickened religious sentiment on the part of Foresters appear to have been, not the Established Church, but its Nonconformist counterparts, possibly because their less

¹⁸¹ *Nicholls's Forest of Dean*, Dawlish, David and Charles, 1966, pp. 150,151. The writer was a perpetual curate of Holy Trinity church in the Forest. The allusion to timber is a reference to the Foresters' inveterate habit of helping themselves to wood from the plantations. He found their personal hygiene practices offensive because their ablutions after work were not "as privately as [they] might be." Among their peculiarities he mentions that when taking an oath in court, the Forester touched the Book of the Four Gospels with a stick of holly, so as not to soil it with his hands. They normally used the same stick, regarding it as having been consecrated for the purpose. (p. 149)

¹⁸² *Victoria County History of Gloucestershire op. cit.*, vol. v., p. 293

¹⁸³ *Nicholls's Forest of Dean, op. cit.*, pp.153-160

formal approach to worship was better suited to the temperament of the population. It certainly seems that the Church of England and the populace were often estranged or at least that the Church's pastoral ministry did not reach a substantial part of the population. Another former incumbent of a Forest parish, writing a half a century later than Nicholls, quoted what was said to have been a common remark in the 1860s, "The Church don't come to us and we won't go to the Church"¹⁸⁴

It is indicative of the low standing of the Church of England in the area that in the first elections to the Forest School Board in 1875, Nonconformist candidates took two-thirds of the votes and two Anglican clergymen failed to win a seat.¹⁸⁵ Most churches in the region were Methodist, particularly Primitive Methodist and Bible Christians¹⁸⁶ and "Nonconformist chapels remained at the centre of the Foresters' religious, social, political and intellectual life until well into the twentieth century."¹⁸⁷ The Diocesan authorities were well aware that their influence in the region was limited. "I suppose", Bishop Gibson remarked in 1910, of the deanery of South Forest, which contained the mining areas, "Nonconformity is stronger than in any other part of the diocese."¹⁸⁸

The County at Work

Some indication of the economic structure of the county during the period can be inferred from the decennial Census reports. The report for 1921 showed that 11.8 per cent of the male work force was employed in transport and communications, 9.9 per cent in agriculture, 8.6 per cent in metal work, 4.6 per cent in wood working and

¹⁸⁴ Allan, G.A., 'Church Work in the Forest of Dean', *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine* 1906, p.193. He cites the case of one sick man who had not been visited by a clergyman for eight years.

¹⁸⁵ *Victoria County History of Gloucestershire*, Vol. v., *op. cit.*, p. 397

¹⁸⁶ *ibid*, p. 396

¹⁸⁷ *ibid*, p. 397

4.2 (probably all in the Forest) in mining and quarrying.¹⁸⁹ Of the female work force, 67.7 per cent, a figure which undoubtedly included married women, were classified as “Retired or not gainfully employed” and of the remainder, 19 per cent were employed either as domestic servants, or as servants in clubs, institutes or hotels.

But these categories did not wholly explain the working life of the county. “It should be noted that the diocese of Gloucester is largely agricultural, at least half of the population of 320,000 living in villages and country towns.”¹⁹⁰ That contemporary description of the diocese was the preamble to the diocesan Report on the National Mission of 1916¹⁹¹ and stresses the key role which agriculture played in Gloucestershire’s economy.

Periods of depression and the mechanisation of labour led to a decline in the both in the amount of arable land and in the number of agricultural workers during the latter part of the nineteenth century:

Table 1.13 Agricultural Decline in Gloucestershire, 1871 to 1901

<i>Year</i>	<i>Arable Land (Acres)</i>	<i>Male Labourers</i>	<i>Female Labourers</i>	<i>Total Labourers</i>
1871	352,613	18,579	2,007	20,586
1881	326,801	18,650	1,150	19,800
1891	286,194	15,386	530	15,916
1901	261,922	13,137	182	13,319

192

but large stretches of the diocese were still dependent on working the land and a county historian could conclude in 1907 that

... although fortunes cannot now be easily made in agriculture, there is no occupation presenting such attractive features to the man with moderate capital as that of a tenant farmer upon a large estate under a

¹⁸⁸ Gibson, *The Diocese and the Parish*, *op. cit.*, p.44

¹⁸⁹ *Census of England and Wales, 1921, County of Gloucester*, London, H.M.S.O., 1923

¹⁹⁰ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1916, p. 169

¹⁹¹ Cf. Chapter 6

¹⁹² *Victoria County History of Gloucestershire*, Vol.II, *op. cit.*, p.245

landlord who may be relied on to deal fairly with his tenants, as is happily the general rule in the county of Gloucester. ¹⁹³

By sharing the patterns of life, sowing and harvesting, in agricultural areas, some priests and their people forged an understanding. The Vicar of Fairford, Francis Carbonell addressing a Harvest Festival congregation in September 1913, pointed out that the service was “an important occasion” for such a parish “where nine-tenths of the inhabitants depend more or less on Agriculture for their living.” ¹⁹⁴ When Thomas Hodson, wished to instruct his Oddington people on the purpose of Lent, he employed imagery appropriate to their daily experience: “It is a time that should be of the same profit to the soul as the different processes of ploughing, harrowing, cleansing the soil and burning and extracting the thorns that grow therein are to the land.” ¹⁹⁵

The rhythms of pastoral life and the changing seasons also had their effect on church activities. The Vicar of Gorsley with Clifford’s Mesne, in the South Forest deanery, acknowledged that in the summer “while the days are long our men indeed and our women too work late and meetings and services are often out of the question for them” but that a number of church activities could be started with the onset of winter. ¹⁹⁶ However, in Bisley deanery the Vicar of Harescombe and Pitchcombe took a different view, admitting in October 1913 that, as the days shortened, “dark and narrow roads” were “inimical to church attendance.” ¹⁹⁷ Other clergy were sometimes sceptical whether the husbandry demands were such an impediment to the religious duties of their parishioners. The Vicar of Sheepscombe voiced the suspicion that “though, in an agricultural parish, certain things must be done on Sundays, yet these works of necessity are probably sometimes blamed unjustly for people not attending

¹⁹³ *ibid.*, p. 261

¹⁹⁴ *Fairford Parish Magazine*, G.D.R. P141 IN 4/13, September, 1913

¹⁹⁵ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, February, 1907

¹⁹⁶ *Newent and District Magazine* October, 1896

church services.”¹⁹⁸ His neighbour at Great Witcombe went further and offered to negotiate with his parishioners, inviting them to state their preferred time for Holy Communion services:

I know the care of the beasts makes a difficulty about coming but I will gladly have the Celebration on one Sunday in the month at any time that will suit your work, if you will let me know what time. The Church Council will meet in January and will give an opportunity for any suggestions to be made.¹⁹⁹

The 1907 verdict on the prospects for farming quoted above of course considered agriculture solely from the view of the landlord or tenant farmer but it was very relevant for many diocesan clergy. A diocesan report on Glebe lands in 1886 asserted that “the clergy represent more than one-fourth of the resident landowners of England” and were suffering, just like lay landowners, at that time of agricultural depression. Fearing that the statement might be “misconstrued” as an admission that the “clergy were aristocrats” the Archdeacon of Gloucester secured a more neutral amendment to the report which then read: “the clergy have for ages been not salaried, but dependent upon land for their income.”²⁰⁰

Clergy Income

After the separation from Bristol, some three quarters of the Gloucester diocese incumbents depended to some degree on tithe or glebe payments for their income. In 1913, 250 benefices possessed glebe land, 40 holding from 50 to 100 acres and 57 over 100 acres.²⁰¹ Notably, Withington in Cheltenham deanery held 1,080

¹⁹⁷ *Painswick Magazine*, 1913, p. 83. As the times of service in that parish remained unchanged throughout the rest of the year, it seems unlikely that anyone took up his challenge.

¹⁹⁸ *Painswick Magazine* 1909, p. 49

¹⁹⁹ *Painswick Magazine*, 1913, p.8

²⁰⁰ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1887, p. 157

²⁰¹ Gibson, *The Work of the Diocese*, *op. cit.*, Gloucester. Minchin and Gibbs, 1913, p. 35

acres at the end of the nineteenth century.²⁰² In 1920, the Diocesan Treasurer revealed that “at least” 213 benefices in the diocese received part of their income from tithes, in one case as low as one pound and, at the other extreme, “a very considerable sum” and he assessed that “a very large proportion of the professional income of the clergy in this diocese came entirely” from tithes.²⁰³

At Tewkesbury, the Abbey’s income was conditioned by some peculiarities of historical provenance.²⁰⁴ The net effect was an unsatisfactory level of income, at least in the view of Ernest Smith, the Vicar in 1914, who scornfully described the £260 per year brought to the benefice by past benefactions and glebe rent as “the average wage of the higher type of skilled mechanic.”²⁰⁵

Tables 1.14 and 1.15 below show the variety of sources of income available to the ten wealthiest and 12 poorest parishes respectively in the diocese in the sample year of 1903:

Table 1.14 Sources of Income in the Wealthiest Parishes, 1903²⁰⁶

<i>Parish</i>	<i>Gross Income 1903</i>	<i>Net Income 1903</i>	<i>Tithes</i>	<i>Glebe (Acres)</i>	<i>EC/QAB</i>	<i>Fees etc.</i>
Bishop’s Cleeve	£1,332	£722	£1,323	450	£6	£5
Hempstead	£1,109	£990	£110	...	£53	£860
Newent	£1,037	£563	£1,542	...	...	£13
Cheltenham St Mary/Matthew	£933	£521	...	...	....	£800
Tetbury	£920	£494	...	...	£65	...
Leckhampton St Peter	£893	£794	...	165	£30	£50
Slimbridge	£774	£674	£683	347	...	£101
Yate	£730	£598	£726	160	33	310
Avening	£650	£500	£681	85	...	£114
Cheltenham Christ Church	£600	£570	...	...	...	...

Note: Column 5 heading ‘EC/QAB’ denotes contributions to the parish from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners or Queen Anne’s Bounty

²⁰² *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1883, 1893

²⁰³ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1921, p.145

²⁰⁴ Under an arrangement dating from 1629 it could claim part of the tithes from the parish of St Ishmael, Milford Haven. *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, June, 1889. In 1921 these contributed £63 to the value of the living. *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, March, 1921. At the same time, the Abbey’s income was subject to regular deductions, £20 going to the Vicar of St Mark, Guildford and £32 to two parishes in the Tewkesbury deanery, £20 to the Vicar of Tredington and £12 to the Vicar of Ashchurch. *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1893, p. 121

²⁰⁵ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, December, 1914

²⁰⁶ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1903, pp. 72-108

The importance of tithe and glebe is shown in the entries for Bishop's Cleeve and Newent, while that for St Mary and St Matthew, Cheltenham indicates that neither was indispensable, so long as other sources of income were available. In the Cheltenham case, the last column almost certainly included the income derived from pew rents. At both churches rented seats were the norm rather than the exception. St Matthew's rented 883 of its 1,192 seats and St Mary's 445 out of 606.²⁰⁷ Hempstead, on the other hand, is unique. The rector there was the beneficiary of a charitable scheme set up by Sylvanus Lysons.²⁰⁸ By 1885 the benefice was worth £1,000 a year²⁰⁹ and in 1923 the parish remained among the wealthiest in the diocese with a declared gross income of £1,196.²¹⁰

Table 1.15 Sources of Income in the Poorest Parishes, 1903

<i>Parish</i>	<i>Gross Income 1903</i>	<i>Net Income 1903</i>	<i>Tithes</i>	<i>Glebe (Acres)</i>	<i>EC/ QAB</i>	<i>Fees etc</i>
Marston Meysey	£78	£72	...	26	£25	£49
Poulton	£78	£62	£24	3	£50	...
Cold Salperton	£75	£71	£8	46	£12	...
Tredington	£73	£65	£20	6	£12	£20
Hawling +	£71	£71	...	13	...	£2
Pauntley +	£71	£71	...	16	£32	£13
Woolstone +	£66	£66	£161	36	...	...
Weston on Avon +	£62	£58	...	38	£6	...
Badminton +	£54	£54	...	...	£54	...
Lemington +	£41	£0	...	39	£11	...
Great Washbourne +	£36	£22	£5	33	£13	...
Up Hatherley	£30	£30	...	...	£30	...
Toddington +	£25	£10	£12	38	...	...

211

The above table represents the income of livings in 1903 but does not necessarily reflect the total income of the incumbent. A '+' after the parish name denotes that the

²⁰⁷ *Diocesan Statistics, op. cit.*, 1903/04

²⁰⁸ Previously mentioned above as the originator of a charity for clergy widows.

²⁰⁹ *Victoria County History of Gloucestershire, Vol. iv., op. cit.*, p.428

²¹⁰ *Diocesan Statistics, op. cit.*, 1923

²¹¹ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar, 1903*, pp. 72-108. *Diocesan Statistics op. cit.*, 1903

benefice was held in plurality with that of a neighbouring parish and in three of the seven parishes so designated the combined total income was above £300 per year.²¹²

Nevertheless, there were a few parishes where no additional income was available. As shown in the Table above, none of the parishes could expect much return from tithes, glebe land rent or fees. Up Hatherley was particularly poorly endowed, being entirely reliant on a small grant from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners

As a broad generalisation, rural parishes relied on tithe payments and/or rent from glebe land for their staple income; urban parishes looked to fees and pew rents. As the nineteenth century advanced, the provision of rented seats in churches became a matter of some controversy, justified only by the necessity to raise income for a living not otherwise endowed. On the eve of the consecration of Holy Apostles, Charlton Kings in June, 1885, the Vicar of Charlton Kings, out of whose parish the new church had been created, placed the hard facts before his parishioners:

This beautiful Church [Holy Apostles] contains 650 sittings, of which 250 are declared to be free for ever. We would much prefer all seats were free, as 250 seats is but a scant allowance for the 1,500 poor who inhabit the district assigned but the Clergy must eat if they are to preach and to eat they must have an income, and the income at Holy Apostles, also secured by the generosity of Mr. Higgs, will only pay for the rent of the Vicarage.

²¹³

A similar point was made at All Saints', Cheltenham in 1910 where 850 seats were divided equally into the free and rented categories. In view of a decline in the amount

²¹² For example, the income for Lemington in 1903: Gross - £41, Net £0, would have been nothing short of disastrous for Augustus Williams, the incumbent, were it not for the fact that he was also Vicar of Todenham which produced that year a Gross/Net income of £295/£253. Similarly, Charles Covey did not need to rely on his income at Great Washbourne when his other benefice at Alderton could yield a Gross/Net return of £343/£303. Likewise, Arthur Davis, who took on the cure of souls at Weston on Avon in 1904 had the more substantial income of Welford (1903 Gross £313/Net £268) on which to rely. 1903 was an untypically lean year for Lemington, as is shown by the following extracts, taken at random from the *Diocesan Statistics, op. cit.*, for subsequent years. Read Year/Gross/Net Income: 1906/£47/£45; 1910/£47/£45; 1915/£49/£45; 1920/£73/£73

²¹³ Paget, M., (editor), *A History of Charlton Kings, op. cit.*, p. 131

of collections that year, and because the church had no endowments,²¹⁴ the congregation were urged “to take seats.”

Nevertheless, in 1903, 178 of the 350 churches in the diocese made no charge for seats.²¹⁵ Notable in this category were the two Forest deaneries where only the parishes on the periphery of the Forest heartland charged worshippers²¹⁶ and Tewkesbury Abbey where all 1,000 seats were free to the congregation. The Abbey’s policy of foregoing pew rents was a fine example but, as successive Vicars found, it resulted in demands on their personal savings.²¹⁷ There was a distinct contrast between the town churches of Gloucester and Cheltenham. In the latter, all 11 churches charged for some proportion of their accommodation, even at St Peter’s, the poorest parish in the town, where 60 of 560 seats were appropriated. In contrast, eight of Gloucester’s 13 churches made no pew charges at all.

The following table, using six selected years, shows that in the first two decades of the twentieth century there was a perceptible shift towards an increase in the number of free seats across the diocese.

**Table 1.16 Diocese of Gloucester
Total Church Seating: Proportion of Rented to Free Seats
1903-1918**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Rented</i>	<i>Free</i>	<i>% Free</i>
1903/04	102,658	27,891	74,767	72.83
1906/07	101,343	24,928	76,415	75.40
1910/11	103,463	21,797	81,666	78.93
1913/14	104,843	20,616	84,227	80.33
1915/16	104,850	19,220	85,630	81.67
1917/18	103,135	16,463	86,672	84.04

218

²¹⁴ All Saints’, Cheltenham, Parish Meetings, G.D.R. P70/2 VE 2/1. March 30, 1910.

²¹⁵ *Diocesan Statistics, op. cit.*, 1903/04. Note 350 churches, not parishes

²¹⁶ As mentioned above, the standing of the Church of England in the Forest was so low that charges for seats would have been a most misguided policy.

²¹⁷ See the comments of Ernest Smith (above) and the remarks of Harry Sheringham (Chapter 2).

²¹⁸ *Diocesan Statistics, op. cit.* 1903/04. 1906/07, 1910/11. 1913/14. 1915/16, 1917/18. The figures relate to parish churches only and do not include mission or temporary churches or rooms. After 1918,.

The above figures probably reflect a change of attitude by church leaders towards the system of renting pews. In his Charge of 1892, Archdeacon John Sheringham of Gloucester had welcomed the practice because it represented the use of “personal property” for the benefit of the Church, as distinct from “real [*i.e.* landed] property,” which was subject to declining returns.²¹⁹ But in 1916 Canon Ridsdale, the Canon Missioner castigated pew rents as an example of “all that was effete and an obstacle to progress” in church organisation and administration.²²⁰ and, on another occasion, “very forcibly” criticised “the impossible system of pew rents.” Nothing, he said, “was further from the true spirit of ‘All One in Christ’ than this custom whereby class distinctions were emphasised in the very House of God in the land.”²²¹ In the same spirit, the Vicar of Tewkesbury, in the following year, criticised the Church’s association with “evil traditions, with pews and private sittings and preferences for the rich.”²²²

It is against this background that an important decision was made at Cirencester in 1917. The parish church of St John the Baptist contained 1,500 seats, of which 450 were rented. At the daughter church of Holy Trinity, Watermoor, 150 seats were rented and 450 free. That year, however, the Easter Vestry meetings at both churches decided by “a large majority”, to abolish, with effect from the following Advent, pew rents which reportedly contributed £150 a year to the income of the benefice. Both churchwardens were in favour of the change but pointed out that the income would have to be raised some other way. Although Earl Bathurst, the owner

the total number of seats remained fairly constant: 1920- 106,372; 1921 – 106,499; 1922 – 102,969; 1923 – 101, 997 but the Statistics no longer distinguished between rented and free seats.

²¹⁹ Sheringham, J.W., *Church Finance, Personal Property, Sustenance of the Clergy. A Charge to the Clergy and Laity of His Archdeaconry, Easter 1892*, Gloucester, Davies and Son, , 1892, p. 10.

²²⁰ *Meetings of the Archdeacon and Rural Deans, op. cit.*, November 16, 1916

²²¹ *Diocesan Magazine*, 1916, p. 139

²²² *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, January 1917

of the family seat of Cirencester Park, “most strongly opposed the change” and moved an amendment to the proposal he was defeated by 85 votes to 18.²²³ However, it seems likely that some form of compromise was later reached at the parish church because the accommodation figures there for 1917/18 were given as 93 appropriated and 1,100 free seats. At Watermoor that year all 400 seats were declared free.²²⁴

The consequence for the diocesan clergy of a dependence on various and variable sources of income was that there was a marked inequality in their level of income, “a source of vexation to laity as well as to the poorer clergy,” so a Diocesan report claimed in 1892.²²⁵ It also meant that clergy income fluctuated according to the changes in agricultural fortunes. In 1898, at a time of agriculture downturn nationally,²²⁶ the Treasurer of Winchcombe deanery issued a letter to the laity stating:

The ancient Endowments of the Church, arising principally from tithes and glebe, are through the widespread agricultural depression, no longer sufficient for the support of all the Parochial Clergy ... and the laity must take up the burden.²²⁷

Even in more favourable economic circumstances, it was noted that the value of tithe had fallen to only one third of its par value and that the possession of glebe could be viewed as more of a burden than a blessing. Lord St Aldwyn explained to the Diocesan Conference in 1907 that

Glebe land is at best a very precarious endowment for a clergyman. He will rarely have the knowledge and, perhaps, still more rarely the means of farming his own glebe at a profit. He has to let it to a parishioner and for the above reasons it is difficult for him to exact an adequate rent. In looking at the great fall in the value of land over a very large part of the diocese of Gloucester, the glebes have, even in the case of livings which were fairly well endowed become, I am afraid, almost a ‘white elephant’ to the unfortunate clergyman who depended upon them; they have been compelled to let them, if they could let them at all, at a rent very far short

²²³ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1917, p. 84

²²⁴ *Diocesan Statistics, op. cit.* 1917/18

²²⁵ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1893, p. 175

²²⁶ Cole and Postgate, *The Common People, op. cit.* p.444

²²⁷ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, July, 1898

indeed of the rent which they commanded in the middle of the nineteenth century.²²⁸

Not all dioceses were so dependent. In 1896, the Bishop of Liverpool responded to a query from Gloucester by stating that “very few Incumbents in his diocese were dependent on tithes or land” and that Liverpool clergy relied on the diocesan organisations to raise their incomes.²²⁹

Problems of income and isolation notwithstanding, many diocesan clergy took solace from the rural character of Gloucester diocese. At a meeting at Charfield in 1907, 15 country clergy, discussing some of the “special difficulties” attached to ministering in country parishes, were invited by the Chairman to count their blessings:

... though undoubtedly country clergy had difficulties which were often particularly trying, they ought to find help in their surroundings, for to them God was ever present in the beauties of nature — a privilege which those who worked in the populous parishes of our large towns did not enjoy.”²³⁰

A similar message was imparted by Archdeacon Sheringham in October 1893 to the congregation at the Newent Harvest Festival when he criticised the drift of agricultural labourers to “our densely populated cities,” where they were “deprived of the physical, moral and intellectual training connected with being daily surrounded with a healthy atmosphere and with the grandeur and beauty of the works of creation.”²³¹ The Archdeacon’s words are notable for their avoidance of economic reality, the awareness that labourers were deserting the countryside not so much from choice as from necessity. The Rector of Newent had greeted the start of that same year with a melancholic observation:

So the New Year opens with gloom spreading its sable wings over our agricultural locality. Scanty, if any, is the remuneration of the

²²⁸ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1908, p. 238

²²⁹ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1897, p. 172

²³⁰ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1907, p.130

²³¹ *Newent District Magazine*, October, 1893

husbandmen. Trade suffers in consequence. 'If one member suffers, the others suffer with it.' Hence comforts which habit has rendered almost as necessities of life have to be sacrificed, but those trials will not be in vain, if they lead us to trust more in our Heavenly Father, Who clothes the lilies; feeds the young ravens; numbers the hairs of our heads; and teaches that man does not live by bread alone and not to be too anxious for the morrow. ²³²

That the economy of the area continued to decline is implied in a report the following year when at a meeting in Newent residents were urged to leave their "overcrowded locality" and emigrate to Canada where they were promised "lucrative employments and ownerships." ²³³

The Archdeacon's romantic view of the worker in communion with Nature may be contrasted with that expressed by J. Arthur Gibbs, writing from the Cotswolds in 1899. As the young squire of Ablington and a churchwarden of Bibury, Gibbs may be presumed to have viewed agricultural work from both a social and religious perspective. He saw "long-suffering farmers" paying wages "out of their fast diminishing capital" and he understood that it was the lack of work which drove agricultural labourers to "go off to the coal mines and big towns", to join the Army or to emigrate. ²³⁴ Furthermore, Arthur Gibbs understood the working life of the agricultural labourer, the monotony of his tasks and his diet and the fatigue which left him unable to make the best use of what leisure time came his way. ²³⁵

Even for those labourers fortunate enough to be in employment, the vagaries of climate and the fluctuations of the market tended to obscure the beauties of Nature. By virtue of their profession, however, the clergy were insulated from experiencing

²³² *Newent District Magazine*, January, 1893

²³³ *Newent District Magazine*, April, 1894

²³⁴ Gibbs, J. A., *A Cotswold Village* (1899). Edited by Alan Sutton, Gloucester, Alan Sutton, 1988, p.46

²³⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 70-71. The same problem equally afflicted the labourers in industrial Birmingham. Hugh McLeod, *Religion and the Working Class in Nineteenth Century Britain*, London and Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1984, p.60.

the worst effects of such changes. In March 1895 the report from Newent held little cheer:

The weather has become so terribly severe and half the homes in Newent have been more or less deprived of ordinary necessities. Poor cottagers have sat without fires, or with little more than smouldering embers, little children have sobbed themselves to sleep for want of food and warmth, mothers' hearts have bled and fathers have sat in gloomy silence, unable to work on the hard frozen land and forced to see their little savings melt away and debt fill their place. ²³⁶

The cold winds could also blow metaphorically for others relying on the natural world for their daily living, as in 1929, when a slump in the mining and quarrying industries of the Forest of Dean ²³⁷ brought hardship to the area's workers.

The Rural Dean thus described the situation:

A good many pits have been closed entirely for a considerable time, and many others have been working very short time, in fact the amount of under-employment is greater than that of unemployment. It was reported that many families in the mining districts can only just manage to get food and the bare necessities of life and there is nothing left for the provision of clothing, bills etc. Many of the quarrymen are also unemployed. ²³⁸

Both of the above descriptions come from clerical pens and illustrate the sympathy and understanding shown by the parish clergy for their flock. But they are essentially the descriptions of witnesses, and not of fellow-sufferers, a facet of the circumstances which inevitably set the clergy apart from the mass of those to whom they were called to minister.

²³⁶ *Newent District Magazine*, March, 1895

²³⁷ A fashion for reinforced concrete had depressed the market for quarried stone.

²³⁸ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine* 1929, p. 28

APPENDIX to Chapter 1
1: Church Accommodation Compared
to Population in Selected Parishes

The data is presented in descending order of the percentage of available seats occupied by communicants on Easter Day that year:

<i>Parish</i>	<i>Deanery</i>	<i>Seats</i>	<i>Population (1901 Census)</i>	<i>Gross Value</i>	<i>Easter Communicants (1903)</i>	<i>% per seat</i>
Sudeley	Winchcombe	80	100	—	92	115.0
Harescombe	Gloucester	100	121	—	50	50.0
Upper Slaughter	Stow	208	232	£130	90	43.3
Icomb	Stow	120	140	£112	50	41.7
Aston sub Edge	Campden	88	100	£301	36	40.9
Up Hatherley	Cheltenham	140	113	£30	56	40.0
Beverston	Dursley	160	182	£283	63	39.4
Lea	North Forest	178	192	£167	62	34.8
Great Witcombe	Gloucester	125	126	£95	40	32.0
Adlestrop	Stow	168	175	—	53	31.5
Highnam	North Forest	300	276	£215	94	31.3
Stone	Dursley	215	241	£201	64	29.8
Staunton	South Forest	200	150	£128	59	29.5
Alderley	Hawkesbury	140	91	£142	40	28.6
Barnsley	Fairford	182	212	£233	51	28.0
Upleadon	North Forest	137	137	£201	38	27.7
Westonbirt	Dursley	204	138	£365	56	27.5
Sutton under Brailes	Stow	200	135	£180	53	26.5
Wormington	Campden	106	79	—	26	24.5
Fretherne	Gloucester	203	188	£171	48	23.6
Tortworth	Hawkesbury	200	222	£438	45	22.5
Flaxley	North Forest	220	176	£302	49	22.3
Tredington	Winchcombe	100	102	£72	22	22.0
Upper Swell	Stow	75	75	£89	16	21.3
Hasfield	Winchcombe	212	225	£300	44	20.8
Hasfield	Winchcombe	212	225	£300	44	20.8
Pitchcombe	Bisley	232	170	—	48	20.7
Lassington	Gloucester	100	70	£170	20	20.0
Down Hatherley	Winchcombe	183	190	£135	36	19.7
Moreton Valence	Gloucester	200	180	£180	37	18.5
Harnhill	Cirencester	80	59	£250	14	17.5
Blaisdon	North Forest	250	223	£167	40	16.0
Cold Salperton	Northleach	95	120	£75	15	15.7
Coln Rogers	Northleach	132	102	£185	20	15.0
Saintbury	Campden	200	120	£308	30	15.0
Syde	Bisley	40	49	£91	6	15.0
Duntisbourne Abbots	Cirencester	230	230	£239	34	14.8
Swindon Village	Cheltenham	250	233	£280	36	14.0
Marston Sicca	Campden	290	290	£169	40	13.8
Little Barrington	Northleach	112	111	£86	15	13.4
Walton Cardiff	Winchcombe	120	60	£82	16	13.4
Turkdean	Northleach	200	145	£92	24	12.0
Aston Somerville	Campden	130	98	—	14	10.8
Frocester	Stonehouse	526	239	—	54	10.3
Bourton on Hill	Stow	400	395	—	40	10.0
Condicote	Stow	100	118	£114	10	10.0
Little Compton	Stow	300	295	£183	30	10.0
Buckland	Campden	280	287	£190	24	8.6
Aldsworth	Northleach	272	290	£143	23	8.5
Beachley	South Forest	100	112	£80	7	7.0
Weston on Avon	Campden	100	112	£62	7	7.0
Framilode	Gloucester	400	375	£287	26	6.5
Nymphsfield	Stonehouse	225	216	£230	11	4.9
Little Sodbury	Hawkesbury	150	126	£164	7	4.7
Charlton Abbots	Cheltenham	92	115	—	—	—
Little Rissington	Stow	186	186	—	—	—
Oxenton	Winchcombe	75	103	—	—	—

A.2: Parish Churches with a Marked Excess of Seats Over Population

<i>Parish</i>	<i>deanery</i>	<i>Seats</i>	<i>Population 1901</i>	<i>Excess of Seats</i>
Frocester	Stonehouse	526	239	287
Saintbury	Campden	200	120	80
Westonbirt	Dursley	204	138	66
Sutton under Brailes	Stow	200	135	65
Pitchcombe	Bisley	232	170	62
Walton Cardiff	Winchcombe	120	60	60
Turkdean	Northleach	200	145	55
Staunton	South Forest	200	150	50
Alderley	Hawkesbury	140	91	49
Flaxley	North Forest	220	176	44

A.3: Parishes with Accommodation for over 800 Worshippers²³⁹

<i>Parish</i>	<i>Deanery</i>	<i>Seats</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Gross Value</i>	<i>Easter Communicants 1903</i>	<i>% per seat</i>
Cheltenham: All Saints	Cheltenham	850	3,699	£487	1,180	138.8
Cirencester *	Cirencester	2,100	7,536	£433	1,532	72.9
Cheltenham: Christ Church	Cheltenham	1,350	3,473	£600	900	66.6
Cheltenham: St Stephen	Cheltenham	896	1,460	£413	585	65.2
Tewkesbury Abbey	Winchcombe	1,000	3,612	£426	550	55.0
Berkeley	Dursley	1,000	5,350	£370	500	50.0
Cheltenham: St Luke	Cheltenham	1,000	5,000	£385	500	50.0
Cheltenham: Holy Trinity	Cheltenham	804	3,119	£377	355	44.2
Cheltenham: St James	Cheltenham	996	3,175	£330	363	36.4
Cheltenham: St Mark	Cheltenham	800	3,000	£390	275	34.4
Dursley	Dursley	800	2,369	£277	265	33.1
Stroud: St Lawrence	Bisley	1,200	4,397	£443	396	33.0
Cheltenham: St John	Cheltenham	996	3,725	£235	320	32.1
Cheltenham: St Mary and St Matthew *	Cheltenham	1,938	10,014	£933	617	31.8
Gloucester: St Nicholas	Gloucester	800	2,441	£256	150	18.8
Cheltenham; St Paul	Cheltenham	1,700	6,700	£224	270	15.9

* *Note:* The accommodation figures for these parishes are the combined totals of two churches in the same ecclesiastical parish. At **Cirencester**, St John the Baptist could seat 1,500; Holy Trinity in the Watermoor district had room for 600. In **Cheltenham**, the medieval parish church of St Mary had room for 606 but the more modern St Matthew could seat 1,332. In both cases, the aggregate accommodation figures have been used because the population and Easter communicant returns do not distinguish between the individual churches.

²³⁹ *Diocesan Statistics, op cit., 1903/04*

Chapter 2
Two Bishops in Contrast

The Bishops of Gloucester

Charles John Ellicott
1863-1905



D. Verey (editor):
The Diary of a Victorian Squire, p. 25

Edgar Charles Sumner Gibson
1905-1922

Gloucester Diocesan Magazine, 1906, frontispiece.

The Office of Bishop

This chapter focuses on the relationship with their diocese of two successive Bishops of Gloucester, Charles John Ellicott (1863-1905) and Edgar Charles Sumner Gibson (1906-1922) and compares and contrasts their ministries. No study of the Church of England in this period at diocesan level can ignore the role of the diocesan bishop. On the one hand, he held a position of great theological and historical significance, directing the work of the Church in his area according to his understanding of the Gospel, setting standards and judging between success and failure. He was the chief pastor to whom all diocesan office-holders were subordinate. On the other hand, his authority was exercised within and circumscribed by a complex interplay of forces — Parliamentary legislation, patronage, clergy freehold and church factions and societies, often mutually antagonistic.¹ In Ellicott's apt description of the paradox, the Church of England was "thoroughly and frankly Episcopal and yet at the same time, characterised by full measures of presbyterial independence."² With the aim of clarifying any confusion, Gibson announced in 1910 that he intended personally to institute all new incumbents to their benefices in order publicly to demonstrate

that while the patron has the right of nominating and presenting a fit and properly qualified person to be appointed to the benefice, it is the Bishop who, as chief pastor of the Diocese, is responsible for satisfying himself that the priest nominated to him is properly qualified, and who alone can commit to him the cure of souls of the parishioners, and place him in possession of his benefice.³

¹ Ellicott, *Some Present Dangers of the Church of England*, London Cassell, Potter and Galpin, 1878, p.28;

'The Bishop's Address' to the Diocesan Conference, 1901, *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1902, p.151

² Ellicott, *Spiritual Needs in Country Parishes*, *op. cit.* p. 26

³ Gibson, *The Diocese and the Parish*, *op. cit.*, 1910, p. 2.

Both bishops were conscious that their personal presence could enliven, however briefly, whatever part of the diocese they happened to be visiting.⁴ When the newly-appointed Bishop Gibson visited Bourton-on-the-Water for the parish's Harvest Festival in 1905, he was greeted by an "immense congregation." The church could normally seat 500 persons but on this occasion, even with the addition of 120 extra chairs, many were still unable to get in.⁵ But however much Ellicott might press the claims of the Cathedral as the Mother Church of the Diocese⁶ and Gibson might wish to insist that "the diocese, not the parish, is the true unit of Church work" and that the clergy should think constantly "of the diocese and not the parish, of which it is only a part",⁷ these two chief pastors could not fail to be aware that, in practice, the spiritual life of a parish depended primarily on the incumbent. "If he is indifferent or half-hearted the people will not be enthused",⁸ wrote Gibson and Ellicott took a similar, if more poetic, view: "If ministerial faithfulness works its weal, ministerial unfaithfulness works its woe."⁹ Furthermore, experience would show both men that they could expect from incumbents a range of reactions to their wishes, from warm and willing co-operation to cold indifference and, particularly with Ellicott, open defiance. These reactions and relationships will be explored more fully in later chapters.

Attempts to compare and contrast the ministry of the two bishops must be made subject to the understanding that they represented different generations and were

⁴ Ellicott, *Spiritual Needs in Country Parishes*, *op. cit.* p.26. Gibson, *The Diocese and the Parish*, *op. cit.*, p. 13

⁵ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, November 1905, *Diocesan Statistics*, 1904/05. The population of the parish at the 1901 Census was 1,453.

⁶ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1871, p. 32

⁷ Gibson, *The Diocese and the Parish*, *op. cit.*, p. 4

⁸ *ibid.* p. 40

⁹ Ellicott, *Spiritual Needs in Country Parishes*, 1887, *op. cit.*, p. 70

influenced by different external events, including government legislation and changes in public opinion and theological insights, over which they had no direct control.

Bishop Ellicott

Two factors concerning Bishop Ellicott must also be noted. For the most of his episcopate he was also responsible for the diocese of Bristol and therefore had a much heavier workload than his successor. With advancing age, he became ever more conscious of the sheer physical consequences of this burden. For instance, in 1892 he complained that

The pressure of Confirmations is very great; not from the nature of the work, which I ever feel to be welcome and refreshing, but from the large amount of time expended in the coming and going, and from the serious accumulations to an already unduly large correspondence which always awaits me when I return. An off-day, now and then, becomes an absolute necessity. ¹⁰

Towards the end of his episcopate, there were signs of a deterioration in the bishop's physically capabilities. In 1892, John Dearman Birchall recorded in his diary an incident when he entertained the Ellicott family to a dinner party and the bishop "dropped asleep during dinner, after dinner and in the drawing room." ¹¹ At the conclusion of his last Diocesan Conference of 1903 the bishop "observed that he had not had a very comfortable chairmanship owing partly to his difficulty of hearing and partly to the position in which his chair had been placed, which only enabled him to catch the speeches with difficulty." ¹²

Evaluation of the contribution of these two bishops is further complicated by the fact that in approximately the last decade of his episcopate, Ellicott radically changed

¹⁰ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1892, p. 6

¹¹ Verey, *The Diary of a Victorian Squire*, *op. cit.*, p. 217. The bishop was then in his 75th year.

¹² *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1904, p. 188

many of the theological positions to which he had clung tenaciously for most of his life. He was fully aware of this conversion which he attributed to “the illumination of the Holy Ghost, which thousands and tens of thousands believe and rightly believe, is being vouchsafed to the Church in fuller measure than it has ever been since the promised and realised illumination of Pentecost.”¹³ Some illustrations of the degree to which his views changed are summarised as follows:

A. On the Public Worship Regulation Act of 1874

1874	1878	1899
<p>“I do honestly believe .. that when prejudice is cleared away, this much reviled measure will be seen to be and accepted as, a note of recall; and will at last be recognised as only another instance of God’s merciful and providential workings towards our Apostolic and Reformed Church”.¹⁴</p>	<p>[On the possibility of the Act being repealed]: “That such an attempt would be utterly futile, need hardly be said. The country has long since formed a shrewd estimate of the operation and use of that Act. It has long been seen to be, as its early friends designed it to be — a deterrent measure. The very limited number of the Clergy that have adopted ritualistic practices, compared with the number of those who at one time were very favourably disposed to such progress, is the best proof of the success of the measure.”¹⁵</p>	<p>“The Public Worship Act of 1874 in no way diminished but augmented existing difficulties. .. [the resulting appeals to the Courts] with all their painful and repulsive consequences, were injurious, not only to Church progress, but to religion itself.”¹⁶</p>

¹³ Ellicott, *Doubt and its Remedy*, London, S.P.C.K., 1903, p.5

¹⁴ Ellicott, *Public Worship Regulation Bill*, London, Longman, 1874, pp. 14-15

¹⁵ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1878, pp.16-17

¹⁶ Ellicott, *Our Reformed Church and its Present Troubles*, London, S.P.C.K., 1899, pp. 21-22

B. On the Doctrine of Eternal Punishment

1864	1885	1890
“... there is no warrant in Scripture for believing that the punishment of the wicked and impenitent is terminable.” ¹⁷	He dismissed attempts by Christian men of science “to explain away the indisputable Scriptural doctrine of eternal punishment.” ¹⁸	“... there are passages of Holy Scripture which speak of a universality of reconciliation, and of a blessed epoch when God will be all in all. The existence of such passages cannot be, and must not be, denied.” ¹⁹

C. On the Doctrine of the Substitutionary Atonement of Christ

1890	1903
“If the exceeding sinfulness of sin must be brought home to the heart.. so must the propitiation for Sin .. be set forth with definiteness and precision”. ²⁰	“Ideas of propitiation and satisfaction to God readily obtained a place in conceptions[in the past] . which we cannot now feel to be holding an equally prominent place in the present.” ²¹

As this transformation occurred when he was reaching the end of his episcopate, most of the views and actions attributed here to Ellicott refer to the earlier period.

Both bishops came from clerical families and had academic backgrounds. Ellicott’s father and grandfather were both clergymen in Rutland. Born in April, 1819, he went up to St John’s College, Cambridge in 1837, taking his B.A. degree in 1841 and M.A. three years later. He was ordained deacon in 1846 and priest the following year, having been elected to a Fellowship at St John’s in 1845. He was, however, obliged to resign his Fellowship on his marriage in 1848. He was awarded a Cambridge D.D. in

¹⁷ Ellicott, *Church Work and Church Prospects*, London, Longman, 1864, p.111

¹⁸ Ellicott, *Are We to Modify Fundamental Doctrine?*, London, Simpkin, Marshall and Co., 1886, p. 63

¹⁹ Ellicott, *Salutary Doctrine*, London, S.P.C.K., 1890, p. 113

²⁰ Ellicott, *ibid.*, p. 22

²¹ Ellicott, *Doubt and its Remedy*, *op. cit.*, p. 4 The whole thrust of this Charge is that the new insights are to be welcomed.

1863 and an honorary Oxford D.D. in 1885. After leaving St John's College, he accepted the living of Pilton in his native county of Rutland and remained there for the next 10 years. This small country parish was to be his only experience of parochial work and his illustrations of the Church at work were frequently drawn from rural settings: a devout congregation of agricultural labourers regularly appearing at an 8.30 morning service,²² a gathering of the congregation in a country churchyard,²³ the village pastor walking with his young flock to their confirmation ceremony.²⁴ That he should produce a lengthy study of *Spiritual Needs in Country Parishes*²⁵ but nothing comparable on the urban situation, can probably be explained by his own attraction to rural parishes as much as by his perception that the need to increase the spiritual vitality of country parishes was more pressing than in the more populous areas,²⁶ because unless the Church of England kept a strong presence in the countryside, her influence on the nation's religious life would be precarious.²⁷

In 1858, he was appointed Professor of New Testament Exegesis at King's College, London and from 1860 to 1861 he was also Hulsean Professor of Divinity at Cambridge University. From 1854 until his consecration as bishop, he established a reputation as a prolific writer of commentaries on the books of the *New Testament* which led to his being invited in 1870 to chair the Committee which produced the Revised Version of the Bible. This output of Biblical scholarship illustrates another important facet of his character. As one of his Archdeacons recalled: "His scholarship, as specially

²² Ellicott, *Church Work and Church Prospects*, London, Longman, p. 16

²³ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1868, pp. 16,17

²⁴ Ellicott, *Church Work and Church Prospects*, *op. cit.*, p. 24

²⁵ Ellicott, *Spiritual Needs in Country Parishes*, *op. cit.*. Even if by that time he was aware that he was likely to lose responsibility for Bristol, he would still retain oversight of Gloucester and Cheltenham.

²⁶ *ibid.*, p.63

²⁷ *ibid.*, p.9

shown in his commentaries, was of consummate accuracy, and of great analytical power; the smallest word was given its place and its force”²⁸ and

His whole self was given to the study and elucidation of Holy Scripture, especially of the New Testament. It is not perhaps too much to say that this was his chief delight; that thus occupied he found his highest pleasure. When beginning to deal with a heavy correspondence, he has been known to long for his books.²⁹

The consequences of his zeal for the Scriptures affected the life of the Church at both national and local levels. In the first place, he was a champion of orthodox interpretations of the Bible against the modernisers. He wrote the chapter, ‘Scripture and its Interpretation’ in the symposium produced in 1861³⁰ as a rejoinder to the 1860 “liberal” publication, *Essays and Reviews*. He joined the chorus of protest against the heterodoxy of Bishop Colenso³¹ and he was one of the four bishops who protested³² against the appointment as Bishop of Exeter in 1869 of Frederick Temple, who had been a contributor to *Essays and Reviews*.³³ The publication of *Lux Mundi*, another set of “liberal views,” in 1889 provoked him again into print with *Christus Comprobator*³⁴ where he argued that our Lord’s references to various Old Testament books had validated their authenticity.

²⁸ Scobell E.C., ‘In Memoriam Charles John Ellicott’, *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine* 1906, pp. 4-5

²⁹ *ibid*, p.5

³⁰ Thomson, William, (editor): *Aids to Faith; A Series of Theological Essays*, London, John Murray, , 1861

³¹ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1868, p. 32. He maintained that Colenso was “spiritually disqualified from exercising [the] functions” of “a spiritual office.” Cf. also his *The Church and Free Thought*, London, Longman, 1873, p.5 where Colenso and *Essays and Reviews* are blamed for encouraging “free thought.”

³² Chadwick, *The Victorian Church, Part II, op. cit.* p. 88

³³ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1869, p. 25

³⁴ Published 1893 but a print of addresses delivered in 1891. *Christus Comprobator*, London S.P.C.K., 1893, pp. 11-12 indicated that the views expressed in *Lux Mundi* were his main target.

Ellicott's contribution to *Aids to Faith* was to have far-reaching consequences since, when Palmerston sought Shaftesbury's advice on the selection of bishops for forthcoming vacancies, the latter recommended, among others, Ellicott on the ground that "honour should be done to everyone (whenever occasion offered) connected with the answers to *Essays and Reviews*." ³⁵

"Occasion" was "offered" in 1862 when the death of Archbishop Sumner of Canterbury provided the opportunity for a chain of episcopal appointments. Archbishop Longley of York was translated to Canterbury; William Thomson, Bishop of Gloucester and editor of *Aids to Faith*, was elevated to York and Ellicott, who had been Dean of Exeter only since 1861, was invited to fill the vacancy at Gloucester. His relationship with that diocese might well have been short-lived, for when Longley himself died in 1868, Disraeli was intent on offering the post of Primate of England to Ellicott. Disraeli had apparently identified him as "a moderate Evangelical who was also a loyal Conservative" but he did not actually know his man.³⁶ Other influential persons claimed a closer acquaintance and their opinions were not flattering. According to Dean Wellesley, who advised the Queen on senior clerical appointments, the Bishop of Gloucester had "a miserably thin, weak voice and no dignity of manner," was "not Low Church but High" and was "an amiable, insignificant man, talking constantly and irrelevantly, with some book learning."³⁷ Victoria seemed to share that opinion, and she delivered her considered verdict to Disraeli:

³⁵ Hammond, J.L. and B., *Lord Shaftesbury*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books 1939, p. 224. For Shaftesbury's influence on the choice of bishops, cf. Nigel Scotland, 'Good and Proper Men': *Lord Palmerston and the Bench of Bishops*, Cambridge, James Clark and Co., 2000, pp. 5, 25, 35

³⁶ Marsh, P.T., *The Victorian Church in Decline*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969, p. 17

The Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, though a good man, has not the knowledge of the world, nor the reputation and general presence (which is of so great importance in a position of such very high rank, constantly called upon to perform all the historical functions in connection with the Sovereign and the Royal Family).³⁸

Having been rejected for Canterbury, Ellicott was to remain at Gloucester for the rest of his working life, a sign, presumably, not so much of his immense fitness for that post as of his unsuitability for a position of more distinction. He was 44 years old when he was consecrated on Lady Day, 1863 and he resigned his position exactly 42 years later, regarded by his peers as a relic from the past.³⁹

For most of his time at Gloucester, he set his face to combatting the dangers which he perceived to be threatening the Church.⁴⁰ Chief among these were the twin attacks on the reliability of the Biblical record, springing from scientific discoveries and Biblical criticism. He believed that this was essentially a moral, rather than an intellectual, issue. Doubt led to "moral ruin"⁴¹ and "Unbelief" was "like some mysteriously propagated disease, subtle, pervasive, penetrating. It steals into the quiet hamlet as well as the peopled city. It allies itself with sin in every form, with intemperance, with carnality, with dishonesty."⁴² He was ready to conclude that many doubters were chiefly motivated by an inner corruption: "Many a case of doubt will be

³⁷ Buckle, G.E., (editor): *The Letters of Queen Victoria*, Second Series, John Murray, London, Vol. i., 1926, p. 545

³⁸ *ibid*, p. 548

³⁹ Bell, G.K.A., *Randall Davidson, Archbishop of Canterbury*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1938 p. 222; Benson, A.C., *The Life of Edward White Benson, sometime Archbishop of Canterbury*, London. Macmillan, 1899 Vol. ii., p. 208

⁴⁰ The term is incorporated in the titles of two of his Charges: *Approaching Dangers* (1874) and *Some Present Dangers of the Church of England* (1878) and pursued in a number of other Charges.

⁴¹ Ellicott, *Church Work and Church Prospects*, *op. cit.*, p. 63

⁴² Ellicott, *The Church and Free Thought*, Longman, *op. cit.*, p.11

found to resolve itself into one of secret sin.”⁴³ In later years, he was to hold that the acceptance of scientific hypotheses with religious connotations by “ordinary readers” had “been found to work incredible mischief” leading to uncertainty, a decline in “personal religion and the gathering of “the shades of the great darkness.”⁴⁴

Although his own background had equipped him to engage with Biblical critics, he seems to have been less confident in dealing with the challenges emanating from scientific quarters. He thought that the theory of Evolution could be regarded “as a working hypothesis of a very high order of possibility”⁴⁵ but concluded that it conflicted with Revelation because Scripture revealed that Man was a “special creation,”⁴⁶ a “divine gift,” which was “entirely incompatible with the idea of a slow and lengthy evolution.”⁴⁷ Moreover, Evolution was philosophically at variance with Revelation because it was based on Man’s progress whereas the latter predicated a Fall, requiring atonement and redemption: “If man’s development, moral and physical is to go on without limit, why, for us men and our salvation, should the Son of God come down from Heaven? Why should He empty Himself of His glory and enter into the likeness of sinful flesh?”⁴⁸

To some extent, Ellicott could personally resolve these difficulties by postulating that Revelation and Science worked within separate spheres and would be found to be in harmony as knowledge increased.⁴⁹ But Science was to be judged by its compatibility

⁴³ Ellicott, *Church Work and Church Prospects*, *op. cit.*, p. 72

⁴⁴ Ellicott, *Are We to Deny Fundamental Doctrine?*, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p.16

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p. 14

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p. 23

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, p.46

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p. 65

with Revelation, not the other way round⁵⁰ and if there were an apparent conflict, the truth would ultimately be revealed since “all trustworthy science moves slowly and tentatively.”⁵¹ Implicitly, therefore, Revelation would ultimately be vindicated. In similar vein, he held that too few of the results of Biblical criticism were stable enough to be relied upon.⁵² The Church Congress in Manchester had been told of “the well established results of Biblical Criticism” but Ellicott dismissed such assertions at his Diocesan Conference in 1888: There were, he said, no “ ‘well-established results of Biblical criticism’, save those old and fundamental truths which modern thought is trying to explain away and to modify.”⁵³ And he told his diocesan clergy that same year, that “to place before our congregations anything claiming to be Church teaching, and yet derogating from the authority of Holy Scripture, especially in those portions of it which bear upon belief and practice” was “plainly utterly perilous.”⁵⁴

Not unnaturally, he sought to enlist his clergy as lieutenants in his campaign. The Theological College for ordinands, which he established at Gloucester was intended to supply the need for additional clergy in Bristol⁵⁵ and, with its Scripturally-based courses, “to produce a wholesome influence on the intellectual restlessness of modern thought.”⁵⁶ Since the bishop personally conducted the entire correspondence with applicants,⁵⁷ was closely involved in weekend gatherings of ordinands⁵⁸ and was both a lecturer and

⁵⁰ Ellicott, *Are We to Deny Fundamental Doctrine?*, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8

⁵¹ *ibid*, p. 11

⁵² Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1888, p. 17

⁵³ Ellicott, ‘The President’s Opening Address’, *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1889, p.147

⁵⁴ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1888 p. 18

⁵⁵ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1893 p.9

⁵⁶ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1868 p. 23

⁵⁷ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1896, p. 8

⁵⁸ Ellicott, *Church Work and Church Prospects*, *op. cit.* pp.32-33 where he refers to the happy tranquil time of “quiet counsels and of united prayers” with ordinands and his regret at their parting on Monday mornings.

examiner at the College,⁵⁹ it was hardly surprising that he could detect among its students no signs of infection with modern thought.⁶⁰ However, this seems to be a doubtful premise for his conclusion that they must therefore be typical of “young men of earnestness and intelligence” throughout the country.⁶¹

If orthodox Christianity were being challenged at an intellectual level, both scientific and textual, and the dissemination of modern views “would be to imperil the salvation of thousands of souls,”⁶² it was clear to Ellicott that the challenge should be confronted at the same level. “Meet very error on its own ground, and on its own ground defeat it” was his slogan.⁶³ Hence, he sought to ensure the continuing supply of University graduates to the ministry.⁶⁴ Similarly, to the very end of his episcopate, he laid great stress on the importance to the clergy of solid and systematic learning, particularly of the Scriptures, even in the country parishes.⁶⁵ All too frequently, however, he was forced to conclude that the established clergy were not responding to this noble aim and that they had allowed “activity” to supplant study in their order of priorities.⁶⁶

He also required his clergy to be more thoroughly systematic in their administration. Most of his knowledge of the state of the diocese came from Visitation returns and reports by the Diocesan Missioner⁶⁷ but he regretfully announced in 1887 that “in many parishes no records are kept — no spiritual register that can be, and ought

⁵⁹ Ellicott, *Church Work and Church Prospects*, *op. cit.* p. 36

⁶⁰ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1869 p.11; *Diocesan Progress*, 1882, p.7

⁶¹ Ellicott, *Christus Comprobator*, *op. cit.*, p. 10

⁶² Ellicott, *Salutary Doctrine*, *op. cit.*, p. 42

⁶³ Ellicott, *Modern Unbelief, its Principles and Characteristics*, London, S.P.C.K., 1876 p. 94

⁶⁴ Ellicott, *Progress and Trials*, *op. cit.*, 1867, p.33; *Diocesan Progress*, 1872 p.12; 1876 p.7

⁶⁵ Ellicott, *Modern Unbelief*, *op. cit.* p. 93; 120-141 *Diocesan Progress*, 1868 p.14; *Spiritual Needs in Country Parishes*, *op. cit.*, p.22; *Doubt and its Remedy*, *op. cit.* pp. 11-13

⁶⁶ Ellicott, *Modern Unbelief* *op. cit.* p. 140; *Spiritual Needs in Country Parishes*, *op. cit.* p. 79

⁶⁷ Ellicott, *Spiritual Needs in Country Parishes*. *op. cit.* pp. 113-114

to be, ready for present reference, and for the information and use of a successor.”⁶⁸ The introduction of the Church Year Book for statistics towards the end of the century revealed that 65 parishes in the diocese had difficulties in forwarding returns in time.⁶⁹

At his Ordination, the priest was given authority “to preach the Word of God, and to minister the holy sacraments to the Congregation.”⁷⁰ Ellicott determined the spiritual state of a parish by its observance of the sacraments, both because it could be quantified and because he regarded it as a touchstone:

I believe that even the most thoughtful among us have hardly any adequate conception of the spiritual blight that rests upon a community where the sacraments are not ministered with due reverence and frequency, and of the tremendous responsibility that in this particular, independently of others, is incurred by the supine and cold-hearted.⁷¹

Parishes should therefore have frequent celebrations of the Lord’s Supper,⁷² baptisms should be administered at congregational services⁷³ and the truest test of the success of a parish mission was to be measured in an increase in communicants.⁷⁴

As he was aware, there was one group of clergy who needed no persuasion in pursuing these aims. The Anglo-Catholics shared many of his ideals. Like him, they placed a great emphasis on the administration of the sacraments; they catechised and they diligently watched over their flocks. In 1866 he described them as

not only men of eminently pure and holy lives, but ... men which in the hours of deep need and trial, amid the dreadful shadows of the now (God grant it) departing visitation, have shown forth to angels and to men a true Christian courage, and a love for souls which Christ came to save.⁷⁵

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p.15

⁶⁹ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1891, p.8

⁷⁰ *The Book of Common Prayer*

⁷¹ Ellicott, *Progress and Trials*, *op. cit.* p.22

⁷² *ibid.*, p.21

⁷³ *ibid.*, p.19

⁷⁴ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1870, p. 13

⁷⁵ Ellicott, *Ritualism*, London, Longman, 1866, pp.8-9

And they had introduced into the Church almost a new tone of preaching, whereby the sermon

now in many a Church is more and more what we may conceive a sermon ought to be — not the mere outpouring of ill-connected thoughts or of merely impassioned words, but home truths, set forth and enforced in soul-searching language, and confirmed alike by the witness of scripture and the inward experiences of the quickened spirit. ⁷⁶

But later developments within the movement both alarmed and alienated him. What had once been “little more than an innocent aestheticism” ⁷⁷ was becoming associated with a Eucharistic doctrine contrary to Reformation principles. In particular, he was troubled by the growth of auricular (or sacramental) confession and intervened against any of his clergy who taught that sacramental confession was essential for high spiritual attainment, ⁷⁸ must be a condition for confirmation ⁷⁹ or should be urged upon congregations during parochial Missions. ⁸⁰

Agitation in the country over the spread of Ritualistic practices led to him taking action during the 1870s against three churches in the combined diocese, St. Mary's, Prestbury, All Saints', Clifton and St Raphael's, Bristol. At all three, the style of worship had attracted large congregations but offended some others. He closed St. Raphael's, deprived the Vicar of Prestbury of his living and put Richard Randall, Vicar of All Saints under a form of episcopal disapproval whereby the bishop would neither confirm there nor license curates to the church. His actions exposed him to criticism. A correspondent to *The Guardian* newspaper pertinently observed: “I fail to see the logic or justice of

⁷⁶ *ibid*, p.9

⁷⁷ Ellicott, *Progress and Trials*, *op. cit.*, p. 61

⁷⁸ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1877, p.6

⁷⁹ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1884, p.15

punishing the laity by cutting off part of their spiritual supplies on account of an alleged offence by their parish priest.”⁸¹ It was about this time that the bishop confided to John Dearman Birchall that he had determined “to speak plainly to the Ritualists, they were getting most overbearing.”⁸² His hostility to “ritual” was such that he stopped visiting St. Lucy’s Home in Gloucester, and only a short distance from the Bishop’s Palace, because he disapproved of the “religious ceremonies” which took place there.⁸³

But he took no action against the group of churches based on St Mark’s, Swindon where, according to a contemporary account, the services were “highly ritualistic.”⁸⁴ Presumably, he was there applying the policy which he explained to Richard Randall, the Vicar of All Saints. Clifton: “I always deal with every case wherever any number of parishioners complain. Where no complaint, I don’t interpose.”⁸⁵

Ellicott justified his actions against Randall on the grounds that he had taken advice on their legality and had been acting out “of duty and of obedience to my Metropolitan.”⁸⁶ but it is difficult to absolve him from a charge of class and intellectual prejudice in his estimation of the younger Ritualists. He blamed the rise of sacerdotalism on

a silent and most unwelcome decline of learning, and especially of general culture in the rank and file of the younger clergy. For some reasons, divers perhaps, and not easy satisfactorily to explain, the class of young men, mostly from the Universities, that a few years ago entered Holy Orders, now go to other professions. [The result was] the tendency to clique and to caste ... personal vanity ... combined with obstinacy ... and this personal vanity,

⁸⁰ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1876, p.9

⁸¹ *The Guardian*, November 26, 1873

⁸² Verey, *The Diary of a Victorian Squire*, *op. cit.*, p. 24. (Entry for January 14, 1871.)

⁸³ *ibid.* St Lucy’s Home in Hare Lane, Gloucester was a ‘Preventive and Training Home’ for young women and girls, run by the Sisters of the Community of St John the Baptist. Clewer. *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine* 1922, pp. 69, 70.

⁸⁴ Morris, W., *Swindon*, (1885), London, Tabard Press, 1970

⁸⁵ Randall, Richard W., *Difficulties in Church Work*, Oxford and London, James Parker 1874, p.30

⁸⁶ *ibid.*, pp.47-48

let it be remembered, is intimately connected with lower social and intellectual standards and, to speak generally and from merely human estimates, always increasing in intensity as courtesy and culture decline.⁸⁷

His handling of the problem might have been less open to criticism had he been able to present his case more convincingly. Legality, rather than credibility seemed to be the main criterion for his actions, as shown in his response to an argument that he himself admitted to encountering quite frequently:

'Why may I not wear a chasuble, and express my belief in a vital doctrine, when my neighbour, a couple of miles off, preaches what I consider to be plain Arianism?' The answer is obvious. 'Because the law, as at present expounded, forbids your act, but has not been brought to bear, by complaint or otherwise, on your neighbour's words.'⁸⁸

Richard Randall, the Vicar of All Saints' made a similar point to which he apparently received no answer: "But surely," he asked, "such extravagance is better than apathy and indifference. Open churches with even an excess of ceremonial must be better than closed churches with no solemn worship offered to God."⁸⁹

Since the bishop considered sacramental confession to be such an important issue, he might have been expected to be thoroughly familiar with the related arguments. He was on sure ground in maintaining that making a sacramental confession should not be made a prior condition for Confirmation⁹⁰ and that the Church had a responsibility to control the appointment of confessors "to avoid the scandal of every young priest setting himself up as a confessor"⁹¹ but simply to complain that some clergy were "practically

⁸⁷ Ellicott, *Some Present Dangers of the Church of England*, *op. cit.* pp.34-35

⁸⁸ Ellicott, *Approaching Dangers*, Longman, London, 1874, p.18

⁸⁹ Randall, *op. cit.* p.20

⁹⁰ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1877, p.6

⁹¹ Ellicott, *Some Present Dangers of the Church of England*, *op. cit.*, p.46

assuming the prerogative which belongs only to God”⁹² failed to address his opponents’ arguments⁹³ and therefore was unlikely to convince or silence them. He did not, for example, explain our Lord’s commission to his apostles,⁹⁴ or the use of that passage in the ordination of priests and bishops.⁹⁵ His argument that the provision for priestly absolution contained in the ‘Order for the Visitation of the Sick’⁹⁶ showed that “the committed power was intended to be used subject to restraints and limitations”⁹⁷ simply raised the question of why there should be a limitation, without providing an answer. His treatment of this issue suggests that pragmatic or political, rather than ecclesiastical or theological conditions, were dominant in his mind: His fear was that “when Confession becomes generally advocated and pressed forward, and with it the sacerdotalism of which it is the outward manifestation, then the last sands of the Established Church will be running, and the end very near at hand.”⁹⁸

In other words, his hostility towards the Anglo-Catholics can be at least partly explained by his fear that they favoured the Disestablishment of the Church or that their practices would lead others to call for its separation from the State. Ellicott’s views on this matter derived from his ecclesiology. For him, the Reformation settlement had not been a political contrivance but the work of the Holy Spirit. Secular forces were the proximate but not the ultimate cause: “Behind all these changes there was the ordering

⁹² Ellicott, *ibid.* p.34

⁹³ It must be admitted that his room for manoeuvre was limited. In view of his insistence that the Gospels contained the very words of Jesus, it would have been difficult for him to assert that the passage was spurious. An alternative suggestion, *i.e.* the commission had been given only to the Apostles and not to their successors, would have damaged his claim that the Church of England was Apostolic in deed and word.

⁹⁴ John, xx. 23

⁹⁵ *The Book of Common Prayer*, 1662. The commission is repeated to the newly-ordained priest; the Gospel passage is suggested for reading at the consecration of bishops.

⁹⁶ *The Book of Common Prayer*, 1662. After the sick person has made a confession, the priest is instructed to proclaim “..By his [Jesus Christ’s] authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins.”

⁹⁷ Ellicott, *Some Present Dangers of the Church of England*, *op. cit.*, p.50

power of the Holy Ghost, and the silent development of that which was the ‘*vera causa*’ of the Anglican Reformation.”⁹⁹ The outcome had been a “pure and Apostolic Church”¹⁰⁰ bound, but not subservient, to the State¹⁰¹ to the mutual advantage of both bodies.¹⁰² Disestablishment would be “the deepest of calamities” because it would be accompanied by disendowment; the Church would no longer be able to function in the countryside; Dissent was too weak to take its place and the net result would be a relapse by the people into the irreligion or paganism of the distant past.¹⁰³

He was thoroughly convinced of the superiority of all things Anglican. To the “pure waters of the doctrine of our Reformed Church”¹⁰⁴ could be added the Book of Common Prayer which had “no equal in all the liturgies of Christendom.”¹⁰⁵ Since the Church of Ireland was closely associated with that of England, he was strongly opposed to the disestablishment of the latter in 1869,¹⁰⁶ “giving up the just claims of the Church to popular clamour,” as he put it.¹⁰⁷ He was similarly opposed later in the century to proposals to disestablish the Welsh Church, not least because he viewed them as a precursor to an attack on the English Church.¹⁰⁸

⁹⁸ *ibid.*, pp.40-41

⁹⁹ Ellicott, *Our Reformed Church and its Present Troubles*, *op. cit.*, p.4

¹⁰⁰ Ellicott, *Some Present Dangers of the Church of England*, *op. cit.*, pp.142,149; *Diocesan Progress*, 1886, p.15

¹⁰¹ Ellicott, *Progress and Trials*, *op. cit.* p. 95

¹⁰² *ibid.*, pp 83, 96-97

¹⁰³ Ellicott, *Spiritual Needs in Country Parishes*, *op. cit.* p.9

¹⁰⁴ Ellicott, *Some Present Dangers of the Church of England*, *op. cit.*, p.142

¹⁰⁵ Ellicott, *Church Work and Church Prospects*, *op. cit.*, p.80

¹⁰⁶ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1869, p.26

¹⁰⁷ Crowther, M.A., *Church Embattled, Religious Controversy in mid-Victorian England*, Newton Abbot, David and Charles, 1970, p.150

¹⁰⁸ ‘First Session’, Diocesan Conference, 1893 *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1894 pp. 164-165; pp.176-177

This exaltation of Anglicanism inevitably downgraded the other churches in his estimation. Whilst he had difficulty in recognising the true marks of a church in the Roman communion,¹⁰⁹ and thought that Roman Catholic “daring innovations” and the “corruption” of the Orthodox churches¹¹⁰ made any possibility of union with those bodies unlikely,¹¹¹ he also had a low estimation of Nonconformity. In his 1867 Charge, he acknowledged that in Visitation returns the clergy had identified three main “hindrances” to the work of the Church in the diocese — dissent, ignorance and intemperance — and added his own endorsement: “I must and do regard Dissent as a hindrance,¹¹² and in the context of that group of “hindrances,” it should be noted that Ellicott regarded intemperance as “England’s most grievous sin.”¹¹³

He believed, however, that the Church of England was “deeply rooted in the affections of the people.”¹¹⁴ It was therefore quite possible that many individual Dissenters might return to their Mother Church,¹¹⁵ but he had no expectation of a successful corporate union of the non-Roman churches. Indeed, at the Diocesan Conference of 1892 he seemed to suggest that there was no Divine sanction for any plan for reunion which disregarded the Apostolic ministry and Apostolic ordination. It was the Church’s duty to labour and pray for reunion with “the great religious communities around us” but

¹⁰⁹ Ellicott, *Progress and Trials*, *op. cit.*, p.94

¹¹⁰ Ellicott, *Some Present Dangers of the Church of England*, *op. cit.*, p.149

¹¹¹ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1895 p.20

¹¹² Ellicott, *Progress and Trials*, *op.cit.*, p. 48

¹¹³ Ellicott, *The Church and the Temperance Question*, London, Longman, 1873 p.4

¹¹⁴ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1872 p.32

¹¹⁵ Ellicott, *Progress and Trials*, 1867, p.51-52; *Reunion with Nonconformity*, London, Longman, 1874 (?) pp. 11-12

... under those limitations which are plainly involved in, and implied in, our dear Lord's high-priestly prayer. When He prayed that all might be one, it was not for all, however circumstanced and characterised; but for all who believed on Him *through the word of His Apostles*. The teaching, and — may we not add? — the example of the Apostles was to be the medium of the belief and substratum of the union. ¹¹⁶

If Ellicott's treatment of the Anglo-Catholics in the 1870s lacked a certain credibility, his later *volte-face* only served to confirm the impression of many that his actions were unpredictable and even incomprehensible. In 1889, he reconciled himself to Randall, the Vicar of All Saints, lifted the prohibition, offered him a canonry at Bristol Cathedral and, in 1892, recommended him for the vacant post as Dean of Chichester. ¹¹⁷ Moreover, as replacement for Randall, he selected Henry Bromby, a known Ritualist, who proceeded to raise the level of Ritualism at the church. ¹¹⁸ The following year, he decided to reconsecrate St. Raphael's, Bristol which had been closed for 15 years and reinstated the former priest in charge. ¹¹⁹ The possibility of a reconciliation with the Vicar of Prestbury had by then passed because the latter had taken a living in Sussex in 1890.

Randall's biographers can offer no satisfactory explanation for this change in the bishop, "as complete as it was sudden." ¹²⁰ but there might be a clue to his behaviour in the cryptic remark which he made to Father Ward of St. Raphael's, "The Holy Ghost has

¹¹⁶ Ellicott, 'The President's Opening Address' *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar* 1893, p.159 The italicised passage is in the original.

¹¹⁷ Briscoe J.F. and Mackay, H.F.B., *A Tractarian at Work, A Memoir of Dean Randall*, London, Mowbray, 1932. p. 175

¹¹⁸ Under Bromby, All Saints' had six candles on the altar, used incense, reserved the Blessed Sacrament and frequently held Requiem Eucharists. Cobb, P., *The Oxford Movement in Nineteenth Century Bristol*, Bristol, Bristol Branch of the Historical Association Pamphlet, 1988 pp. 22, 28. Cf. also Alleyne, F.M., *All Saints', Clifton*, Bristol, W. Crofton Hemmons, 1892 [?], p. 63

¹¹⁹ Cobb, *op.cit.*, p.26

¹²⁰ Briscoe and Mackay, *op. cit.*, p.175

had much to teach us in the Church of England in these years that are past.”¹²¹ In other words, he was apparently testifying to fresh spiritual illuminations.

At earlier periods during his ministry, he was to vindicate the Queen’s reservations about his worldly wisdom. In 1872, speaking a dinner of Gloucestershire farmers, he referred to the rise of agricultural Trade Unionism in the land and appeared to encourage his listeners to take physical action against any agitators who arrived in their villages.¹²² The comment was not unreasonably interpreted by the national press as an incitement to violence and although Ellicott protested he had only been jesting and tried to make amends by inviting the labourers’ representatives to the Palace to air their grievances, he had reinforced the impression in many minds that in any dispute between master and worker, the Church would take the part of the former. This was certainly the view of Joseph Arch, the founder of the National Agricultural Union. Describing the bishop as “one of my worst enemies in the early days of the movement,” he remarked:

As to parsons generally, I never expected them to have much sympathy with us. Their stock argument against the Union was it was ‘setting class against class.’ That was their poll-parrot cry. “Oh, yes” said they, “the men have a perfect right to try and improve themselves and we will help them, but the Union is setting class against class.”¹²³

A few years later, Ellicott was again the object of public criticism. In December, 1878, he was one of six diocesan bishops who voted in the Lords in support of the Afghan War. The Cheltenham newspaper *The Examiner* saw in this an opportunity to make a political point, noting that opposition to the war came from Dissenters and the

¹²¹ Cobb, *op.cit.* p.26

¹²² Kitson Clark, *Churchmen and the Condition of England, 1832-1885, op. cit.*, p.247

“Positivist community” but not from the clergy or the bishops “who are paid £4,000 or £5,000 a year to believe in the Christian religion.”¹²⁴ Ellicott was honest (or rash) enough to try to justify himself in a reply to the newspaper. After explaining that he thought that there was a political necessity for the military action, he went on: “But I also voted as a minister of the Gospel. Imperfectly as we have hitherto done our duty in India, we are now awakening to our tremendous responsibilities, and for England’s power now to wane in India would be for the evangelisation of that portion of the Oriental world to be retarded, it may be for centuries.”¹²⁵

He had obviously been oblivious to the likely impact of such an argument on pacifists. *The Birmingham Daily Press* wondered if the bishop had really understood what he was writing. His explanation might have been acceptable as an “ironic exposition of the wickedness of war” but such had not been his obvious intention; “he shows every sign of being sincere.” The article then proceeded to ridicule him:

[If the war] is justified by a desire to promote Christianity in India, this is the kind of argument with which he must approach those whom he desires to convert; or if he does not put it to them, they will so shape it for him ... as a Minister of the Gospel he recognises the rifle, the bayonet and the cannon as instruments in the work of evangelising the heathen!¹²⁶

Despite this concern with the evangelisation of India, there is little evidence that Ellicott placed foreign missions high on his list of priorities and he seems to have made only isolated references to the cause.¹²⁷ In 1864, he referred to “the wide realm of heathenism, crying to us out of the depth of pagan darkness to deliver the Lord’s

¹²³ O’Leary, J.G.(editor), *The Autobiography of Joseph Arch* (1898) London, McGibbon and Kee, (no date) p. 64

¹²⁴ *Cheltenham Examiner*, December 18, 1878

¹²⁵ *ibid.*, December 25, 1878

¹²⁶ *ibid.*

testimony among them and to hasten His coming.”¹²⁸ In 1887, he seemed to suggest that stimulating an interest in “the great Missionary cause” could “raise the whole tone of a parish” as though it should be a means to an end rather than an end in itself.¹²⁹ Yet in 1898, he referred to foreign missions as “the vital subject of our own times.”¹³⁰

“An amiable, insignificant man, talking constantly and irrelevantly.” Such was Dean Wellesley’s opinion of Ellicott in 1868.¹³¹ He “has a foolish voice and manner which make him appear weaker than I believe he really is”,¹³² was Lord Derby’s opinion. Lord Granville once asked whether the bishop was “really such a fool as he seems to me”¹³³ There was little in Bishop Ellicott’s subsequent career which served fully to dispel that notion. There is even evidence that he was regarded with some disdain by his peers. “Your bishop is a *very* odd man”, Bishop Samuel Wilberforce told Richard Randall in 1873,¹³⁴ and the Dean of Gloucester once confided to John Dearman Birchall that Mrs Ellicott “kissed his mastiff dog more heartily than he guessed she ever kissed the bishop.”¹³⁵ Neither did he always impress the lower orders. He was once refused entry to Canon Samuel Barnett’s house in Bristol because the servant who answered the door mistook him for a vagrant.¹³⁶ At the national level, he acquired an unenviable reputation for ill-considered pronouncements. When John Charles Ryle, the newly-appointed Bishop of Liverpool, announced in 1880 that he had taken Holy Orders only after his

¹²⁷ To judge from the infrequent references to foreign missions in *Diocesan Progress*, his annual review of work in the diocese.

¹²⁸ Ellicott, *Church Work and Church Prospects*, *op. cit.* p. 48

¹²⁹ Ellicott, *Spiritual Needs in Country Parishes*, *op. cit.*, p.122

¹³⁰ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1898, p. 7

¹³¹ Buckle, *The Letters of Queen Victoria*, *op. cit.*, Second Series, Vol i., p. 545. *op. cit.*

¹³² Edwards, D. L., *Leaders of the Church of England*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1971, p.84

¹³³ Kitson Clark, G., *Churchmen and the Condition of England, 1832-1885*, London, Methuen, 1973

¹³⁴ Briscoe and Mackay, *op. cit.*, p.144

¹³⁵ Verey, *The Diary of a Victorian Squire*, *op. cit.* p.36

¹³⁶ Barnett, S.A., *Canon Barnett, His Life, Work and Friends*, London, John Murray, 1921, p. 224

political ambitions had been dashed by his father's bankruptcy, the *Church Times* considered such an admission to be ill-advised and pronounced that "we had hoped that by the time Bishop Ryle was consecrated he would at least have learned one episcopal virtue, that of holding his tongue; but in point of silly and indiscreet talk, he has left the most brilliant efforts of Bishop Ellicott far behind him."¹³⁷

With his advancing years, however, he attracted a kind of affection. Bishop Benson, who shared a journey to London with him in 1895 described him as "a clever old man and a scholar, and seems beloved by his respectable diocesans. He never ceased talking for a moment entertainingly."¹³⁸ A later generation of clergy would remember not the garrulous, obscurantist scourge of Ritualists but

... the sympathetic friend, the embodiment of courtesy, the ideal English gentleman,— but above all, the holy man of God who went in and out among us, and set us all an example of plain living, high thinking and the love of God. We shall not soon forget that frail figure, bent head, and feeble voice as he spoke to us on the most solemn day in our lives [Confirmation] words we shall never forget.¹³⁹

In the same vein, Archdeacon Edward Scobell recalled the bishop in his earlier years moving around the diocese on horse-back or on foot, "welcome as a friend in humblest house or smallest church." So, too, it was claimed that when he gave tuition, the ordinand would "leave the Palace feeling that he had been residing in the house of a sympathetic friend."¹⁴⁰

This younger element would have been more accustomed to the bishop whose change of views, later in life, have been alluded to above. In his last Charge to the clergy

¹³⁷ Loane M., *John Charles Ryle, 1816-1900*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1983, p. 85

¹³⁸ Benson, A.C., *The Life of Edward White Benson, sometime Archbishop of Canterbury, op. cit.*, Vol. ii, p. 637

¹³⁹ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine* November, 1905. The bishop seems to have retained his "feeble voice" throughout his life.

¹⁴⁰ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1906, pp. 131-132

of Gloucester in 1903 he ascribed these changes to the work of the Holy Spirit. “New insights” were “impossible to explain away or deny.”

They rest in the deeper study of God’s Holy Word, and especially in the illumination of the holy Ghost, which thousands and tens of thousands believe, and rightly believe, is being vouchsafed to the Church in fuller measure than it has ever been since the promised and realised illumination of Pentecost. ¹⁴¹

He asserted that in “the past”, the Holy Ghost had been, in a sense, “a lost God” and His abiding presence in the soul and spirit of the individual believer had not been recognised. ¹⁴² However, he held that the prevailing characteristic of modern times was the “search after truth” and that “what we are now permitted to receive in answer to our prayers is personal guidance, and the guidance of a blessed and adorable personality who, not only is the Spirit of truth, but as our dear Lord promised, will guide into all truth.” ¹⁴³ Previous conceptions of God’s purposes for mankind, based on ideas of sacrifice, propitiation and judgement had been hindrances to the spread of the Christian message:

The full assurance of salvation here and hereafter was regarded as the special sign of God’s mercy and favour; the absence of this assurance as the monitory sign that conversion had not taken place and that the helpless soul was still in a state of estrangement from God. Anxious thought, as we well know, went much further, and called out those gloomy forecasts of life after death, in the case of the unconverted which have, in many cases, lingered down to our own times and made the work of bringing the Gospel home to the masses of our people, increasingly difficult. ¹⁴⁴

Modern Church historians seem uncertain how to categorise Bishop Ellicott. David Edwards ¹⁴⁵ and P.T. Marsh, ¹⁴⁶ perhaps influenced by his reputation as an opponent of ritualism and his conservative views on Scripture, call him a “moderate

¹⁴¹ Ellicott, *Doubt and Its Remedy*, *op. cit.*, p. 5

¹⁴² Presumably, this meant that he recognised that Christian truth could come from an individual believer

¹⁴³ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ Ellicott, *Doubt and Its Remedy*, *op. cit.*, p. 4

¹⁴⁵ Edwards, *Leaders of the Church of England*, *op. cit.*, p.83

Evangelical.” Chadwick places him with Evangelical bishops like Ryle of Liverpool and Hervey of Bath and Wells.¹⁴⁷ But Dean Wellesley in his report to the Queen of 1868 described Ellicott as “not Low Church but High”¹⁴⁸ and Balleine in his history of the Evangelicals in the Church of England refutes the “myth” that Palmerston always appointed Evangelical bishops by pointing out that “Ellicott and Jacobson [Bishop of Chester] were distinctly High Churchmen, though of an older school.”¹⁴⁹ On one key issue, conversion, Ellicott was certainly not in the classic Evangelical mould. In 1896 he delivered a sermon at Newent on ‘the conversion of St Paul’ in which he stressed that after his conversion on the Damascus road, the Apostle spent three days in blindness, “reviewing his past and facing his future,” and then passed three years “of solemn reminiscence and sad repentance” in the Arabian desert:

People spoke sometimes as if conversion was an instantaneous process, which at once turned the whole current of a man's life from evil to good — and henceforth he had no further trouble. This ‘cheap salvation’ as he must call it, was nowadays preached in our streets and shouted in our thoroughfares and he thought it time that all earnest and sober-minded men should ask themselves what conversion really means.¹⁵⁰

Ellicott's apologia was outlined in the Preface to his 1878 Charge to the diocesan clergy in which he stated that

The views generally mentioned in these Addresses, so far as they represent the views of any party in the Church are those of what may perhaps be conveniently termed the Constitutional Party — men deeply attached to the Reformation, and firmly loyal to its principles and settlements, but no less revering the primitive and apostolical aspects of the great historical Church to which it is our blessing to belong.

¹⁴⁶ Marsh, *The Victorian Church in Decline*, *op. cit.*, pp.17, 28

¹⁴⁷ Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, p. 102

¹⁴⁸ Buckle, *The Letters of Queen Victoria*, *op. cit.* Vol. i., p. 545

¹⁴⁹ Balleine, G.R., *A History of the Evangelical Party in the Church of England*, Church Book Room Press, 1951, p. 211. Scotland, *Good and Proper Men, Lord Palmerston and the Bench of Bishops*, *op. cit.*, p.56

¹⁵⁰ *Newent District Magazine*, February, 1896

He then drew a distinction between “Old High Churchmen” and their later Tractarian successors and placed himself in continuity with the former, but not the latter group.

Till recently, this honourable and influential body was commonly known by the name of the ‘Old High Church Party’ but as the High Church Party has now unhappily been stretched to include men whom the loyal High Churchmen of former days would have promptly disowned and repudiated, some fresh name has been necessary to designate that large ‘Party of the Centre’ as it has been called, with which the best spirits both of the old High Church and of the great Evangelical party can honourably unite and cooperate.¹⁵¹

Bishop Gibson

Bishop Ellicott wholeheartedly welcomed the appointment of Edgar Charles Sumner Gibson as his successor, reportedly telling the dean of Gloucester that he was “convinced that no better choice could have been made.”¹⁵² Like Ellicott, Bishop Gibson came from a clerical family, a more distinguished one in his case, since he was the son of William Gibson, a Hampshire vicar, but his maternal grandfather was Charles Richard Sumner, Bishop of Winchester from 1827-69.¹⁵³ When *The Times*, in his obituary in 1924, described him as “definitely of the High Church School”¹⁵⁴ the term did not signify that he held the same views as his predecessor. Edgar Gibson came from a clear Tractarian background. A product of Wells Theological College, he was successively student, Chaplain, Vice-Principal and Principal of that establishment which has more recently been depicted as a medium for the dissemination of “moderate” Tractarian

¹⁵¹ Ellicott, *Some Present Dangers of the Church of England*, *op. cit.* pp. vi-vii. On another occasion, (*Diocesan Progress* 1882, p. 19), he claimed to be following in the tradition of a group of (mainly 17th century) Anglican divines: Richard Hooker (1554?-1660), Henry Hammond (1605-1660), Daniel Waterland (1683-1740), George Bull (1634-1710), John Pearson (1612-1686) and Isaac Barrow (1630-1677). This list notably excludes the Elizabethan Reformers.

¹⁵² *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, April, 1905

¹⁵³ And therefore the great-nephew of John Bird Sumner, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1848-62.

principles.¹⁵⁵ It is therefore not surprising that, like his Tractarian predecessors, he should voice the Tractarian orthodoxy that “the first 30 years of the 19th century before the beginning of the Tractarian Movement are generally regarded as a time of utter deadness and neglect.”¹⁵⁶

Similarly, he could present for emulation heroes of the Movement such as John Keble¹⁵⁷ and Charles Lowder¹⁵⁸ in the fields of pastoral care and public Bible reading respectively and quote the 17th century Bishop Lancelot Andrewes on the distinction made by Anglicans between adoring the Blessed Sacrament and adoring Christ in the Sacrament.¹⁵⁹ Neither did he hesitate to quote any Roman Catholic opinion which he thought appropriate, such as Cardinal Vaughan’s view on the importance of regular clergy visits to church schools.¹⁶⁰

The arrival of Edgar Gibson at Gloucester did not result in dramatic and immediate changes in the direction of the diocese’s affairs. Baptism, Confirmation and communicant figures, coupled with the number of Eucharistic celebrations, continued to be used as the yardsticks by which to measure progress. His opposition to Welsh

¹⁵⁴ *The Times*, March 10, 1924, p. 18.

¹⁵⁵ Jacob, W.M. ‘The Diffusion of Tractarianism: Wells Theological College, 1840-49’ in *Southern History*, Gloucester, Alan Sutton, Vol. 5, 1983, pp.189 ff.

¹⁵⁶ Gibson, ‘Address to Rural Deans’ September 22, 1909 in *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1909 p. 163. The Oxford Movement is generally held to date from Keble’s sermon at Oxford in 1833. A more recent and radical assessment of the Church of England in the preceding decades is contained in Peter Benedict Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context: Anglican High Churchmanship, 1760-1857*, Cambridge Cambridge University Press, 1994

¹⁵⁷ Gibson, *The Diocese and the Parish*, *op. cit.*, p. 48

¹⁵⁸ Lowder’s reading was said to “make the Bible speak.” Gibson, ‘The Bishop’s Letter’ in *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine* 1917, p. 19. The reference to Lowder may well have had a particular resonance in the diocese since he was a curate at Tetbury in the 1840s.

¹⁵⁹ Gibson: *Standards and Practice*, *op. cit.* p.31. Bishop Andrewes’ statement was made in his ‘*Responsio ad Apologiam Cardinalis Bellarmini*’, (see More P.E. and Cross, F.L., *Anglicanism*, London, SPCK 1957, p.465). Many Tractarians considered themselves to be in the direct line of theological descent from the Caroline divines.

disestablishment, including the organisation of public demonstrations, was, if anything, stronger than that of his predecessor, although this is partly explained by the fact by then the threat had become much more imminent.¹⁶¹

But there were very clear indications of changes of emphasis. In his first Charge to the Diocese, he expounded at some length on what he termed the “disastrous” attempts of the post-Reformation Church of England to impose religious belief and the harm which that approach had done.¹⁶² His survey was confined to the 16th and 17th centuries but, whether intended or not, it could also be construed as an implicit condemnation of Ellicott’s policies towards the Ritualists. As a member of the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline,¹⁶³ Gibson felt it a duty to ensure that his clergy observed the restrictions on certain practices recommended by the Commission.¹⁶⁴ But he did not intend to coerce them; rather, he appealed to the consciences of any offenders.¹⁶⁵ Only two cases have been found where he disciplined clergy for doctrinal offences. In 1913, he withdrew his authority from one of the Diocesan Missioners, the Revd. Charles H. Sharpe who had published a book¹⁶⁶ in which he apparently acknowledged the supremacy of the Pope and upheld the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.¹⁶⁷ The censure on Sharpe was comparatively mild.¹⁶⁸ In 1922, he took a more stringent

¹⁶⁰ Gibson, *The Work of the Diocese*, Charge of 1913, p. 17. Cardinal Herbert Vaughan was Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, 1892-1903

¹⁶¹ Gibson, ‘Bishop’s Address to Diocesan Conference, 1911’, *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, p.237; Bishop’s Letter’, *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1913 p. 185

¹⁶² Gibson, *Standards and Practice*, *op. cit.*, p.8

¹⁶³ Gibson’s name was annotated “High [Church]” in a list of members of the Commission. G.K.A. Bell, *Randall Davidson, Archbishop of Canterbury*, London, Oxford University Press, 1938. Vol. i, p. 462

¹⁶⁴ Gibson, *Standards and Practice*, *op.cit.*, *ibid.*, p. 26. These included the use of the Roman missal, the veneration or invocation of saints, non-communicating Eucharists *etc.*

¹⁶⁵ Gibson, *The Diocese and the Parish*, Gloucester, Minchin and Gibbs, 1910 p.7

¹⁶⁶ Sharpe, C.H., *Catholicism and Life*, London, Longman, 1913.

¹⁶⁷ *Meeting of Archdeacons and Rural Deans*, September 18, 1913

¹⁶⁸ Restrictions were placed on his activities in the diocese which meant that he would have to seek the Bishop’s permission before assisting in a church for more than two Sundays in succession.

step, inhibiting the Revd. Silas Morgan Harris from preaching in the diocese. Harris, a priest at Bridgend in Wales had allegedly offended by telling a Gloucester audience that the Church of England must make “entire and unconditional submission to Rome” and that the Prayer Book, “stained in every page with murder, lust and adultery” was unfit to use.¹⁶⁹

Unlike Ellicott, Gibson was not a Biblical scholar but, as Principal of a Theological College, he was well aware of Biblical controversy and had formed his own views. Any clergyman who had heard Ellicott warn of the perils awaiting those who were seduced by the new Biblical criticism could not have failed to notice the contrast with their new diocesan who dismissed the “sort of idea that criticism was an enemy to be feared rather than an ally to be welcomed.”¹⁷⁰ He maintained that just as the Early Church had made use of Greek philosophy, so could the modern Church make criticism serve Christ’s cause and he thus pressed on “all alike, laity as well as clergy, the importance of making such critical and intellectual study” of the Bible “as lay in their power.”¹⁷¹

A lecture on ‘Sunday’ which he delivered at Leeds in 1907 showed that the views of the Christian Fathers and the practice of the Early Church were dominant factors in his interpretation of Scripture. He was insistent that Sunday should be maintained as a special day of worship but he quite explicitly rejected any notion that the practice should be based primarily on the Fourth Commandment, because nowhere was this belief to be found in the practice of the early Church: “You may search through what remains of all

¹⁶⁹ Gibson, ‘The Bishop’s Letter’, *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1922, pp. 75, 92-95, 137. The Bishop was not impressed by Harris’ explanation that he had been referring, not to the Prayer Book alone, but to a whole range of Reformation documents.

the ecclesiastical writers of the Christian church to the end of the 5th century, and in no single one of them will you find that the fourth commandment is referred to as the ground of the obligation to observe the Lord's Day." ¹⁷² He went on to emphasise that the Sabbath was primarily a day of rest but the Christian Sunday was a day of worship.

As mentioned above, Gibson intended to enforce the prohibitions against "illegal" ritual practices, but his 1907 Charge suggested that he forbade the practices, not because they were intrinsically wrong but because some limits had to be laid down, "unless a way is to be kept open for the taking of every conceivable heresy and the infraction of every conceivable rule." ¹⁷³ Otherwise, for example, a priest could omit the prayer of consecration altogether. But, as a member, he was aware that the Royal Commission had also concluded that "the law of public worship in the Church of England is too narrow for the religious life of the present generation. It needlessly condemns much which a great section of Church people including many of her most devoted members, value." ¹⁷⁴

The obvious solution to that problem was to introduce changes, but this necessitated an approach to Parliament. Ellicott regularly balked at the possibility, for example, of asking Parliament to approve changes to the Ornaments Rubric: "Nothing, I am convinced, would be more disastrous than any application to the present Parliament on such a subject, or, indeed, to any Parliament of the future." ¹⁷⁵ In 1907, Gibson had a short answer to that sort of objection; such an assumption could be validated only by

¹⁷⁰ Gibson, 'The Study of Holy Scripture', Diocesan Conference, 1906, *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1907, p.171

¹⁷¹ *ibid*, p.172

¹⁷² Gibson, 'Sunday' *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine* 1907, p.44

¹⁷³ Gibson, *Standards and Practice*, *op. cit.*, p. 26

¹⁷⁴ *ibid*, p.21

¹⁷⁵ 'The President's Opening Address', Diocesan Conference, 1889. *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1890 p.155

being put to the test ¹⁷⁶ and the Church ought to have faith that she would be guided in such matters by God.

From their new bishop, the clergy of Gloucester could expect clarity of thought and consistency of action but not indulgence. As principal of Wells, Gibson was renowned for “an unusual power of initiative and an insatiable hunger for work.” ¹⁷⁷ A man who, before arriving at Gloucester, had produced a book entitled *Self-Discipline in Relation to the Life and Work of a Priest*, ¹⁷⁸ who rose at five in the morning while Vicar of Leeds to do his literary work, ¹⁷⁹ who was impatient to return to work when afflicted by illness, working “when other men might have given in,” might be expected to be “intolerant of slackness” among his clergy. ¹⁸⁰ Ellicott had identified the country clergy as being the weak spot in the diocese’s ministry but he seemed to have some sympathy with the special conditions under which they worked. Gibson, on the other hand, was less tolerant, and it can only be surmised that his outburst at his last Diocesan Conference in 1922 must have been the culmination of many years of frustration with the performance of the rural clergy:

It was a grand thing that there were posts where a man could quietly carry on his studies. But they were not all Dean Churches, ¹⁸¹ and for many a man it was a deadly thing for him to be settled in some remote country parish, where he had not enough to occupy his time, where there were not many people to mix with, where he could not get about, and where he was in

¹⁷⁶ Gibson, *Standards and Practice*, Charge of 1907, p.26

¹⁷⁷ Elwes, E.L., *The History of Wells Theological College*, London, S.P.C.K., 1921, p.46

¹⁷⁸ Published 1894, quoted in Davie, P., *Raising Up a Faithful People*. Leominster, Gracewing, 1997, pp. 88-89,115

¹⁷⁹ Charles Ridsdale, in the Obituary Notice for Bishop Gibson, *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine* 1924, p.40

¹⁸⁰ *ibid*, p.42

¹⁸¹ Richard William Church (1815-1890), Dean of St Paul’s from 1871. His works included *Lives of Anselm, Dante, Spenser and Bacon* as well as *The Beginning of the Middle Ages* (1877) and *The Oxford Movement, Twelve Years, 1833-1845* (1891)

danger of becoming, not like one of his vegetables, because he did not grow, but where his life was more like that of a vegetable than of an animal. ¹⁸²

The country clergy, in particular, failed him in a new category which he introduced for measuring progress individually in parishes and collectively in the diocese. He told the Diocesan Conference in 1908, there was “no cause nearer my heart” than foreign missions, that “the diocese should awake to its responsibility, and that every parish in it, however tiny, should realise the claim which the mission work of the Church has upon it, and realising it, should do its utmost to meet it. ¹⁸³

That these hopes were constantly disappointed can be inferred from his commentaries throughout his episcopate on the levels of missionary support. In 1910, he criticised “a lamentable lack of enthusiasm” for missions on the part of the parish priests for which they someday would “have to answer.” Such indifference he held to be a form of spiritual selfishness, one of the seven deadly sins. ¹⁸⁴ In 1913 he was even more explicit, warning that where a lack of interest in mission work was shown, “it is impossible to acquit the parish priest of a grave neglect of duty, for which he will have to answer before the judgement seat of Christ” ¹⁸⁵ and at a Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (S.P.G.) meeting in 1916, he spoke of the Church of England’s “poor record” in missionary work and the need for Church people, “both personally and collectively, to repent of their shortcomings”. ¹⁸⁶

¹⁸² Bishop Gibson, at the Diocesan Conference, 1922, *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar* 1923, p.156. This was the second Conference to be held under new membership rules, extending to virtually all clergy in the diocese, so many rural clergy would have heard the remarks.

¹⁸³ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1908, p. 188, *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1909, p.231

¹⁸⁴ Gibson, *The Diocese and the Parish*, *op. cit.*, p.35

¹⁸⁵ Gibson, *The Work of the Diocese*, *op. cit.*, p.27

¹⁸⁶ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1917, p.11

It has been remarked above that Bishop Ellicott did not give an exceptional amount of attention to foreign missions. In Gibson's case, the topic amounted to almost an obsession, the roots of which are to be found in his conviction that the Church of England had an essential role in God's universal plan. According to the report of the Annual Festival of the Diocesan Board of Missions in 1913:

[the bishop] bade us remember the conversion of England synchronised with the first advance of Mohammedism. He bade us note that when this evil power, a power which a later speaker declared was Anti-Christ himself, was rising in the East, there was by God's providence at the very time a planting of His Church in the distant West and to set one event against the other and to think if we could not see here something of the design and purpose of God in giving England such imperial power and her Church so vast a wealth, such special fitness and so great an opportunity. ... If we, said the Bishop, knowing the awful need and abundantly provided with the means, hold back, then though God's purpose will still be carried out, it will be by others, and upon us will fall a deserved and dreadful nemesis. ¹⁸⁷

It is presumed that Gibson's theory was derived from a perceived correlation between St. Augustine's arrival in Canterbury in 597 and the 'Hegira' in 622 ¹⁸⁸ although the validity of the argument begs some important questions. ¹⁸⁹ Nevertheless, he continued on the same theme. In 1915, for example, he told the diocese that "The Church, as well as the Nation, is in a very real sense on its trial. If it fails now to care adequately and to intercede faithfully for the extension of Christ's Kingdom, its future is very dark indeed."

¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁷ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1911, p. 138

¹⁸⁸ *i.e.* Mohammed's flight from Mecca to Medina, generally reckoned as marking the beginning of the Muslim religion.

¹⁸⁹ For example: where did the Celtic Church, which was already in existence, figure in this plan?; was the 20th century Church of England the true descendant of that established by St Augustine? (a subject which has engendered many volumes!); why did it take some 1,300 years for the plan to come to fruition?;

¹⁹⁰ 'The Bishop's Letter,' *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1915, p.155

Although his strictures concerning missionary support were directed mainly at the clergy, he could be equally severe on any signs of self-indulgence or slackening by the laity. At the Diocesan Conference of 1911, during a discussion on preaching, he criticised the laity, “with such an insatiable appetite for sermons,” for burdening the clergy and advised the latter that they should not be afraid of repeating sermons on a Sunday. In fact, they should repeat themselves more. “St John was converted by a sermon which had been twice preached.”¹⁹¹

One of Bishop Ellicott's aims had been to make opportunities for worship more accessible to the people, if necessary licensing schoolrooms for divine service.¹⁹² Gibson showed some lack of sympathy with this policy and “thought they had done real harm to the Christianity of the country by the way in which they felt it necessary to multiply churches and mission rooms in every conceivable little hamlet.” The harm lay in the fact that they “were weakening” the people’s “endurance of hardship which ought to be a characteristic of very good soldier of Jesus Christ.”¹⁹³

This was completely consistent with his general attitude of apparent distaste for pleasure. As early as 1915, he had looked forward the ending of the War but cautioned against yielding to the spirit of “mafficking,” “excess, revelling, rioting and other forgetfulness of God.”¹⁹⁴ His message of ‘restraint above all things’ was the same when peace finally arrived and a special service of Thanksgiving was held in Gloucester

¹⁹¹ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1912, p.249 [I do not understand this allusion to St John]

¹⁹² Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1872, p.9; 1888, pp.4-5

¹⁹³ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1910 p.247

¹⁹⁴ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1916, p.249. ‘Mafficking’ had been coined after the riotous celebrations in Britain following the relief of the town of Mafeking in 1900 during the Boer War.

Cathedral: “There should be no wild tumult of rejoicing, but a sense of awe”¹⁹⁵ was his counsel.

In 1907, he led a discussion on ‘The Church and Amusements’ at a “vast” meeting for men at Cheltenham Town Hall and used the occasion to dissect the various synonyms used for ‘amusement’ in a manner which indicated his disapproval of the popular understandings. Thus, ‘recreation’ meant refreshment and restoration of the jaded and worn spirit; ‘diversion’ was a temporary turning-aside from serious work; ‘amusement’ meant the pursuit of the muses; ‘sport’ the disporting of limbs. ‘Pastime’ was an “ignoble” word, implying that people had nothing better to do than get through the hours somehow.” In short, “God did not send them into the world simply to eat, drink and be merry. He sent them to help forward the cause of their fellow men. Recreation was intended to help them to advance better.”¹⁹⁶ This attitude was thrown into sharp relief by the speaker who followed him and developed a theme on the line that “All work and no play made Jack a dull boy.”¹⁹⁷ Surprisingly, the bishop admitted to spending his own leisure time in reading novels, but they were usually the “older novels” because he was so disgusted by the content of modern works, even those which had had favourable reviews or had been recommended by friends.¹⁹⁸ Any impression of austere puritanism which might be conveyed in the preceding paragraphs needs to be tempered by the assurance from one who knew him well that the clergy found him approachable and that “as one got

¹⁹⁵ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1918, p.168

¹⁹⁶ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1908, p.247

¹⁹⁷ *ibid.* The speaker was John Bowers, Suffragan Bishop of Thetford and a former Canon Missioner of the diocese and Archdeacon of Gloucester.

¹⁹⁸ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1913, p.254. As he did not identify these volumes, it is not possible to form a judgement on his tastes.

to know him, the natural shyness disappeared and one found the warm heart underneath.”

199

It needs also to take account that his character included a strong sense of justice. In 1918, he described the Reform Bill of that year for the enfranchisement of women as “a simple measure of justice.”²⁰⁰ This opinion may be contrasted with Ellicott’s summing-up of a debate on women at the Diocesan Conference of 1895: “The Scriptural view of women undoubtedly was that she should be a helpmate to man, but distinctly *in a position of tempered subordination*. This relation was seriously endangered by modern conditions of life and education.”²⁰¹

Commenting on Gibson’s book *The Three Creeds* in 1908, the reviewer praised the author for “his absolute fairness and broad charity”²⁰² when considering opinions with which he disagreed. The same characteristic was to be displayed in his public as well as his literary life. Whilst accepting that his clergy would have opinions on political matters of the day, he was anxious that they should not express them from the pulpit, because it would be an abuse of their calling to advocate a political line “when no reply or question is possible.”²⁰³ He was, for example, strongly opposed to any extension of the grounds for divorce, but thought that the existing law was unfairly biased against the poor: “While no one would desire divorce to be made too easy, yet it is surely wrong that any one should be deprived of his legal rights merely by poverty.” Similarly, he believed that it was only just that the Matrimonial Causes Bill had placed women on an equal

¹⁹⁹ Charles Ridsdale, *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1924, p.41.

²⁰⁰ Gibson, ‘Bishop’s Letter’, *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine* 1918, p.2

²⁰¹ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1896, p.183. The italics are mine. Cf. also Chapter 5.

²⁰² Selby, W.J. *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1908, p.76

²⁰³ Gibson, ‘The Bishop’s Letter’, *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1910, p.5

footing with men when petitioning for divorce on the grounds of adultery.²⁰⁴ He was definite in his opposition to the provisions of the Deceased Wife's Sister Act of 1907 but he shrank from recommending that those who took advantage of its provisions should be refused communion because he "might be doing a real wrong and making some hearts sad which God has not made sad."²⁰⁵

It must also be assumed, because the speaker was his nephew and was addressing the Diocesan Conference of 1921 at the bishop's invitation, that he was broadly in sympathy with the Revd. B.O.F. Heywood, Vicar of Leeds, who found "the great principle of equality of opportunity which underlay the Labour movement to be a Christian principle" and contested the view that "a certain class was only fitted for the menial tasks." The speaker took the view that "a good liberal education would cause a good deal of shuffling of the positions occupied by members of the various classes."²⁰⁶

Conclusion

The main conclusions to be drawn from the above investigation of the episcopal oversight part of Bishop Ellicott's phrase quoted at the start of this chapter are that the bishop of the diocese during this period was no mere figurehead. He could and did make an impact on the life of the Church. However, it is clear that the power placed in the hands of a bishop such as Ellicott, deeply learned but lacking in wisdom, could gravely damage the very causes he sought to promote. If such a judgement seems unduly harsh on Ellicott, it must be remembered that towards the end of his episcopate, he delivered his

²⁰⁴ Gibson, 'The Bishop's Letter', *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1921, pp. 38-39. Hitherto, a man could divorce his wife simply for adultery, but she could not reciprocate unless she could prove cruelty on his part.

²⁰⁵ Gibson, *Standards and Practice*, *op. cit.*, p. 56

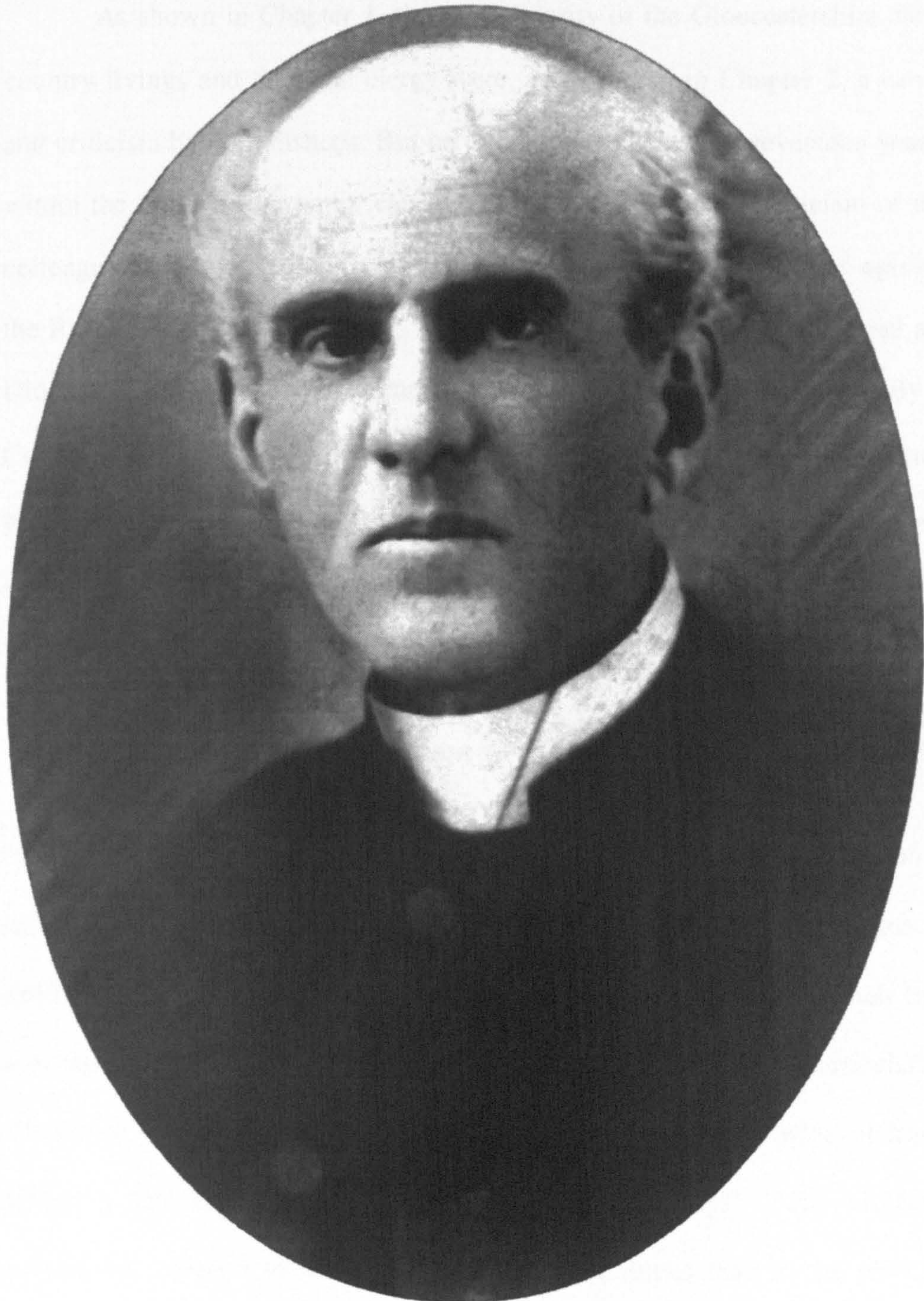
²⁰⁶ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1922, p.151

own resounding verdict on his performance by implicitly renouncing many of his past beliefs and actions.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁷ One of his last Charges, *Salutary Doctrine, op. cit.*, pp.103-108, contains a lengthy reflection the state of the soul after death. He interpreted Hebrews 9.27 — “it is appointed unto men once to die, and after death the judgement” — as meaning that, after death, the soul reviews its past life and passes upon itself “a prelude and anticipatory judgement.” It seems possible that, at the end of his life, he was already anticipating this process.

Chapter 3
The Clergy of the
Diocese

Thomas Hodson



Susan Fletcher: *Britain in Old Photographs: Charlton Kings*, p. 13

He spent virtually all of his 42 years of ministry in the diocese. He was Vicar of St. Mary's, Charlton Kings from 1892 to 1906 and of Oddington from 1906 to 1916 after earlier ministries in Minchinhampton and Slad. Four of his seven sons, all educated at Cheltenham College, became priests. His obituarist described him as "a loveable man", "so guileless & unreserved", "a singularly unworldly man". *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1916, p.6

The Country Clergy

As shown in Chapter 1, the vast majority of the Gloucestershire clergy occupied country livings and the rural clergy were, as remarked in Chapter 2, a cause of anxiety and criticism by both bishops. But on two notable occasions, seventeen years apart, from within the ranks of the junior clergy themselves came public criticism of their diocesan colleagues, mainly the country clergy, thus corroborating the bishops' opinions. In 1894, the Revd. Arthur Heber Browne, Vicar of Northleach, was invited to read a paper to the Diocesan Conference on 'Hindrances to Spiritual Life in the Country.' By the time the Conference opened, Mr Browne had accepted a missionary post in Newfoundland and the paper was read for him by the Canon Missioner. Possibly because he would not be personally present to deliver his views, Mr Browne appeared to have shed any inhibitions which might otherwise have constrained him. Too often, he claimed,

... the great hindrance in a parish was the parson, in consequence of the quiet, apathetic contentment, with a lower view of the office and his duties, which was nowhere more apt to creep over a man than in the dullness and seclusion of a country village. ¹

He accused many of his brother clergy of putting too much emphasis on meeting the secular concerns of their parishioners: "to supply *panem et circenses*, to teach wise thrift, and rational amusements, might, and could, occupy a great deal of their time" ² but he was equally critical about some aspects of their spirituality, particularly the "poor effeminate type of sacerdotalism which veiled its little knowledge of true priest-craft behind a fair show of clerical assumption and dignity." ³ His brother clergy, he maintained, "needed to look more closely to the duties than to the privileges of their

¹ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1895, pp. 184-185

² *ibid.*, p. 185

³ *ibid.*, p. 185

office. The hateful word 'living' had contaminated their thoughts; they were apt to think of their post as a benefice rather than a cure of souls." ⁴

Whether consciously or not, he was echoing the call of Bishop Ellicott decades earlier. He too had complained of parishes "where the great principle — that livings are trusts is very imperfectly recognised" ⁵ and had called for country clergy to be more disciplined in their calling. The bishop had pointed out that in a small parish,

... what may be done any day is sometimes done no day; other pursuits and interests come in to fill up the week's void; the little parish slowly recedes into the background; the cure of souls becomes not the primary but the secondary object ⁶

... many a place yet is there where there is little more than routine and formalism ... nothing save selfish isolation, dull professional routine, lifeless discharge of duties". ⁷

In Heber Browne's opinion, the Church was being faced with a challenge and an opportunity to "weld together opposing class interests" but these would demand personal sacrifice from the clergy: "In this age of wealth, set face to face with misery, the clergy should give up everything that seemed like ostentation and undue luxury." ⁸

In 1886, at the instigation of the Canon Missioner, a 'Society for Sacred Study' had been set up in the Diocese "to promote systematic study of the Holy Scriptures, and also of the best theological work of the past and present." ⁹ The Society's rules were not excessive; members were asked to give "time" four days a week to the study of religious literature. ¹⁰ This initiative was quite consistent with Bishop Ellicott's emphasis on the importance of study, especially for the country clergy: "More time must be found for

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 185

⁵ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1871, p. 3

⁶ Ellicott, *Church Work and Church Prospects*, *op. cit.*, p. 13

⁷ Ellicott, *Progress and Trials*, *op. cit.* p.101

⁸ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1895, p. 186

⁹ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1886, p.7

study; and in that study there must be far more of system and method than I fear is observed and cultivated by our clergy who have most time and opportunities at their disposal.”¹¹

The same theme was taken up by Bishop Gibson in his Charge of 1910. Without regular and systematic study, he maintained, the clergy would not be able to maintain their proper position as teachers. ‘The Society of Sacred Study’ was one of the major ways in which a clergyman could fulfil his own need for religious instruction, but the bishop appeared to doubt whether many clergy were availing themselves of this opportunity:

... with all these aids available, I ask you to think whether there is really any valid excuse for the neglect of study, and whether the true reason why so many of you have to make the humiliating confession that they are doing so little, is not the want of inclination and of resolution from which they suffer.
¹²

A year later, the Revd. William Curtoys, himself the incumbent of a small country parish,¹³ drew attention to the fact that the Society had attracted only 72 members from the 319 benefices in the diocese¹⁴ and reminded his brethren that a priest had taken a solemn vow during his ordination, to study sacred literature.¹⁵ Curtoys’ criticism of his brother clergy ran along similar lines as those of Heber Browne above, namely, that they had become preoccupied with the mundane features of country life to the detriment of their higher calling and he proceeded to catalogue his perception of common clergy pursuits:

¹⁰ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1906, p.87

¹¹ Ellicott, *Spiritual Needs in Country Parishes*, *op. cit.*, p.22

¹² Gibson, *The Diocese and the Parish*, *op. cit.* p. 34

¹³ Cromhall, population of 565 at the 1911 Census

¹⁴ Curtoys, W.F., ‘The Society of Sacred Study’, *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine* 1911, pp 26-27

For we must remember that we have not *promised* to keep cows or pigs, and to be interested in the number and nature of their families, or to have an exact knowledge of flowers and vegetables, or even to know hawks from handsaws; though any or all of these interests may be quite desirable and useful in country life. Recreation for the youth of the country is also a great need for their due development but the clergy have not promised to arrange or conduct it. Temperance touches the work at many points, but the clergy have not promised to conduct meetings on its behalf or to advocate the pledge. We did not promise to write articles, however racy and admirable, for magazines and newspapers. But we *have*, all of us, promised, on perhaps the most solemn and impressive day in the whole of our lives [to maintain sacred studies] ¹⁶

Mr. Curtoys was himself a rural parson but his main qualification thus to exhort his brother clergy to greater efforts in study was his position as one of the three sub-Wardens of the Society, working under the direction of the Canon Missioner. He was also one of the Diocesan Inspectors of Church Schools which presumably gave him a wider experience of parish conditions than his own immediate sphere of responsibility. It is difficult to quantify the extent of this alleged neglect of their duties by incumbents but incidents can be cited which suggest that a number of parishes were as spiritually lifeless as the concerns expressed above imply.

Stow Deanery provides an interesting illustration of clergy attitudes to the world outside the immediate parish. When a monthly Deanery magazine was started in 1902, six of the 25 incumbents in the Deanery regularly failed to contribute any material. ¹⁷ As late as 1913, Bishop Gibson complained that, after he had sent a letter to all incumbents in the diocese, inviting them to observe a special day of intercession for Home Missions,

¹⁵ “*The Bishop*: Will you be diligent in Prayers, and in reading of the Holy Scriptures, and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same, laying aside the study of the world and the flesh?” Answer: ‘I will endeavour myself so to do, the Lord being my helper.’ ‘The Ordering of Priests’, *Book of Common Prayer*.

¹⁶ Curtoys, *op. cit.*, p. 26

¹⁷ In contrast, some incumbents appeared to regard the monthly publication as a medium for learned treatises. In the first volume can be found a monograph on the spiritual value of fasting by the Vicar of Bourton on the Water and an exposition by the Vicar of Upper Swell of the doctrine and practice of the Primitive Church, as shown by Justin Martyr, including baptismal regeneration, the centrality of the Eucharist in Christian worship, the doctrine of the Real Presence and Reservation of the Sacrament. *Stow Deanery Magazine*, March, July 1902.

an analysis of replies to his later Questionnaire revealed that over 120 parishes did not appear to have taken any notice and many appeared “neither to have read” the letter “nor even to have heard of the appointment of the day.”¹⁸ Thus, he continued, “in at least one third of the total number of parishes no attention whatever was paid to the call to prayer which came with the authority of the Archbishop of the Province.”¹⁹ A similar call to observe a special day for Foreign Missions met with an improved, but not wholly satisfactory, response; the Bishop observed that in “60 to 70 parishes there appears to be no recognition whatever and in some others the observance by incumbent and people” was “slight”.²⁰

A period in the history of the parish of Painswick provides a good example of pastoral indifference. From 1839 to 1885, the sale of the advowson from one private patron to another appears to have produced a succession of pastorally unsuitable vicars. In 1839, Mr Biddle, a Stroud mill owner, bought the advowson and in 1856 presented the living to his son, John who reportedly had “two interests in life — collecting French pictures and breeding shorthorns.”²¹ Later in his incumbency he always officiated at the nearby village church of Edge, leaving Painswick church to the ministrations of his curate, Molesworth, “an amiable man who was generally liked, but laughed at on account of the length of his hair.”²² Another sale of the advowson brought to the village in 1868 the Honourable Percy G. Willoughby who was liked but afflicted with a shyness which

¹⁸ Gibson, *The Work of the Diocese*, *op. cit.* 113, p.26

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 26

²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 27

²¹ Hyett, F.A. *Glimpses of the History of Painswick with a Bibliography of its Literature*, Gloucester, John Bellows, 1928, p.53

²² *ibid.*, p. 54

“certainly made the performance of his duties irksome.”²³ He was succeeded in 1876 by Herbert McCrea, the son of the new patron, who apparently was fond of music and raised the standard of the Painswick church choir but “made no secret of his lack of interest in some of his duties.”²⁴ It was not until C.W.D. Perrins bought the advowson in 1885 and offered the living to his son in law William Seddon, that the parishioners were satisfactorily served by a parish priest who worked diligently and conscientiously among them. Mr Seddon had two spells as Vicar of Painswick and when he finally left the village in 1917, he was presented with a testimonial from parishioners which read: “We can wish for no greater blessing for Painswick than that the good seed which you have sown may continue to bear fruit long after the hand that scattered it and all who are addressing you are forgotten.”²⁵

The diary of John Dearman Birchall (1828-1897), a leading Gloucestershire layman, has revealed other cases of indifferent clergy performance. In 1869, he recorded his criticism of the Revd. Henry Green, his local Rector at Upton St. Leonards: “He offends his parishioners and seldom visits them. He seems not to appreciate the good that can be done by sympathy and loving tender action.”²⁶ An entry in 1871 provided an example of the Rector’s treatment of his flock. Two families brought infants to the church’s evening service for baptism:

One [infant] he apparently rejected and its friends sat down for a few minutes. Then in a most noticeable way during the baptismal prayers, all got up and walked out. With the other, when Mr Green got to the point of baptism, he discovered that the water had all run out. Mr Green, too impatient to wait while the old clerk Freeman went to the drawer well, continued with the usual evening service, and after a most interesting sermon from Canon Venables,²⁷ I suppose completed the baptism.²⁸

²³ *ibid.*, p. 55

²⁴ *ibid.*, p.55

²⁵ *ibid.* p.58

²⁶ Verey, (editor) *The Diary of a Victorian Squire, op. cit.*, p. 13

²⁷ Later the Precentor of Lincoln.

Mr Green's successor at Upton, the Revd. John Emeris arrived in the parish in 1872 with a glowing reputation: "an invaluable man, good at business, an admirable parish priest, a scholar and a gentleman. He was a pupil of Dr Arnold and admires his master's views."²⁹ But Birchall found Mr Emeris' deficient in performance. In 1872, he remonstrated with the rector for including a 'churching'³⁰ in the regular public service and, on two separate occasions, for refilling the chalice without re-consecration during Holy Communion. Mr Emeris promised to eschew public churchings in the future and admitted that it was "indefensible" to omit reconsecration but pleaded in mitigation that he "thought it was only a spoonful or so."³¹ However, the reprimand appears not to have had a lasting effect because he re-offended on two later occasions.³²

Despite the fact that the two men were apparently on friendly social terms, Birchall was obviously dissatisfied with Mr Emeris' spiritual leadership. In 1876, he persuaded the rector to authorise a mission in the parish although it had apparently not occurred to the latter to have one. Birchall had "pointed out the lethargy of Upton, the neglect of church and sacraments, the frequency of cases brought before the magistrates" and village gossip which held that the Rector's interests were in Gloucester.³³ Despite this confrontation, matters apparently did not markedly improve, since in 1887 Birchall expressed his regret that a couple named Dyer-Edwardes, who were contemplating buying the nearby estate of Prinknash, might be discouraged from doing so because they

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 27

²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 37

³⁰ *i.e.* "The Thanksgiving of Women after Childbirth" (*The Book of Common Prayer*)

³¹ Verey, *op. cit.*, pp. 44, 51.

³² On the first Sunday of 1881, Birchall recorded in his diary: "40 communicants. The wine running short, Mr Emeris replenished without consecration" and on Easter Day that year he noted: "There were 50 communicants. Mr Emeris replenished the bread once and the wine twice without reconsecrating." *ibid.*, pp. 121, 123,

³³ *ibid.*, p. 86

were “both High Church, and the Rector’s dull empty church and Mrs Emeris’ sour evangelicalism” was likely to deter them.³⁴ A rupture in the relationship between squire and parson finally came in 1889 when John Emeris resigned the living of Upton, giving as his only reason “Dearman’s remarks urging shorter and brighter services” and the Bishop then offered the living to Edward Scobell, the incumbent of a church in the city of Gloucester.³⁵ Dearman Birchall found Mr Scobell to be a much more satisfactory incumbent and his diary entry for December 11, 1892 reads:

His [Scobell’s] ministrations have put another face on Upton, and scarcely a house in the parish but has some representative attending church. He goes visiting all over from 7 to 9 p.m. and he generally gets a cup of tea in some cottage or other. Many men are coming to church and even Communion that never came before. The Bible class is full, the club is full and Dora Scobell’s Mothers’ Meeting a wonderful success. Archer [Birchall’s coachman] and his wife come arm in arm to every communion. He [Scobell] said he often took 8 hours to prepare a sermon. Thinking it over I wrote and congratulated him on the great and noble work he had done in the parish.³⁶

The above episodes from Painswick and Upton illustrate the truth of the bishops’ dicta³⁷ that the incumbent had a fundamental and critical responsibility for the spiritual life of his parish. At the same time, however, even where a clergyman was proving unsatisfactory, the ability of his superiors to remedy the situation was curtailed by such factors as the parson’s freehold. Birchall’s diary entry for New Year’s Day, 1873 records a conversation with Bishop Ellicott concerning “the inefficiency of the present spiritual assistance” in the neighbouring parish of Cranham whose incumbent was “old, feeble and miserably poor” yet could not be “induced to resign.” The bishop had apparently advised

³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 196. In fact the Dyer-Edwardes family did purchase Prinknash Park and later offered it to the Diocese as a Retreat House or as the Bishop’s palace. The offer was rejected because of the anticipated high running costs. Subsequently, Dyer-Edwardes converted to Rome and offered it to a Roman Catholic Benedictine community (formerly Anglicans) who still occupy the estate. *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine* 1926, p.5

³⁵ Verey, *The Diary of a Victorian Squire*, *ibid.*, p. 204. Scobell later became Archdeacon of Gloucester.

³⁶ *ibid.*, p.217

the squire to get the churchwardens to write a letter of complaint to him which he could then “take it into consideration.”³⁸

It might be contended that, being within relatively easy reach of Gloucester,³⁹ neither Painswick nor Upton were typical of the diocese’s rural parishes. But the manner in which those two parishes could be transformed by a change of incumbent indicates that any rigid division which automatically coupled a country parish with clerical neglect or, conversely, a town parish with spiritual vibrancy would be far too simplistic. There can be no doubt that Westcote, a village a few miles east of Bourton on the Water where the chief occupation was rearing sheep,⁴⁰ was a truly rural parish. Census returns for the period of this study show that its population experienced a steady decline in numbers, from 245 in 1861 to 172 in 1921. The reduction was partly because of emigration, 31 villagers emigrating to New Zealand.⁴¹ But the Revd. John Thomas, who arrived in 1906 applied himself vigorously to revitalising the parish. A year after his arrival, he invited the Church Army to hold a mission there. Weeknight services, held in a barn, reportedly attracted 50 to 100 villagers; therefore, about half of the village population responded to the Mission. As he settled in, he began to introduce Ritualistic practices. In 1910, he established in the parish a ward of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament (C.B.S.) which had 21 members five years later.⁴² In 1916, he set up a ‘Guild of the Holy Family’ the members of which were required to model their family life on that of the Holy

³⁷ Cf. Chapter 2, ‘Two Bishops in Contrast’

³⁸ Verey, *The Diary of a Victorian Squire*, *op. cit.*, p. 53

³⁹ Dearman Birchall walked from Upton to Gloucester and back on more than one occasion. (Verey, *The Diary of a Victorian Squire*, *op. cit.*, pp. 30, 92)

⁴⁰ *Victoria County History of Gloucestershire*, Vol. vi. p. 176

⁴¹ *ibid.*, p. 173

⁴² *Stow Deanery Magazine*, August, 1915. The CBS is an Anglican organisation intended to encourage devotion to the Eucharist.

Family.⁴³ The Guild processed around the village with incense in July of that year,⁴⁴ incense and Eucharistic vestments having been introduced into parish worship on Ascension Day.⁴⁵ In 1927 he invited to the village a community of nuns, the Community of Jesus of Nazareth, who remained there until 1969.⁴⁶ In this period of a declining village population, the number of Easter communicants increased by some 50 per cent, as shown below:

Table 3.1 Easter Communicants in Westcote Parish⁴⁷

<i>Year</i>	<i>1904</i>	<i>1907</i>	<i>1908</i>	<i>1909</i>	<i>1913</i>	<i>1915</i>	<i>1920</i>	<i>1923</i>
Communicants	45	42	48	48	68	65	56	40

More remarkably, for most of his incumbency, donations to both home and foreign mission causes were far in excess of what might be expected from such a small and poor community. The Table below shows the Westcote contribution towards Home and Foreign Missions in sample years, before and after Mr Thomas' arrival and is compared with the average contribution that year from other parishes in the Deanery. For simplicity, the sums involved have been rounded to the nearest pound:

⁴³ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, March, April 1916

⁴⁴ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, August, 1916

⁴⁵ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, July, 1916

⁴⁶ Anon., *The Westcote Convent, 1927-1969*, Westcote Local History Society, Westcote, 1998

⁴⁷ *Diocesan Statistics* for the appropriate years

Table 3.2 Westcote Donations to Home and Foreign Missions⁴⁸

<i>Year</i>	<i>Westcote (Home)</i>	<i>Deanery Avge. (Home)</i>	<i>Westcote (Foreign)</i>	<i>Deanery Avge. (Foreign)</i>
1904	£4	£4	£5	£3
1907	£9	£6	£22	£7
1908	£16	£5	£18	£9
1909	£18	£8	£85	£6
1914	£169	£13	£55	£8
1915	£110	£7	£66	£9
1920	£59	£2	£93	£9
1923	-	£2	£80	£9

Prima facie, the above returns suggest that Westcote (and its incumbent) well met Bishop Gibson's test that the spiritual health of a parish was to be judged on the basis of its support for Mission; John Thomas also provides an exception to the bishop's other contention that country clergy were generally lacking in energy and application. However, it is possible that there is another explanation for the mission contributions. Current members of the Westcote Local History Society are sceptical that the villagers alone could have been responsible for such a level of support.⁴⁹ There is another possible explanation. In 1920, one Evelyn George Ryecroft, a resident of Westcote, died. His obituary praised him for "his overmastering aim to serve his God and to help his neighbour" and also recorded his strong interest in Foreign Missions, hinting that he was a generous benefactor to that cause:

Few men, born and brought up as he was, would have lived for choice so simple, almost ascetic a life as his, but those who knew him well were aware that this enforced self-denial was in order that he might do more for others and for the causes which he loved.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ *Diocesan Statistics* for the appropriate years

⁴⁹ I have discussed the matter with officers of the Society.

⁵⁰ *Diocesan Magazine*, 1921, p. 24. The contribution to Foreign Missions fell noticeably in 1921 and 1922 but recovered to near their original level in 1923.

Whatever the explanation for Westcote's performance in financially supporting missions, it is clear that a blanket condemnation of the country clergy was both unjust and inaccurate. Archdeacon Henry Hayward of Cirencester presented a case for their defence in 1910:

The world in general knows but little of the patient, monotonous and painstaking life of the country clergyman. The great issues of events in Church and State naturally engross its attention and everyday familiarity with the parson of his parish takes off from the nature and value of his work and disposes the parishioner to accept it as a matter of course. ⁵¹

More positively, Canon John Bowers, Gloucester's Diocesan Missioner, told an audience of Welsh churchmen in 1889 that the rural clergy were "noble, saintly and scholarly men, ministering in our hidden-away villages and hamlets — leading their forlorn hope with conspicuous courage" and that the country clergyman filled "one of the most difficult posts in the whole Church of God." He continued:

Think of their geographical, social and intellectual isolation — and the difficulty of practically realizing the corporate life of the Church; think of the comparatively young man, coming to a village Parish full of enthusiasm and zeal, and then think of the going on year after year, and the temptation becoming stronger and stronger to settle down to a sort of dead level. Then there is the difficulty of speaking out where everybody's life is well known ...

He added to these problems those of a "miserable stipend" and the demands of the Dilapidations Act and concluded rhetorically, "where can you find me a class of men needing help and sympathy more than they do?" ⁵² The apparent contradiction between his views and those of William Curtoys and Arthur Heber Browne, quoted above, can be reconciled if it is understood that Canon Bowers was talking about the country clergy generically, the former about men personally known to them. Even Bishop Gibson, so critical of his rural clergy, rewarded a country clergyman, William Wright with a canonry

⁵¹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine* 1910, p. 92

⁵² Bowers J.P.A.; *Diocesan Mission Colleges*, Osborne, Gloucester, (no date, 1889?), pp.10-11

at the Cathedral in 1913 in recognition of his 47 years of service in the villages of Eastleach Martin, Eastleach Turville and Southrop.⁵³

Furthermore, Archdeacon Hayward⁵⁴ was himself said to be an embodiment of the truth that taking a lively interest in country affairs and being spiritually alive were not mutually exclusive activities. According to his obituarist, Henry Hayward was the ideal country parson. He was a “good specimen of the muscular Christian,” a horse rider, “a boating man at college and an enthusiast for cricket.” Thus equipped, “his natural sympathies and tastes gave him common ground with squire and farmer and labourer alike. He could always talk, and enjoyed a talk with each on his special concerns.” But he was also a spiritual leader, “a strong Churchman of the Tractarian type,” confident of the position of the Church of England within the Catholic Church and “impatient of indefiniteness in theological statement and of uncertainty in the exposition of Christian principles.”⁵⁵

As Bishop Gibson acknowledged, there was a legitimate place in a country parish for the scholar who, in later years, wished to move to an area of tranquillity where he could pursue his studies. Such was Peter Goldsmith Medd, Rector of North Cerney from 1876 to 1908, Fellow of University College, Oxford from 1852 to 1877 and the author of a number of religious books.⁵⁶ Another was Robert Bruce who died at Littledean in 1914 aged 81 after missionary work in Persia where he translated the Bible and Prayer Book

⁵³ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1928, p.20

⁵⁴ Archdeacon of Cirencester from 1883 to 1908.

⁵⁵ Acworth, W.P., ‘Henry Rudge Hayward’, *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine* 1913, p.6

⁵⁶ Bishop Gibson described him as. “one of the old school of Tractarians, the friend of William Bright and Henry Parry Liddon, who set before a younger generation a grand example of quiet, loyal and faithful service, and through 30 years of ministry in a country parish well maintained the tradition of devout scholarship and sanctified learning which he brought with him from his college rooms at Oxford. *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1909, p. 230

into Persian and later became Professor of Persian at University College, London.⁵⁷ Neither must the contribution be overlooked of those rural incumbents whose spiritual qualities were acknowledged by their incorporation into the Diocesan Mission team which regularly went out into rural areas for evangelistic purposes.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, allowing for all the foregoing exceptions, there is enough evidence to suggest that, in general, a sufficiently large number of the rural clergy, were so deficient in the performance of their spiritual duties as to invite censure.

Long-serving Clergy

One particular obstacle to clergy efficiency was the number of clergy, particularly in rural livings, who remained in post for an excessive length of time, often to the detriment of the spiritual health of their parish. The Revd. John Elliot, who was licensed to the parish of Randwick in 1819 was still its Vicar when he died in 1891, an incumbency of 72 years.⁵⁹ The Revd. Martin Whish, ordained in 1839, went to Alderley seven years later and remained there for 57 years, dying in 1903.⁶⁰ Two Cotswold clergymen, Robert Le Marchant of Little Rissington in Stow deanery and Thomas Crook Gibbs of Coates in Cirencester deanery, both died in office aged 95.⁶¹ In the last few years of their incumbencies both engaged and personally paid for the services of a curate. Mr Gibbs, who worked in the diocese for 72 years,⁶² seems to have been remarkably fit for his age and in 1913 he travelled to Cheltenham to join in a demonstration against the proposed disestablishment of the Church in Wales and marched and stood in the pouring

⁵⁷ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1915, p. 49

⁵⁸ Cf. Chapter 6. The honorary missionaries included the Revd. Richard Nason, Rector of Saintbury, who was said to have had "the reputation of being one of the ablest preachers in this part of the country." *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, August, 1906.

⁵⁹ *Victoria County History of Gloucestershire*, Vol. x., *op. cit.*, p. 229

⁶⁰ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1903, p.123

⁶¹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1915, pp. 20,44

rain.⁶³ His neighbour seems to have been less physically active. His Archdeacon's obituary for Dr Le Marchant is a good example of the art of damning with faint praise:

The times have moved since he became Rector and his sympathies were with the older order of things. His work, while he was capable of doing it, was performed punctually and regularly. In later years, though less out and about among the parishioners he was not forgotten by them, and many tokens of affection were given at his funeral.⁶⁴

It is noteworthy that the first contributions from Little Rissington to the *Stow Deanery Magazine* since its inception in 1902 came after Dr Le Marchant's successor had arrived at the rectory. Since Dr Le Marchant was not always meticulous in submitting figures to the diocese from his parish registers, the evidence is limited but some inferences about parish life before and after his death may be drawn from a comparison of the average Easter communicant figures in three different periods. From 1903 to 1908 (when he ministered alone) the average was 24; from 1909 to 1913 (when he had the assistance of a curate) 29; from 1914 to 1923 (when younger men were the incumbents) 38.

For a period, Tibberton in North Forest deanery, also had a largely invisible incumbent. When the Rector, the Revd. Honeywood Scott died in 1908 after 56 years as the parish priest,⁶⁵ it was remarked that "latterly, owing to ill-health and infirmity, he could hardly have been known to some of his younger parishioners at all."⁶⁶ It was possibly with these sort of examples in mind that in the wartime and post-war years the Diocesan Board of Finance apparently realised that reliance upon elderly incumbents with private means could have a negative effect on parish vitality. They therefore called for more effort from the laity to provide financial support to the clergy. In 1913, the

⁶² *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1915, p. 20

⁶³ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1913, p. 131

⁶⁴ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1915, p. 49

⁶⁵ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1911, p. 180

Treasurer invited 500 subscribers to donate a guinea a year to Board funds, assuring them that a portion of the sum would go towards training ordinands so that “some young man who has hitherto been too poor to undertake the expensive training for the ministry will be enabled to do so; and thereby the reproach against the Church, that only a man of means can afford to be ordained, will be a little less true than it was before.”⁶⁷ The same theme was pursued in a 1917 statement from the Board:

We think that very few of the laity realise the extent in which in the immediate past, at least in the country parishes, the Church has been dependent upon the private income of the clergy. Those who are behind the scenes know well that as the inevitable changes in personnel take place, the newcomer is nearly always a poorer man than his predecessor. The consequences of the war will accentuate the pace of causes already in progress. The laity rightly objects when a man suffering from senile decay remains in charge of a parish. Yet is it possible to live, educate children, insure one's life, provide for old age on even £200 a year? The total amount voted for pensions is £500 and for aided insurance £150. Yet there are 319 beneficed clergy and 87 licensed curates working in the diocese.⁶⁸

The implication of the above statement was that a private income was a prime requirement for clergy in many livings and that the retention in post of senile clergymen was a consequence of this situation. A Diocesan Committee report on ‘Impoverished Livings’ in 1892 had stated the principle that “no parish clergyman can be free from pecuniary anxieties who has not a glebe house rent-free and a clear income of £200 a year.”⁶⁹ Two years later, the Committee responsible for administering a fund to aid the incumbents of ‘Small and Impoverished Benefices’ discovered that at least 85 per cent (430 out of 497) of the benefices in the then combined diocese had incomes below an

⁶⁶ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1909, p. 20

⁶⁷ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1913, p. 172-173

⁶⁸ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1917, p. 77

⁶⁹ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1893, p. 174

annual value of £200, 139 being below £150, 71 below £100 and “several” below £50.⁷⁰ The Gloucester situation was not exceptional. In 1889 a Report of the ‘Incumbents’ Sustenance Fund’ to the Lower House of Convocation stated that in England and Wales 1,400 benefices had a value of below £100 and 3,400 of between £100 to £200, a direct consequence of clerical reliance upon a fall in the value of “real” property.⁷¹ However, the Gloucester Committee appointed to administer the ‘Fund for Aiding the Incumbents of Impoverished Benefices’ reported to the Diocesan Conference of 1894 that

Your Committee, while finding a diminution in the incomes of benefices serious enough to justify all that has been said in previous reports and circulars, are happy to state that their worse fears respecting clerical distress in the Diocese have not been altogether realised. A large majority of the incumbents are fortunately in the possession of private means, which enable them to bear the shrinkage of their professional income without actual privation.⁷²

That assessment did not fully take into account that in some parishes the necessity for a private income could constitute a significant obstacle to clergy deployment. The Revd. Harry Sheringham was sufficiently well connected to undertake periodic duties at the Chapel Royal⁷³ but he apparently found his post as Vicar of Tewkesbury a drain on his resources. In 1897, he arranged an exchange of livings with a Scarborough vicar, only for the latter to realise that he could not “afford to come to Tewkesbury.”⁷⁴ Some three years later, another exchange was successfully effected, the Revd. Oswald Wardell-Yerburgh arriving in Tewkesbury from Christ Church, St Marylebone and Mr Sheringham moving in the opposite direction. In an open letter to Abbey parishioners, the departing vicar explained the reasons for his resignation:

⁷⁰ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1896, p.167

⁷¹ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1893, p. 175

⁷² *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1895, p. 169

⁷³ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, June, 1898

⁷⁴ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, June and July 1897.

But you will, I am sure, understand that there are circumstances which must always render your Vicar's position, whoever he may be, an anxious and difficult one. This is a post of great responsibility, and at the same time, one of much pecuniary anxiety. I will not conceal the fact that I am leaving Tewkesbury considerably poorer than I came to it. And it is for this reason, and for this reason only, that I find myself obliged to sever ties which, were it not otherwise, would bind me more and more closely to this parish. ⁷⁵

Canon Wardell-Yerburgh's election to the Athenaeum Club in 1912 ⁷⁶ suggests that he may have suffered fewer financial concerns than his predecessor. Moreover, he appears to have had a wealthy mother in law who, among other benefactions, was funding the provision of a fourth curate at the Abbey at the time of her death. ⁷⁷

At Painswick the Revd. William Guest-Williams, on arriving as the new Vicar in May 1890, told his parish that he had been initially reluctant to accept the post because of its "financial responsibilities."

In late years, under the annually decreasing income of the benefice, your Vicars have been able to help the Parish out of their own private reserves. Now the income is smaller than ever, scarcely half its nominal value and I, as a poor man, cannot do as my predecessors have done. However, this, though a somewhat difficult position for me, may be no disadvantage to the Parish, inasmuch as there will be greater opportunities for those voluntary efforts and contributions, which are the signs of a healthy and vigorous religious life, and which church men are not slow to make when need arises. ⁷⁸

As Mr Guest-Williams remained in the parish for seven more years, it must be presumed that he was able to cope with the financial problems which he had anticipated.

A third example comes from Cirencester in 1908 when John Sinclair resigned the living on being appointed Archdeacon. Bishop Gibson convened a special meeting of

⁷⁵ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine* November 1899. Harry Sheringham was the son of John Sheringham, the Archdeacon of Gloucester.

⁷⁶ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, July 1912

⁷⁷ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, March, 1911

⁷⁸ *Painswick Magazine*, May 1890

parishioners in the town's Corn Hall at which it was explained that the bishop had started to look for a successor:

But when he enquired into the official income of the Vicar, he found that, after deducting all necessary expenses, there remained barely £100 for the Vicar's own expenses. The Bishop, thinking that this was not a right state of things in such a place as Cirencester, and not wanting to be tied in his choice by having to find a new incumbent with large private means, wrote to the churchwardens stating the facts of the case and asking them to do what they could to help him in the matter. ⁷⁹

The outcome of the meeting was a unanimous decision to make the parish self-supporting through a Free-Will Offering Fund and a plan to canvass the town in its support. As Mr Guest-Williams at Painswick had suggested that his private privations would provide the impetus for wider public support for the parish priest, so at Cirencester the positive advantages of the proposal were stressed:

The great gain will be that whereas in past years the £300 has been contributed by comparatively few persons and those of the wealthier class, such a scheme as is proposed aims at getting the support of all the Communicants who will be asked to subscribe what they can week by week towards the support of those who minister to them. ⁸⁰

Nevertheless, the problem continued to dog Church affairs and well into the twentieth century Ernest Smith, one of Harry Sheringham's successors at Tewkesbury, maintained that "nineteen out of every twenty livings are impossible for a man without private means." ⁸¹ Even though this was probably a subjective impression rather than a proven fact, it is indicative of the existence of a persistent difficulty for both the recruitment and subsequent careers of the clergy.

There were, moreover, many parishes where the incumbent did not have the support of a private income. According to data published by the diocesan branch of the

⁷⁹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1908, p. 168

⁸⁰ *ibid.*

⁸¹ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, June 1921

Queen Victoria Clergy Fund, Permanent Endowment Grants to boost incomes were given to 17 rural parishes in the period from 1898 to mid-1903.⁸² Grants for nine more parishes were outstanding at that time.

Table 3.3
Permanent Endowments Paid to Gloucestershire Benefices
January 1 1898 to June 30, 1903⁸³

<i>Parish</i>	<i>Value per annum</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Local Contribution</i>	<i>Total Increase of Annual Value</i>
Hewelsfield	£76	£50	£100	£7-10-0
France Lynch	£99	£25	£75	£6-0-0
Highnam	£95	£50	£230	£14-0-0
Westbury on Severn	£96	£50	£360 •	£24-0-0
Ozleworth	£96	£75	£200	£10-10-0
France Lynch (2 nd)	£108	£30	£190	£12-10-0
Longney	£119	£20	£80	£6-0-0
Blaisdon	£122	£25	£175	£12-0-0
Mitcheldean	£126	£25	£75	£6-0-0
Cainscross	£139	£50	£1100	£66-0-0
Charlton Kings	£142	£75	£425	£30-0-0
Aldsworth	£144	£10		Only part paid
Coaley	£150	£130	£270	£19-4-0
Lower Cam	£160	£50	£500	£30-0-0
Coaley (2 nd)	£170	£30	£70	£6-0-0
Oakridge	£176	£50	£350	£24-0-0
North Nibley	£209	£50	£600 ♦	£37-10-0
Totals		£795	£4,800	£311-4-0

Notes: • From sale of land, value £12 a year; ♦ From sale of land and cash

The 1892 principle of £200 net as the benchmark stipend for incumbents⁸⁴ was clearly based on the traditional model of one incumbent per parish without regard to the size or nature of the parish and the demands which it might make upon him. But into the twentieth century, the perspective from which the problem was viewed began to change and the assumptions which had informed discussions for the previous generation began to

⁸² *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar* 1903, pp. 172-173

⁸³ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1904, p. 172

⁸⁴ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1893, p.174

be challenged. In 1907, Lord St Aldwyn, one of Bishop's Nominees to the Diocesan Conference, told that year's gathering that it was not sufficient simply to raise money to support the clergy; it had to be spent wisely and effectively. He therefore concluded

That in a considerable proportion of the parishes of this diocese the existing endowments of the Church are insufficient to provide a reasonable income for the incumbent and that a determined effort is required, in the best interests of the Church, to remedy this evil by increasing the official income of *the more important of these benefices* — especially those in public patronage — and by uniting with neighbouring benefices, after full local enquiry, those *where the work is insufficient to take up the whole time of one man*.⁸⁵

As Sir Michael Hicks Beach, Lord St Aldwyn had twice held the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer in Conservative governments⁸⁶ so was presumably accustomed to grappling with hard financial decisions. His was not a lone voice; he had the backing of the diocesan hierarchy, as indicated by the fact that his proposal was seconded by the Archdeacon of Gloucester who saw a clear need for a more effective distribution of the clergy:

The present large population in the towns are left without proper spiritual care, whereas in some districts a very sparse population formed a separate charge, due to the determining factor of the existence of a consecrated building, of some endowment, and of a certain, limited area which constituted a parish.⁸⁷

Canon Ridsdale informed the 1911 Conference that he had been told by some of the parochial clergy themselves that there was insufficient work to be done in their parish⁸⁸ and Bishop Gibson put to the 1910 Conference the rhetorical question:

Why should they pay a [clergyman] a full day's wage if he only had to do half a day's work? And that was what it was in a very large number of cases. There were parishes in this diocese with a population of only 60, or even 40,

⁸⁵ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1908, p.242. The italics are mine.

⁸⁶ Ensor, Sir Robert, *England, 1870-1914*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1968 *edn.*, p. 32, *fn.* 6

⁸⁷ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1908, p 242

⁸⁸ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1911, p. 245

and there was one with even less than 40 souls. ... The Church must become a business concern, to put it very bluntly, if it was to carry with it the enthusiastic support of the laity. It could not be a business concern while they were setting men down to look after these very small parishes and there were these enormous parishes unmanned.⁸⁹

The notion that the diocese was too generously provided with clergy seemed to shock some of the Conference members, as did the implications of the proposal for united benefices, which included a suggestion for a greater use of lay readers. In the various objections raised can be traced some of the contemporary conceptions about the role of a clergyman and the church building in parish life. It was claimed that the absence of a clerical household might lead to a loss of 'tone' in a village;⁹⁰ that the family of a married resident priest could greatly influence for good the whole population;⁹¹ that parishioners would rather attend a Nonconformist chapel than go to another village for their church services;⁹² that they would not accept a layman conducting services in a church;⁹³ and that they would see no difference between "the layman in the Church and the layman in the chapel."⁹⁴

The intervention of the Great War interrupted action but the problem remained and called for a solution. At the Diocesan Conference of 1921, a layman, Dr S.T. Pruen of Cheltenham, drew attention to a current level of clergy poverty whereby "many of them have insufficient food and clothing and are unable to educate their children properly." He therefore proposed that "every resident incumbent of a full-sized parish should have the equivalent of £500 a year with allowances for children."⁹⁵ The

⁸⁹ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1910, p.247

⁹⁰ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1908, p.244

⁹¹ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1910, p. 245

⁹² *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1908, p. 244

⁹³ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1911, p.243

⁹⁴ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1911, p.244

⁹⁵ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1922, p. 156

proposition was carried with only two dissentients but lingering disquiet over the past performances of some clergy could be traced in the approval of a rider to the proposition stating that only those clergy who carried out their duties “in an effective manner should receive the grant.”⁹⁶

The seconder of the original resolution, a Lt. Cdr. F.C. Cadogan of Hatherop, had alluded to another option, that of a celibate priesthood, but had dismissed it as not being “in accordance with the English ideal.”⁹⁷ Nevertheless, “a frank recognition of celibacy for a section of the clergy” was suggested by Spencer Jones, the Vicar of Batsford with Moreton in Marsh, at the following year’s Conference, a suggestion to which Bishop Gibson gave a qualified welcome by expressing his opinion that young clergymen should exercise self-denial and self-control and not expect to marry as soon as they were ordained but “wait until they had a benefice before entering the holy estate of matrimony.”⁹⁸ The Bishop coupled with this a vision whereby teams of clergy, operating from a centre such as Cirencester or Tewkesbury could serve the surrounding villages.⁹⁹ The process of uniting benefices reduced the number of benefices in the diocese from 320 in 1921 to 309 in 1927 and raised the average income of incumbents from £359 p.a. to £392.¹⁰⁰ So some relatively modest steps had been taken to rectify at least one of the problems facing the diocese.

⁹⁶ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1922, p. 157. What standard of performance was expected and who would judge it were not made clear.

⁹⁷ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1922, p. 157.

⁹⁸ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1923, p. 156

⁹⁹ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1923 p. 156

¹⁰⁰ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1929 p. 4

The Churchmanship of the Clergy

The notoriety of the disputes over Ritual between Bishop Ellicott and some of his clergy and the generally Evangelical ethos of large parts of centres such as Bristol and Cheltenham may tend to obscure the fact that, certainly by the turn of the century, the Diocesan clergy as a whole could be said to have been heavily influenced in favour of Tractarian principles. According to a survey of incumbents in the diocese conducted in 1916, “Churchmen of varying degrees of thought believe that Holy Communion should have the central place”¹⁰¹ in public worship. This may be contrasted with Bishop Ellicott’s discovery on arriving in the Diocese in 1863 that only 14 of the 451 benefices¹⁰² had a celebration of Holy Communion every Sunday.¹⁰³

It is not possible to present a Churchmanship profile of the whole diocese at all times, not least because some clergy changed their views over a period of time. Such was Canon Mowbray Trotter, Vicar of St Mary de Crypt, Gloucester whose “strong Evangelical views” were said to have broadened in later years, not least because his clerical career placed him as incumbent of a parish in the diocese of Canterbury with a High Church tradition.¹⁰⁴ Another was John Thomas,¹⁰⁵ the incumbent of Westcote, who came from a Welsh Wesleyan family but moved towards the “Catholic and Reformed heritage” of the Anglican Church while an undergraduate at Jesus College, Cambridge. There may well have been others who made careful distinctions in their churchmanship like George Lewis, the Rector of Icomb, who in 1904 sent the proceeds of an offertory to a fund set up to erect a memorial in Gloucester to the martyred Tudor bishop, John

¹⁰¹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine* 1916, p. 172

¹⁰² Bristol and Gloucester were at that time a single diocese.

¹⁰³ Ellicott, *Church Work and Church Prospects*, *op. cit.*, It is not clear how many of those 14 churches made the service so “central” to the day’s worship in that it was the main service of the day.

Hooper, explaining that he did so, "to do honour to a brave Englishman and a loyal Churchman" but with the reservation that "we 'recognise' Bishop Hooper only historically as the prototype of an ecclesiastical party."¹⁰⁶

However, the election of Proctors to Convocation in 1910 provides an opportunity to measure the attitudes of the clergy at that time with a reasonable degree of accuracy. At that election, the Revd. Alfred Cox, Vicar of Christ Church, Cheltenham, was a late entrant among the candidates, having been persuaded to stand specifically against the proposed "re-introduction of Roman Vestments." At the subsequent election, he came bottom of the list, polling less than 15 per cent of the total votes cast.¹⁰⁷ It is interesting that in his pre-election address Mr Cox admitted that he did not expect to receive many votes but felt that a stand should be taken as a matter of principle.¹⁰⁸

This should not be construed as a sign that the disputes over Ritual in the late nineteenth century had been in vain and that Bishop Ellicott's opponents had been vindicated. Rather, it shows the realisation that it was possible to adopt Tractarian principles in the diocese without incumbent and bishop being set on a course of confrontation. In this approach, the Prayer Book could be used to support and justify contrary positions.

The lay mind of the diocese may well have been at variance with the clergy on questions of Churchmanship. With talk in the air of the Church having reached a position

¹⁰⁴ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1913, p. 45

¹⁰⁵ *The Westcote Convent 1927-1969*, op. cit. p.3

¹⁰⁶ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, July 1904. As a translator of *St Bernard's Five Books on Consideration* (*Stow Deanery Magazine*, August 1908) Mr Lewis' spirituality may be presumed to have been in a catholic direction.

¹⁰⁷ 59 out of the 402 votes cast.

¹⁰⁸ "Even at the risk of obtaining very few votes, I deem it of great consequence that we should make our position visible everywhere, otherwise it will be justly said that we are indifferent to the question and are content to see the decision go by default." *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1910, pp. 41-42

of “crisis” over doctrine and liturgical practices at the end of the nineteenth century, in May, 1899 three prominent laymen of the diocese organised an “Address” to the Bishop, which was signed by 300 churchwardens and nearly 5,000 lay communicants. The signatories affirmed their loyalty to the Prayer Book, deplored the spread of auricular confession and elaborate ritual and pledged support to the Bishop in his endeavours “to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God’s Word.”¹⁰⁹

In what appears to have been a response and partial corrective, twelve Rural Deans and 170 incumbents of the diocese, “representing as we believe the great majority of the clergy of the whole Church of England,” issued a *Declaration and Appeal of the Parochial Clergy in the Diocese of Gloucester with regard to the Present Religious Controversies* in which they declared their acceptance of the Prayer Book “as our standard and rule both of doctrine and worship” and “deeply regretted” those clerical brethren who exceeded or neglected¹¹⁰ its provisions, appealing to them to “trust and support the ordained officers of the Church in this her time of trial.” Yet at the same time, they declared positions on some of the major religious controversies of the day which showed a conviction that the Prayer Book could be interpreted in a distinctly Tractarian manner.

On Confession, they held that the forms of General Confession and Absolution in the Prayer Book provided for “the normal needs of the people” but they also approved of the form contained in the ‘Order for the Visitation of the Sick’ for individual confessions,

¹⁰⁹ *All Saints’ Cheltenham Parish Meeting*, April 4, 1899. The signatories were headed by the Earl of Ducie, (the Lord Lieutenant of the county), Sir John Dorington and William (later Sir William) Marling. The All Saints’ meeting refused to sign the ‘Address,’ judging it to have been “largely got up by a number of interested persons largely for political purposes.”

¹¹⁰ It was a favourite riposte of clergy with Tractarian sympathies that censure should be laid against not only those clergy who went beyond the provisions of the Prayer Book in their services but also against those whose Protestant sympathies caused them to neglect some of its more Catholic emphases.

providing that its use was not placed as “a burden upon the conscience of any” or made “a condition of receiving any of the Church’s ordinances.” Their Eucharistic doctrine acknowledged the unique nature of the Atonement, but also a belief that the Communion Service was a “perpetual Memorial of that Sacrifice.” Similarly, on the subject of the Real Presence, “while holding both [Christ’s] Presence and Communication to be in a special sense most real,” they expressed themselves “thankful to be able to assert that our Church binds us to no particular definition.”¹¹¹ Numerically, the signatories represented about 57 per cent of the Diocesan clergy although they included 12 of the 16 Rural Deans in their number. Presumably, a large minority could not or would not subscribe to those convictions.

Cheltenham could still be classified as broadly Evangelical in tone. The annual accounts of the Diocesan branch of the mainly Evangelical Church Missionary Society showed the Cheltenham Deanery in 1906 as by far the largest single contributor to funds.¹¹² Similarly, in 1909 it was reported that 20 of the 29 parishes in Cheltenham Deanery contributed to the Society with Cheltenham Parish Church the largest single contributor¹¹³ and in 1911 the Revd. Arthur Cox,¹¹⁴ complaining of “inadequate” diocesan support for the Society, revealed that “Cheltenham gave more towards it than all the rest of the diocese.”¹¹⁵

However, large and influential churches like Cirencester and Tewkesbury Abbey were known as Tractarian centres, putting a strong emphasis on the observance of the sacraments and the solemnity of worship. At the Abbey, Ernest Smith, the Vicar from

¹¹¹ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, June, 1899.

¹¹² *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1907, p. 223. Out of a total of £4,038 15s 3d from 14 deaneries, Cheltenham Deanery provided £2,132 18s 7d.

¹¹³ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1909, p. 127

1914, maintained the tradition established by his predecessors. He pressured his parishioners to buy him a set of Eucharistic vestments ¹¹⁶ and taught the value of auricular confession, ¹¹⁷ prayers for the departed ¹¹⁸ and fasting Communion. ¹¹⁹ His zeal for the Eucharist, ¹²⁰ led him to disparage Matins as “a meaningless routine performance of certain stated Psalms and Prayers, with about as much practical efficacy as the Buddhist’s praying wheel” ¹²¹ and later in the same year told his parishioners that he would retain the sermon at Morning Prayer only as “a concession to weaker brethren.” ¹²² Nevertheless, Smith styled himself a ‘moderate’ Churchman, held himself aloof from the activities of the Anglo-Catholics, ¹²³ declared himself “repelled rather than attracted to the Roman Catholic Church” ¹²⁴ and criticised that church for her “attitude of supercilious detachment” from the rest of Christendom. ¹²⁵

Similarly, in 1910 Canon George Gardner, the Vicar of All Saints’, Cheltenham explained to his Church Council that he had “dropped the use of the sanctus bell,” apparently in deference to Bishop Gibson’s wishes, because “it was not a piece of ritual that was worth fighting for.” ¹²⁶ In the same spirit, his successor, Canon Phillip Johnstone told his parishioners in 1914 that “his ideal for All Saints’ was that it should be a church

¹¹⁴ The unsuccessful Convocation candidate for the Proctor elections of 1910

¹¹⁵ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1911, p. 127

¹¹⁶ *ibid.*, November, 1917. While celebrating the Holy Communion at Cirencester, he had used a costly set of vestments, a gift from parishioners to the Vicar. The experience prompted him to ask the Abbey congregation when they would “come to learn the unique delight of making gifts of like munificence to their parish church.”

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*, December 1918

¹¹⁸ *ibid.*, November, 1914, November, 1918

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*, December 1915, December 1918

¹²⁰ *e.g. Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, January, 1917 under the heading, ‘The Food of Fellowship’.

¹²¹ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, January 1916

¹²² *ibid.*, September, 1916

¹²³ *ibid.*, June 1923

¹²⁴ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, September, 1921

¹²⁵ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, September 1920

¹²⁶ *All Saints’ Cheltenham Parish Meetings Book*, March 30, 1910

in which, avoiding Romanism, fussiness, hysteria and sentimentalism, the services were calm, dignified and stately and in strict accordance with the Prayer Book”¹²⁷ and ten years later he held that “All Saints’ stood in Cheltenham for the Catholic position in the Church of England and without going to extremes it had consistently fulfilled the purpose for which it was built.”¹²⁸

Tewkesbury Abbey, Cirencester Parish Church¹²⁹ and All Saints’ Cheltenham are thus illustrations of the fact that it was possible to hold ‘Catholic’ convictions in the Church of England at that time without in any way becoming embroiled in controversies over Ritualistic practices. Even so, there was no inevitable identity of view among those who would broadly stress the Catholic nature of the Church of England. The most articulate and persistent advocate in the diocese of the Anglo-Catholic position was the Revd. George Bayfield Roberts, Vicar of the small country parish of Elmstone Hardwick and sometime President of the diocesan branch of the English Church Union. On the evidence of his activities at the Diocesan Conference, Bayfield Roberts was a vigilant and vigorous guardian of the rights and privileges of the priesthood. This led him, for example, to give an early intimation of his opposition to include the laity in the government of the Church which resulted in the establishment of Parochial Church Councils [P.C.Cs] in 1919. At the Diocesan Conference of 1917 he opposed resolutions welcoming the development because they sought to give the laity a greater voice in Church government than they had had in history¹³⁰ and his opposition had not lessened by the time that the Diocese began seriously to consider in 1920 how the Act should be

¹²⁷ *ibid.*, April 15, 1914

¹²⁸ *ibid.*, April 24, 1924

¹²⁹ Where Eucharistic vestments were worn.

¹³⁰ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar* 1918, p. 173

implemented locally. He was not, he said, opposed to laymen taking “a fair share” in church work but “he stood for the right of the parson whose influence would be greatly diminished” if a resolution to establish P.C.Cs in the diocese were adopted.¹³¹ In this respect at least he differed from the Vicar of Tewkesbury who warmly welcomed the development.¹³² Like the Vicar of All Saints, Cheltenham, Bayfield Roberts professed loyalty to the *Book of Common Prayer* and in 1910 declared himself to be “emphatically opposed to any alteration in the Prayer Book,”¹³³ indignantly refuting an accusation by another speaker that in his own parish he “revised the Prayer Book to his own liking.”¹³⁴

The Clergy and Nonconformity

Until the time of the Great War, most of the diocesan clergy appeared to regard their Nonconformist brethren as competitors rather than allies in the struggle against the world, the flesh and the devil. Bishop Ellicott had agreed in 1867 with his clergy’s evaluation that Dissent was one of the three great “hindrances” to their work.¹³⁵ But he also insisted that relations between the churches should be courteous and in 1873, noting complaints that the clergy had often shown a “want of consideration” to “the dissenting minister,” impressed on them that they should always treat their Nonconformist colleagues courteously.¹³⁶ Nevertheless, that same perception of Dissent as a “hindrance” to the Anglican ministry persisted into the early twentieth century, as shown in 1906 when Canon Sidney Alexander, the Diocesan Missioner, stressed the importance of the local clergy nurturing converts after a mission. His evangelists, he said, “were well

¹³¹ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1921, p. 153

¹³² *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, February, 1920

¹³³ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar* 1911, p. 255

¹³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 258

aware how easily a convert may slip back into indifference or worldliness, or become attached to other religious bodies.”¹³⁷

The rivalry between Church and Chapel seems to have been more acute in the Gloucestershire towns than in the villages. In 1886, a Bristol vicar, addressing the Diocesan Conference on ‘The Spiritual Influence of Dissent in our Parishes’ told his listeners that in Bristol Nonconformity was at least as powerful as the Established Church:

... we Bristol clergy are working in our parishes, shall I say, side by side, or must I say face to face, with a body of dissenting ministers equal to ourselves, assisted by a body of lay preachers far excelling both in number and organisation anything we have to show, presiding over congregations at least as numerous as our own, in chapels which in the aggregate contain many more sittings than our churches.¹³⁸

In his opinion, this situation derived from historical factors, not least the past neglect by the Church of areas of the city and the consequent filling of the vacuum by the Free Churches. On the other hand, he argued that “dissent in the country districts is a waning force; for spiritual purposes it is generally not required, and it is honey-combed by its own divisions, which are more sharp and bitter than in the broader life of the large towns.”¹³⁹ Exceptions to this general rule, where nonconformity was strong, were “the

¹³⁵ Ellicott, *Progress and Trials*, *op. cit.*, p. 48

¹³⁶ Ellicott, *Reunion with Nonconformity*, 1873, p. 16

¹³⁷ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1906, p. 38

¹³⁸ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar* 1887, p. 168

¹³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 170

mining districts of the Forest of Dean and Kingswood, ¹⁴⁰ Bristol, some of our smaller towns and in parts of the Stroud valley.” ¹⁴¹

An awareness of and objections to Nonconformist influence were not confined to the clergy. It was a layman who at the Ruri-decanal Conference of Tetbury in 1907 raised the spectre that if a policy of uniting small benefices were adopted, any consequent curtailment of Anglican services would provide an opening for Nonconformity. It was claimed that “the laymen of the Church wanted their services every Sunday, and if the Church failed to provide them the Nonconformists would very soon get a strong hold on country places.” ¹⁴² And it was a layman at the Forest South Ruri-decanal Conference in 1911 who moved a motion of censure, (which was carried unanimously), against the Bishop of Hereford for inviting Nonconformists to a service of Holy Communion in his Cathedral. ¹⁴³ It was, too, a layman who in 1912, hinted at sinister political machinations on the part of Nonconformists, alleging that “a good deal of the trouble of the Church at the present time in relation to education, Disestablishment and Disendowment” stemmed from Nonconformists trying “to get on every public body that they could.” ¹⁴⁴

The attitude of some Anglican clergy towards the Nonconformists owed much to their belief in the moral and structural superiority of the Church of England over its rivals. In 1905, Canon Henry Proctor predicted that “the permanent effects of the Church Army are likely to be more satisfactory than those of the Salvation Army because, in the

¹⁴⁰ Cf. also an account of ‘Church Work in the Forest of Dean’ in *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1906, p. 210 which quotes the opinion of a leading Church layman, Sir John Dorington: that (religiously speaking) “The Forest of Dean is lamentably behindhand .. probably owing to its uncared for condition in ecclesiastical matters in bygone ages.” The Kingswood mentioned here is the former mining district in Bristol, notably evangelised by John Wesley in the 18th century, not the Gloucestershire village just south of Wotton under Edge.

¹⁴¹ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar* 1887, p. 170

¹⁴² *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1907, p. 190

¹⁴³ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1911, p.128. The bishop was John Percival.

first case, co-ordination with the Church's policy has accompanied zeal, in the other it has not." ¹⁴⁵ Canon Ridsdale, the Canon Missioner told the Diocesan Conference in 1912 that "he had nothing whatever to say against the Free Churches, or against the good work they were doing, but, after all, if one prayed in church to be delivered from schism, one was not advancing things by rushing into schism oneself." ¹⁴⁶ Some 40 years earlier Bishop Ellicott had used much the same language, explaining that although "individual Dissenters" had been courteous to him and he recognised them as servants of the same Lord, he could still pray with conviction the Litany petition, "From all false doctrine, heresy and schism, Good Lord, deliver us." ¹⁴⁷

On some issues, such as temperance, it was acknowledged that there was every advantage in Church and Nonconformity combining their efforts. As the Diocesan Secretary of the Church of England Temperance Society put it in 1906, "Temperance is happily a matter in which all Christians can combine with perfect harmony, and such meetings bring us all together in heart as well as in bodily presence." ¹⁴⁸ Even then, however, old suspicions could surface. In July, 1912 an open air temperance service, held in the Market Square at Coleford, attracted "at least 1,000 people," including "contingents from various chapels." When a "tropical shower" interrupted proceedings, a suggestion that the service be moved to the Parish Church was deemed to be "too threatening and not more than 300 responded." ¹⁴⁹

Suspected Nonconformist influence behind Government legislation such as the Burials Bills of the mid 19th century, the early 20th century debate over education,

¹⁴⁴ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1913, p.257

¹⁴⁵ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1906, p. 170

¹⁴⁶ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1913, p. 268

¹⁴⁷ Ellicott, *Progress and Trials*, *op. cit.*, p. 50

(particularly religious education) and proposals to disestablish the Church in Wales served to exacerbate relations, although in the last case, there were some Anglicans who were prepared to make a distinction between “political Nonconformity,” perceived to be antagonistic to the Church and “religious nonconformity,” more sympathetic to the Anglican position.¹⁵⁰

Bishop Ellicott noted in 1877 that an “extremely large” number of his clergy opposed “with the utmost tenacity” any proposal to extend to Nonconformist ministers the right to hold their own burial services in churchyards. In this respect, the Gloucestershire clergy were at one with their brethren in the rest of the country.¹⁵¹ It is in that context that a dispute which arose between the Vicar of Winchcombe and some of his parishioners must be understood.

In 1878, the Revd. Robert Noble Jackson was accused by Winchcombe residents of discrimination during the funeral services he conducted. According to the complaint, he reserved the words of the Burial Service, “in sure and certain hope of the resurrection,”¹⁵² only to those whom he considered to merit them, a category which excluded Nonconformists. Allegedly, he had been reprimanded by Bishop Ellicott for his “unlawful” actions but had countered that, since he was not sure of his own salvation, he objected to using the words at all.¹⁵³ He caused particular offence when conducting a joint funeral of two children, one of Anglican, the other of Methodist parents. According to a public testimony, signed by several townsfolk, when uttering the phrase in question,

¹⁴⁸ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1906, p. 61

¹⁴⁹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1912, p. 169

¹⁵⁰ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar* 1910, p. 239

¹⁵¹ Norman, E.R., *Church and Society in England, 1770 to 1970*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1976, p.208.

¹⁵² From the ‘Order for the Burial of the Dead’, *The Book of Common Prayer*

¹⁵³ *Cheltenham Examiner*, June 5, 1878

he had turned away from the Methodist and towards the Anglican child.¹⁵⁴ Despite the Vicar placing a denial of the accusation on the church door, his version of events continued to be disputed in the town and “A Winchcombe Churchman” prophesied that

... as long as Mr Jackson is determined to insult the friends and the memory of the dead, there will be no peace in Winchcombe. Mr Jackson's conduct is calculated to contribute more to Dissent than a score of eloquent Nonconformist ministers. If it were not for several ties which bind me to the Church, I should have been a Dissenter long ago.¹⁵⁵

The controversy surfaced again in 1880 when the Vicar was accused of having refused to conduct a burial service for an unbaptised infant.

...no parson, no curate took part in the ceremony and the simple reading of the Lord's Prayer over it by the Parish Clerk must serve to convey to its afflicted parents that it died not in “the sure and certain hope” which its youth and innocence might have appeared to ensure for it.”¹⁵⁶

Mr Jackson was said to have compounded this insult a few days later by according the full funeral service to a woman who had been found dead in her cottage, apparently the worse for drink. Again, the Vicar was accused of having “done as much perhaps as any other clergyman in the neighbourhood to keep alive a sense of the need of a Burials Bill.”¹⁵⁷ In similar circumstances, Leonard Wilkinson, the Vicar of Westbury on Severn, apparently wrestled with his conscience over the issue. An examination of the parish's funeral registers in the late nineteenth century has revealed that, for example,

About 20 persons were buried “without service of the Church”; these included several unbaptised babies, ... two suicides and about 15 nonconformists. The latter had funeral services conducted by their own ministers or preachers. Wilkinson himself sometimes conducted “unofficial” funeral services for the unbaptised babies and suicides.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ *Cheltenham Examiner*, July 10, 1878

¹⁵⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ *Cheltenham Examiner*, February 25, 1880

¹⁵⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ *Gloucestershire Family History Society Journal*, No. 87, December 2000, p. 32

although there is evidence that he did so despite some personal qualms.¹⁵⁹

It was not until the Great War and the Lambeth Conference of 1920 that some of the old Anglican suspicion of and antagonism towards Nonconformists began to soften. Bishop Gibson's recollection of that Conference was "one of profound thankfulness to God, whose Spirit was indeed present at the Conference, and I believe, firmly guided the members of it"¹⁶⁰ but his attitude was nevertheless cautious and he reminded his clergy that although Convocation had decided that, under certain circumstances, Nonconformists might be allowed to speak in church, any such concession was subject to the prior permission of the bishop.¹⁶¹

In a more generous spirit, the Vicar of Tewkesbury preached to his congregation in 1922 a sermon in which he claimed to sympathise with the Nonconformist "prejudice" against bishops. United open air services had successfully been held in Tewkesbury during the war years and Ernest Smith proposed to explain the historical circumstances which led to the rise of Nonconformity. In the past, he maintained, bishops, including the Reformers, had been "proud prelates" and it was "only within the last 50 or 60 years" that English bishops had "ceased to regard themselves as princes of the Church"¹⁶² and begun to behave as fathers of the flock and servants of the servants of God."¹⁶³ The persecution of dissenters in the seventeenth century, particularly the Conventicle Act of 1664 and the

¹⁵⁹ A register entry in his own hand on February 11, 1891 reads: 'This day, being Ash Wednesday and so very fit for such a deed — a base [*illegitimate or born out of wedlock?*] child of Hyett's, seven months old but wickedly left unbaptised, was buried by me with a certain form of prayer of mine invention, but I will never bury another in such sort.' A later entry shows that another "base" and unbaptised child was buried by the sexton alone "*sine ritibus ecclesiae.*" *ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1920, p. 98

¹⁶¹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1921, p. 88

¹⁶² cf. Varley, E.A. *The Last of the Prince Bishops*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992, a study of William Van Mildert, Bishop of Durham from 1826 to 1836.

¹⁶³ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, August 1922.

Five Mile Act of 1665 had been “two monstrous pieces of stupidity which shewed [*sic*] how little English Churchmen had learnt the lesson writ large on every page of history that persecution is the most powerful of propagandists.”¹⁶⁴ In Ernest Smith’s opinion, the problem of reunion with nonconformity was essentially a simple one. The Church of England already embraced all kinds of opinions and practices so surely the Nonconformists could find a spiritual home there:

And so I say, if the Church [of England] is wide enough to contain extreme ‘high’ or extreme ‘low’ or extreme ‘broad,’ it’s wide enough to contain every one of the Free Churches without asking them to abate one jot or tittle of their claims of distinctive doctrines or particular forms of service.¹⁶⁵

But centuries of misunderstanding and suspicion were not to be removed so easily and over the periods of separation differing interpretations of the Christian religion had hardened on both sides of the divide. Canon Henry Proctor, the Vicar of Stroud, was an enthusiast for Reunion and quickly followed up the impetus of the Lambeth Conference by initiating a series of local meetings with his Nonconformist counterparts but his first progress report revealed some disillusion and surprise that the latter did not share Anglican assumptions:

... their ‘Gospel’ seems to us to be of a very narrow content. Instead of including the Church, the Ministry and the Sacraments, it is commonly contrasted with these as something prior to and superior to them all. To Church people, this phase of thought is puzzling and disconcerting.¹⁶⁶

Intra-Church Disputes and Divisions

Ernest Smith’s recognition of the divisions within the Church of England is a reminder that, in the nineteenth century at least some clergy faced stronger opposition from their Anglican brethren than from the Nonconformists. Earlier contentions at

¹⁶⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1921 p.59

Tewkesbury have been chronicled in Chapter 1, although relations between the town's two incumbents appeared to improve after the death of Edward Cosens, the Vicar of Holy Trinity. His successor, the Revd. George Smith Winter read a lesson at the Abbey during the Dedication Festival of 1912 and preached at the Harvest Festival at Walton Cardiff the following month.¹⁶⁷ It seems unlikely that his predecessor ever took part in an Abbey service.

Although factional differences within the Church of England were obviously undesirable, it is arguable that a town such as Tewkesbury was large enough to contain them. The damage was greater when they surfaced in a smaller parish where those laity who did not wish to embrace nonconformity had no alternative place of worship but the parish church. The parish of Sheepscombe, in the Stroud Valley provides an illustration of the effect of church party strife in a small village. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the Vicar of Painswick (1891 population 1,630) held the patronage of the neighbouring parish of Sheepscombe (450). From 1890 to 1897, Painswick's Vicar was William Guest-Williams, whose "views bordered on those which are usually described as 'high.'" ¹⁶⁸ In 1895, when Sheepscombe's Vicar, Robert Strong, succumbed to poor health, Mr Guest-Williams appointed to the vacancy the Revd. John Wilcox.¹⁶⁹ Whether he was fully aware of the latter's theological views is not clear but Mr Wilcox soon displayed militant Protestant beliefs, and in 1898 invited to his parish itinerant evangelists of the 'Bishop

¹⁶⁷ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, October, November 1912. The village of Walton Cardiff was within the Abbey parish and staffed by the Abbey clergy.

¹⁶⁸ *Painswick, Edge, Sheepscombe and Pitchcombe Church Magazine*, December, 1897

¹⁶⁹ John Charles Wilcox. B.A., St. John's College, Cambridge, Ordained deacon 1886, priest 1887. He was very probably the author of a biography of the Protestant propagandist, John Kensit (see footnote below) entitled *John Kensit, Reformer and Martyr*, mentioned in the entry for John Kensit in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, (edited Cross, F.L. and Livingstone, E.A.), Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997. If that identification is correct, the biography must have been written while he was at Sheepscombe.

Hooper Van,' working on behalf of the Church Association to maintain the Protestant character of the Church of England.¹⁷⁰ He personally endorsed their efforts and added his own judgement on some of his fellow clergy:

Our attitude should be one of earnest prayer for those clergymen in our church whose avowed object is to re-introduce the degrading ceremonies and blasphemous doctrines of what they call 'The Mass,' when our Articles speak so plainly against such unscriptural teaching.¹⁷¹

Mr Wilcox remained at Sheepscombe until 1890 and was succeeded by another clergyman but it was when the latter needed to be replaced in 1906 that a storm broke. The choice fell on the Revd. John Amps, reportedly a member of three organisations devoted to promoting the Catholic cause within the Church of England, namely, the Society of the Holy Cross, the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament and the English Church Union. In a reaction against the appointment, 133 Sheepscombe parishioners signed a petition to the 'Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Disorders' [*sic*] claiming that having "been accustomed from time immemorial to Evangelisel [*sic*] teaching" in their church, they had been "cut off from Church privileges and practically Church membership" by the appointment. A further grievance on their part was that "this unfaithful act" had been approved by Bishop Gibson, himself a member of the Royal Commission.¹⁷² Despite the protests, the appointment stood and Mr Amps remained at Sheepscombe until 1911 when, as mentioned in Chapter 1, the Vicar of Painswick

¹⁷⁰ *Painswick, Edge, Sheepscombe and Pitchcombe Church Magazine* August, 1898. It is unlikely that this visit was approved by the parish patron, the Vicar of Painswick, who complained in 1902 about an unwelcome visit to the village by 'Kensitites' and stated his conviction that "no churchmen invited them." *Painswick, Edge, Sheepscombe and Pitchcombe Church Magazine*, 1902, p.75

¹⁷¹ *Painswick, Edge, Sheepscombe and Pitchcombe Church Magazine*, August, 1898

¹⁷² *Cheltenham Examiner*, June 6, 1906. The erroneous titles in the petition suggest that it was genuinely produced locally and not the work of outside agitators. According to a booklet by Canon Hugh Stowell, "the popular preacher and Protestant champion of Manchester," entitled *The Peaceful Valley, or the Influence of Religion. A Narration of Facts*, published in 1825, Sheepscombe experienced a religious revival at the start of the nineteenth century. Extracts from the booklet were published in the *Painswick, Edge, Sheepscombe and Pitchcombe Church Magazine* of 1898 and 1899.

himself took charge of the parish.¹⁷³ But an estrangement between priest and some parts of the parish, at least in the earlier years of Mr Amps' residence, is suggested by the parochial returns, as shown in the following selection:

Table 3.4 Sheepscombe: Annual Baptism, Confirmation, Easter Communicants and Sunday School Totals

<i>Year</i>	<i>Baptisms</i>	<i>Confirmations</i>	<i>Easter Communicants</i>	<i>Sunday School</i>
1903/04	8	0	48	57
1904/05	8	0	48	57
1905/06	...	...	...	...
Arrival of the Revd. John Apps				
1906/07	4	0	22	51
1907/08	3	4	22	40
1908/09	1	0	22	41
1909/10	2	0	40	40
1910/11	2	2	30	...
Departure of the Revd. John Apps				
1911/12	9	6	66	45
1912/13	9	9	52	53

174

Fellow clergy played at least indirect parts in the mid-nineteenth century prosecutions for ritualism of the Vicars of Prestbury and All Saints', Clifton.¹⁷⁵ Some echo of those past antagonisms can be found in the fact that in 1899 All Saints' Cheltenham had a special collection for the work of the (Evangelical) Church Missionary Society [C.M.S.] in recognition of the fact that "they had now so much more cordial relations [with Evangelicals] than formerly, owing largely to the friendliness of the present Rector of Cheltenham."¹⁷⁶ Similarly, in 1906 the Diocesan branch of the C.M.S. acknowledged contributions from the Cheltenham churches of All Saints' and Ss Phillip

¹⁷³ *Painswick Valley and Great Witcombe Magazine*, February, 1911

¹⁷⁴ *Church Statistics* for the appropriate years. G.D.R. A4

¹⁷⁵ de la Bere (formerly Edwards), J.: *The Prosecution, A Statement Relating Thereto Set Forth in a Letter Most Respectfully Addressed to His Grace the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury*, London, Palmer, 1881, p. 26. The Vicar of Prestbury was prosecuted under his former surname of Edwards. Alleyne, F.M., *All Saints', Clifton*, W. Crofton Hemmons, Bristol, 1892 (or 1893), p. 19.

and James, which normally supported the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel [S.P.G.] but had given a donation to the C.M.S. out of “brotherly love.”¹⁷⁷

Clergy Qualifications

During the early years of his episcopate, Bishop Ellicott placed culture and learning high among the qualities which he sought in his clergy. In his first Charge to the Diocese in 1864 he remarked that among a large number of men offering themselves for ordination was a group “of a lower stamp, educational and social, than we have hitherto accepted.” Such men were unlikely to be accepted because the parson was required to be a respected leader of the society in which he was placed. The Bishop was sure that his hearers would understand “how observant our country people are of the general bearing of their minister, and how an instinctive respect is shown and a consequent influence and authority conceded in one case, which is vainly to be looked for in another.” At a time when “meek and persuasive learning” was “more urgently needed” than it had been “since the Reformation” it would be “to endanger the very foundation of our Church” and “to aid the assailants of our common faith” if it were decided to “admit into our Priesthood men of inferior education and lower intellectual qualifications.”¹⁷⁸

Under Bishop Ellicott, graduate candidates for ordination had to satisfy certain minimum qualifications.¹⁷⁹ The maintenance of clergy standards in both learning and culture remained an axiom of Diocesan thinking for many decades. A Committee,

¹⁷⁶ *All Saints' Cheltenham Parish Meetings*, 4 April, 1899. The Rector of Cheltenham at that time was Canon Edmund Lully Roxby. By implication, his predecessor, Dr. Charles Bell, who was Rector during the prosecution of Prestbury's vicar, had not shown the same degree of warmth to All Saints'.

¹⁷⁷ *Cheltenham Examiner*, May 23, 1906

¹⁷⁸ Ellicott, *Church Work and Church Prospects*, *op. cit.*, p. 36

¹⁷⁹ If they had graduated from Oxford or Cambridge, they were required to produce a certificate of having attended two courses of lectures by a Divinity professor, or of having resided for one year at a Theological College. Those from Trinity College, Dublin had to produce the 'Divinity Testimonium'; those from

investigating the problem of impoverished benefices in 1893, took as one of its fundamental assumptions: "That the laity desire and expect the clergy of the Church of England to be men of education and refinement and to maintain a well-defined position in the sphere of duty where their lot is cast."¹⁸⁰ As for education, it is significant that in 1914 the speaker on the subject of *The Worship of the Roman Emperors in Relation to Christianity* at a meeting of the Gloucester Clerical Society, started his talk with the assumption that "we have all of us presumably enjoyed in greater or less degree the benefits of a classical education."¹⁸¹

An analysis of the educational background of beneficed clergy in the diocese, taking four sample years from 1893 to 1923, shows that in each year well over four-fifths were University graduates, predominantly holding degrees in arts subjects. The great majority had been educated at Oxford or Cambridge, with Durham, Dublin, Lampeter and London having some representation.

Table 3.5 Qualifications of Beneficed Clergy in the Diocese of Gloucester

<i>Year</i>	<i>Oxford</i>	<i>Cambridge</i>	<i>Other University</i>	<i>Gloucester Theological College</i>	<i>Other Theological College</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
1893	142	82	48	7	21	10
1903	145	85	50	11	23	6
1913	148	70	53	10	28	14
1923	132	70	65	7	29	14

182

As shown above, less than a fifth held qualifications solely from a theological college and only a few were *alumni* of the Gloucester Theological College, although this was in some

Durham the Licence in Theology; Associates of King's College, London had to possess the Theological Certificate. *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1902, p. 123

¹⁸⁰ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1894, p. 169

¹⁸¹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1915, p. 24

¹⁸² Collated from the *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar* and *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar* for the appropriate years

ways predictable since that College had been founded primarily to meet the needs of the Bristol part of the then combined diocese. At one stage, however, three Gloucester city parishes were held by former Gloucester College students ¹⁸³ and, since the parish patronage was held by either the Bishop or the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral, this suggests that at least some of the products of the College enjoyed the confidence of the Diocesan authorities.

In general, however, Bishop Ellicott's comments reveal a strong preference for university graduates. As he observed in 1893, "the difference between those who have had a University education and those who have not" was becoming steadily more apparent. ¹⁸⁴ In 1886 he had noted a distinct increase in the number of ordinands who had come "from a different stratum in society to that from which they commonly came five and twenty years ago" although he did admit that this might be an advantage if it would "help more to attach a class" of people "to the Church of England that has hitherto sat rather loose to it." ¹⁸⁵ But his earlier preoccupation with the social status of his clergy remained and towards the end of his episcopate he deplored an unmistakable decline in "the social standard" of ordinands. ¹⁸⁶ It is therefore ironic that one of the complaints about the clergy in Gloucestershire which emerged from the National Mission in 1916 was that they were "drawn too much from one social class" and were consequently believed to be unsympathetic to working men's aspirations. ¹⁸⁷

¹⁸³ Samuel Robertson was the incumbent of St Mary de Lode from 1892 to 1903 and of St Catharine's from 1903; Enoch Brooke-Bradley was at St Luke's from 1902 to 1909; Leonard Lyne was Vicar of St Mark's from 1900 to 1920. Source: *Diocesan Statistics*, 1903 to 1923 volumes.

¹⁸⁴ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1893, p. 7

¹⁸⁵ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1886 p. 6

¹⁸⁶ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1896 p. 8

¹⁸⁷ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1916 p. 171. Cf Chapter 6

Although the bishop's strong preference was always for graduate clergy, in establishing the Theological College at Gloucester, he was pragmatic enough to acknowledge that such an ideal was not always attainable. In 1896, on the eve of the separation from Bristol, he explained that the foundation of the College 29 years earlier

...arose from the fact that earnest and hardworking men who were not able to meet the then expenses of a University education were found to be constantly required, especially in Bristol. To meet this need, and to avoid the highly precarious practice of ordaining literates or young men of whose theological training I had not accurate knowledge, it seemed desirable to open a College at Gloucester, where young men might be trained under the shadow of our venerable Cathedral. ¹⁸⁸

Similar concerns in other parts of the country had led to similar solutions. In addition to the Gloucester College, the *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar* of 1867 listed 12 other institutions which had been founded to meet the need to train non-graduates for the Anglican ministry:

Table 3.6. Theological Colleges in England 1816-67

<i>Location</i>	<i>Foundation Year</i>
St Aidan's, Birkenhead	1846
Queen's College, Birmingham	...
St Bees,	1816
St David's, Lampeter	1822
St Columbas, Rathfarnham	...
Chichester	1854
Exeter	1861
Gloucester	1868
Lichfield	1857
Salisbury	1861
Wells	1840
St Augustine's Canterbury	...

¹⁸⁸ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1896, p. 9. He might have added that their training was to be under the shadow, of not only the Cathedral, but of the bishop himself!

¹⁸⁹ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1867, p. 42. Haig, *The Victorian Clergy*, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-176 discusses the training of non-graduate clergy.

As shown in the Appendix, during the 1870s in particular the number of non-graduate clergy ordained in the diocese often matched and sometimes exceeded that of their graduate counterparts. The separation from Bristol in 1897 had an immediate effect on the annual number of ordinations. The closure of Gloucester Theological College naturally reduced the number of non-graduates receiving Holy Orders but many university graduates could also claim an additional spell of study at a theological college such as Wells, Salisbury or St Stephen's House, Oxford.

While supervising the acceptance and training of ordinands, Bishop Ellicott took pride in the fact that, despite many requests to do so, from both applicants and even incumbents, he permitted no relaxation of the spiritual and intellectual standards required for those to be ordained from the diocese.¹⁹⁰ Just before his retirement he could therefore announce with some apparent satisfaction: "It has taken many years to bring it about, but I think it is now generally understood that it would be imprudent for young men insufficiently prepared to offer themselves for ordination in this diocese."¹⁹¹

It is not known what syllabus his students followed but it is assumed that it was similar to those for priests and deacons examinations during Bishop Gibson's supervision of the diocese which placed strong emphasis on knowledge of the Bible and works with an Anglican emphasis.¹⁹² The emphasis was virtually entirely academic, a point which a clerical speaker made to the Diocesan Conference of 1891. Commenting on the brief

¹⁹⁰ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1888, p. 7; 1891, p.6; 1894, p.7; 1896, p.8;

¹⁹¹ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1901, p.7

¹⁹² The syllabus regularly included study of Hooker's *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Perry's *English Church History*, Butler's *Sermons on Human Nature* and Bishop Montgomery's *Foreign Missions*. The full syllabi for both deacons' and priests' examinations were published annually in the Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar from 1906 onwards.

training of six weeks given to Church Army evangelists, he added, “but, after all, it is a longer professional training than most of the clergy enjoy.”¹⁹³

¹⁹³ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1892, p.161

APPENDIX

1: Ordinations in the Diocese of Gloucester and Bristol 1869-96¹⁹⁴

Column 5 = Oxford, 6 = Cambridge University; 7 = Durham; 8 = Dublin, 9 = London; 10 = Manchester; 11 = Lampeter; 12 = Other Universities; 13 = Gloucester Theological College; 14 = Other Theological Colleges

Universities													
Year	Total	Priest	Deacon	Oxf	Cmbr	Drlm	Dblin	Lndn	Mnch	Lamp	Other	GTC	TCs
1869	36	18	18										
1870	42	12	30										
1871	61	33	28										
1872	40	22	18	14	13		3						10
1873	53	27	26	13	13		3					16	7
1874	54	24	30	18	14	1	1						17*
1875	60	28	32	20	15	1						17	7
1876	56	35	31	17	10			1				19	8
1877	56	21	35	10	11		3					19	13
1878	64	...	...	7	13		3				1♦	24	16
1879	68	36	32	12	12	4	1	1			1♦	28	11
1880	41	24	17	10	9	4	1						16*
1881	45	23	22	12	11	1	3			1		12	6
1882	56	26	36	18	13	1	5					7	6
1883	48	26	22	20	13		2					8	5
1884	49	21	28	20	13		2					7	7
1885	55	29	26	19	18		3					8	7
1886	50	27	23	18	19	1	1					10	1
1887	53	24	29	21	16	1						14	2
1888	53	26	27	18	16	2						15	2
1889	52	23	29	22	14	1	1	1				10	3
1890	49	26	23	22	14	1	1				1φ	7	3
1891	51	21	30	17	15	2		3	1	1	1φ	7	4
1892	40	25	15	15	13	3	2	1				2	4
1893	38			14	13	4						7	
1894	40			13	14	5	2					5	1
1895	38			12	14	2	3					6	1
1896	39			12	14							9	4

Notes: * plus one privately educated; ♦ Glasgow; ♣ total may include GTC; φ New Zealand University

¹⁹⁴ Collated from annual editions of *Diocesan Progress* and the *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*

2: Ordinations in the Diocese of Gloucester, 1897-1923

Year	Total	Priests	Deacons	Oxford	Cambridge	Other Univs.	Theological College	University & Th. College
1897	21	9	12	9	7	1	4	5
1898	17	10	7	7	6	3	1	7
1899	15	7	8	6	8		1	8
1900	11	6	5	6	4		1	4
1901	12	6	6	5	6		1	3
1902	7	1	6	3	3		1	4
1903	4	1	3	1	2	1		1
1904	6	1	5	1	4		1	
1905	7	5	2		5	2		4
1906	7	1	6	4		1	2	4
1907	12	4	8	6	2	2	2	6
1908	9	8	1	4	2	1	2	2
1909	6	3	3	4	1	1		
1910	6	1	5	2	2	1	1	3
1911	5	3	2	1	2	1	1	2
1912	6	2	4	2	1		3	3
1913	7	1	6	4		1	2	4
1914	4	2	2	1	1	1	1	
1915	3	1	2	1		2		1
1916	3	2	1		1	2		1
1917	8	4	4	1	3	3	1	
1918	1		1			1		
1919	7	3	4	2		4	1	2
1920	7	3	4	1	2	2	2	2
1921	3	2	1		1	1	1	
1922	6	1	5	3	1	1	1	
1923	9	4	5	6				2

¹⁹⁵ Collated from annual editions of the *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine* and *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*

Chapter 4
The Question of
Social Class

Earlier chapters focusing on the bishops and clergy of the diocese necessarily reflected Church life in Gloucestershire mainly from the somewhat enclosed theological and ecclesiastical world. This chapter introduces the third major element, the laity, for whose sake, it may be argued, bishops and clergy existed. The aim is to identify which laymen, or groups of laymen, had influence within the diocese and the nature of their relationship with bishops and clergy. Inevitably, it raises the problem of the class structure of the society of that time.

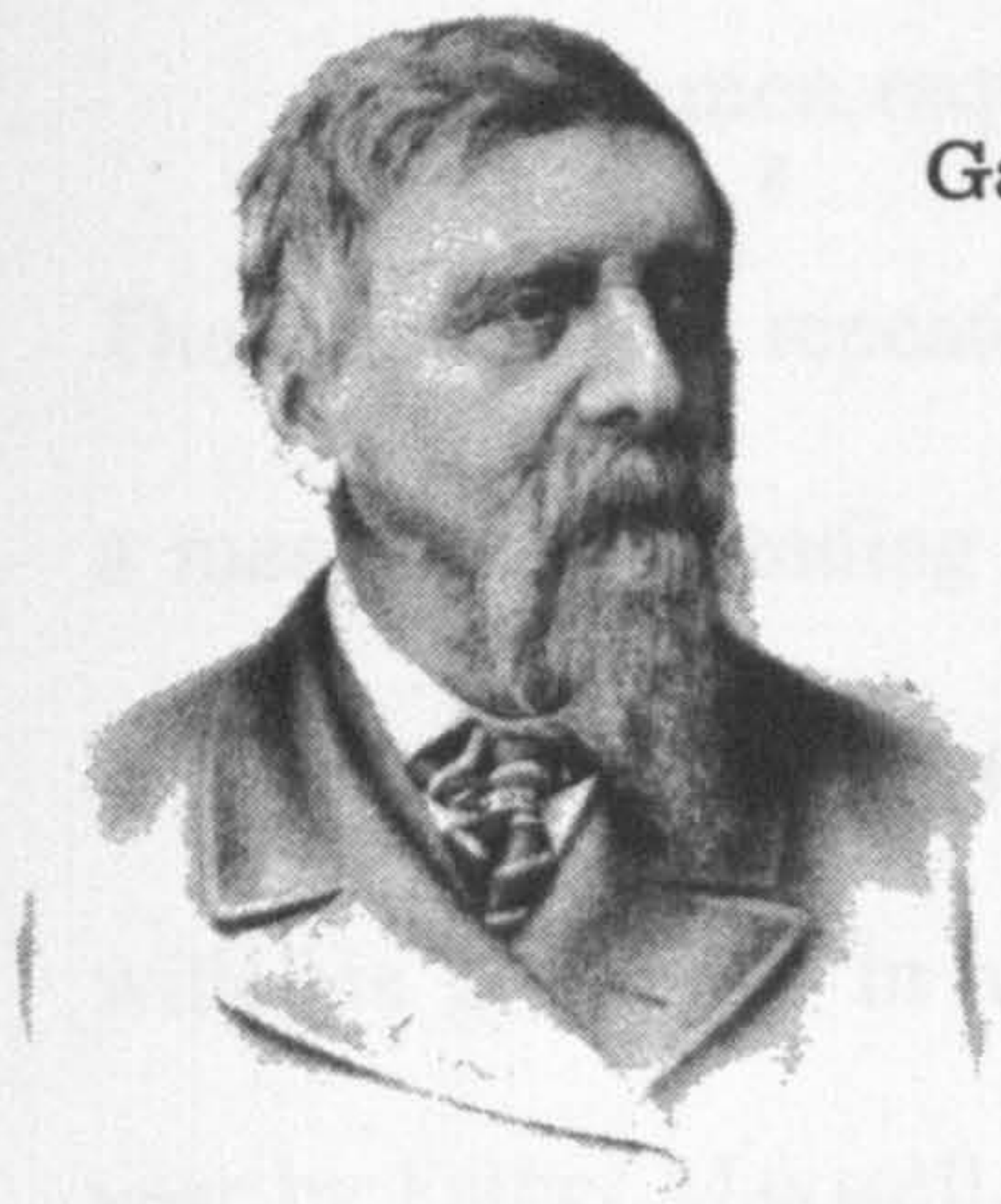
A 'Classless' Church?

The ideal of the Church, as expressed by many Church leaders, was of a body where society's distinctions of class, sex, wealth and status were subsumed into the larger society of believers. Many churchmen saw the Church of England Men's Society [C.E.M.S.] as potentially the great exemplar of many of those ideals. As Captain T.F. Watson, the organisation's Lay Secretary told a Gloucester meeting in 1907, it was "trying to break down all party, class and political distinctions."¹ Later that year, Cosmo Gordon Lang, then Bishop of Stepney, at the Diocesan C.E.M.S. meeting at Cirencester reinforced the image of an organisation dedicated to promoting harmony within the Church. Claiming that the movement had over a thousand branches and "an army of more than 40,000 banded together to pray and work for the cause of Christ the King," he asserted that:

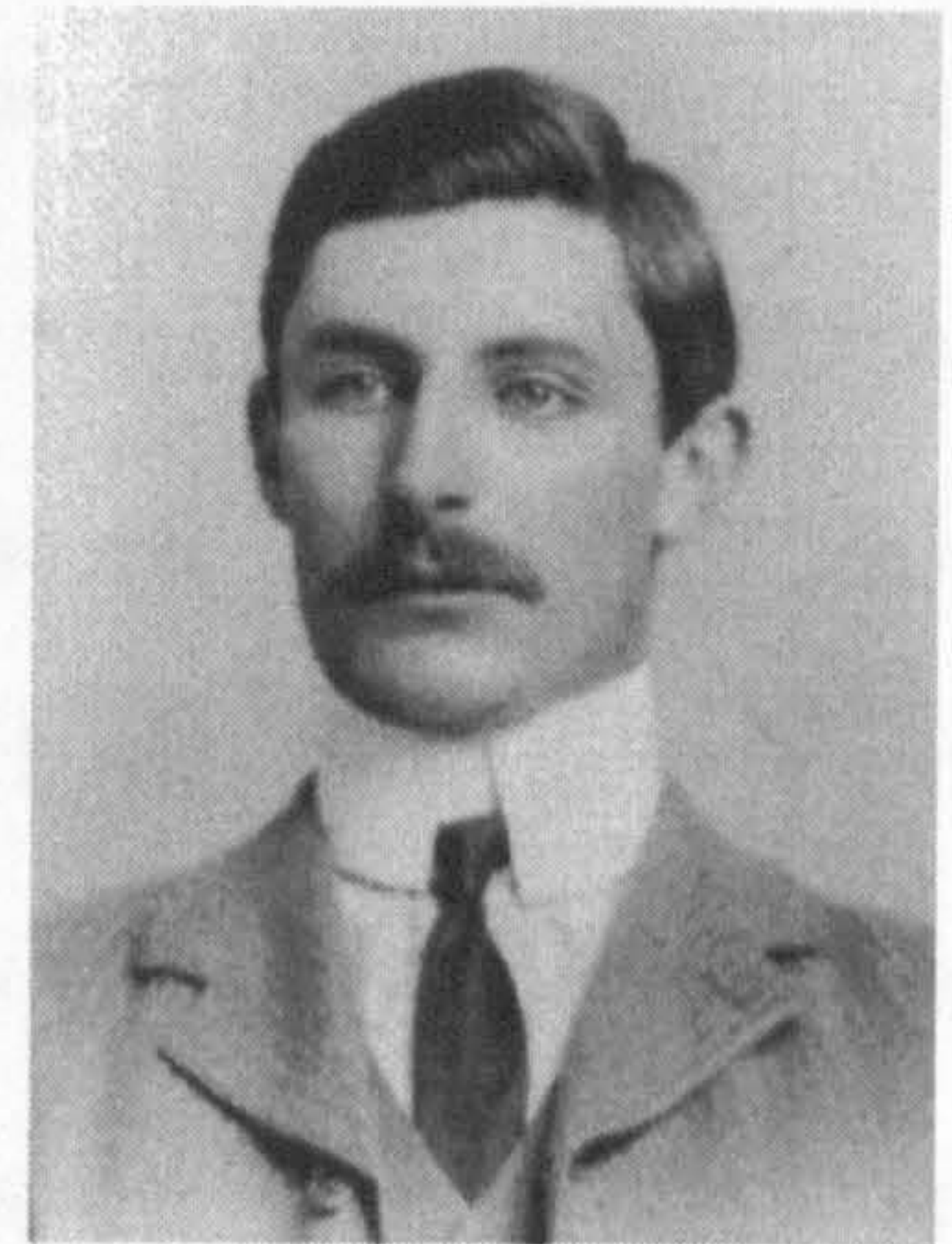
Whatever parties there were in the Church, they did not know them in the C.E.M.S., and they knew no classes or social distinctions, for those who were honoured by being habitual guests at the table of the King of Kings,

¹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1907, p.66

Leading Laymen of the Diocese



**Thomas
Gambier Parry**

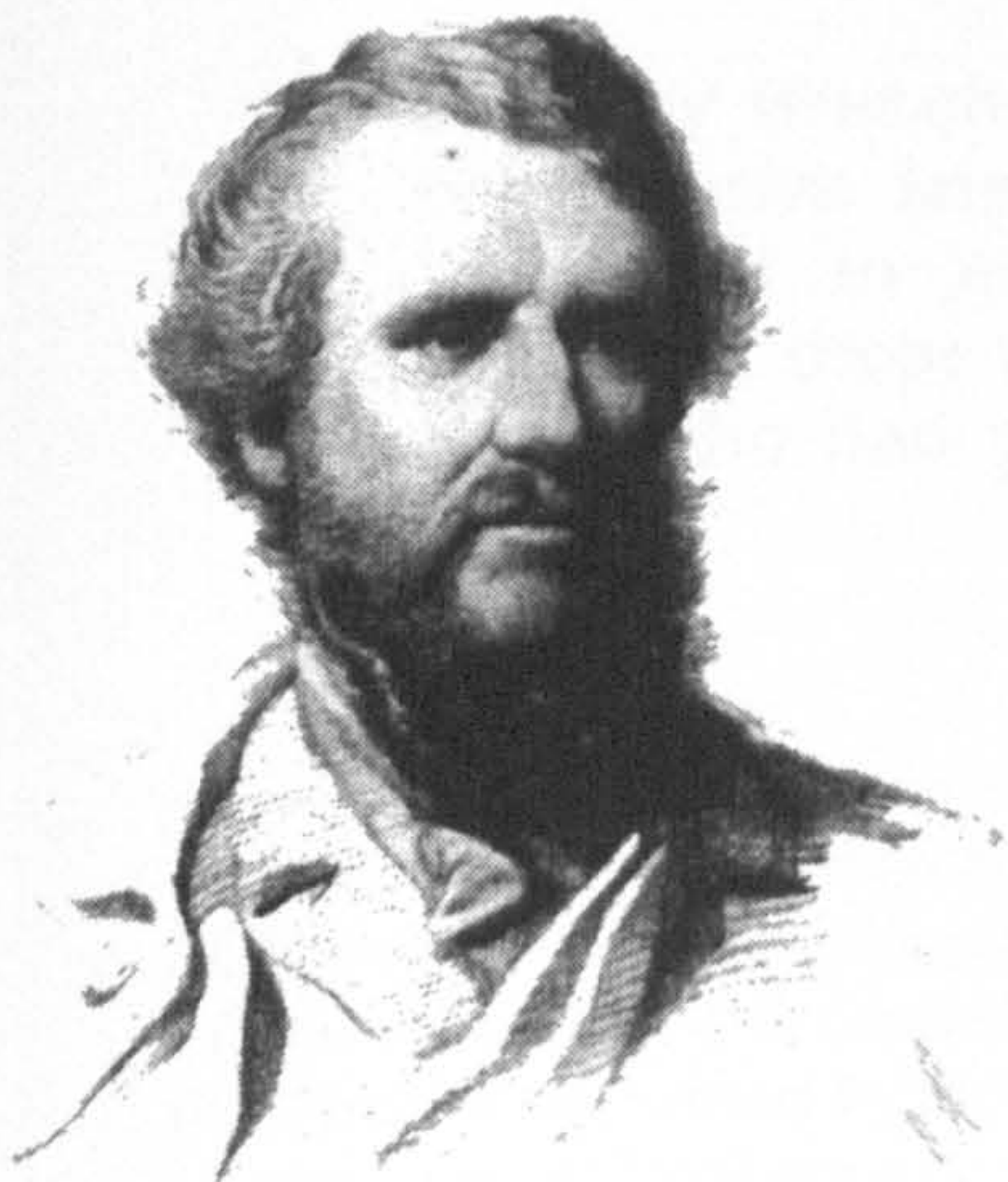


**Sir Jack
Birchall
M.P.**



**Thomas Barwick
Lloyd Baker**

**Sir John Dorington,
M.P.**



**John Dearman
Birchall**



among men required no introductions, and stood in a position of honour and equality.²

The concept was repeated at the Diocesan Conference of 1909 when Thomas Kingscote, a member of a leading Cirencester family, saw the C.E.M.S as exemplifying this great truth. "It brought class and class together; the squire sat down by the baker, and the earl with his groom."³ In another context, the ideal of a classless Church was echoed that year by Father Maxwell, the Superior General of the Cowley Fathers, when he spoke to a men's service at Painswick. His address included a description of the caste system in India which he found "divided man from man by insuperable barriers which Christianity alone was able to break down." These statements were noble aspirations which were not always reflected in reality. Father Maxwell's words were reported in the local parish magazine together with an anonymous comment: "Read class for caste and we fear it must be admitted that Christianity has still much to do in our own country."⁴ Similarly, the C.E.M.S., in Gloucestershire at least, failed to become the envisaged melting-pot of society, simply because it did not attract to its ranks the professional and leisured classes. The Revd. Ernest Smith, Organising Secretary of the C.E.M.S. in the West of England and Wales,⁵ admitted to the Gloucester Diocesan C.E.M.S. Festival at Lydney in 1913, that he had found

in many Branches an entire failure to reach the professional class, men of comparative leisure, who had been to a large extent left out of their movement in many towns and villages. Everybody was wanted by the C.E.M.S., those who were called the working classes and the rich, especially those who had gifts and opportunities and abilities, which the Church of

² *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1907, pp. 141-142

³ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1910, p. 252

⁴ *Painswick Valley and Great Witcombe Magazine*, 1909, p. 23. The comment presumably was endorsed by the Vicar, if not penned by him.

⁵ Later Vicar of Tewkesbury

England needed as much as she needed the strong right arm of the wage-earners.⁶

This was also the opinion of the host to that gathering, Charles Bathurst, M.P. who told the 450 members present, who had come from all parts of the diocese by train, car or bicycle,⁷ that “they mainly represented the working class in the diocese.” and added that the other classes of society “needed every bit as much that help which union in a spiritual brotherhood gave to them all.”⁸

An important aspect of the philosophy of the place of the clergy in society held that they were in a special position, both involved in and yet apart from its structures. A Gloucester Diocesan Committee on Glebe Land report in 1886 considered the dependence of many clergy on glebe as a source of income as a positive advantage because it brought them “into sympathy with the farmers and labourers.”⁹ Their unique position as the servants of all permitted them to act as arbiters in society’s disputes but their credibility required that they should not be seen to be partial to any parties where conflict arose. It was in order that they should preserve this balance that Bishop Ellicott consistently emphasised that his clergy should not attempt to take sides in the disputes between agricultural employers and employees which arose during the latter half of the nineteenth century. He called on them to convey “that gentle impartiality, that wise abstinence from taking any side save the side of peace and love which will do more towards the return to better relations than mistaken sympathy or equally mistaken

⁶ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1913, p. 156

⁷ *ibid.*, p. 155

⁸ *ibid.*, p. 157

⁹ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar* 1887, p.157

opposition.¹⁰ It was, however, their duty to point out to both sides any Christian principles involved in disputes:

Then as opportunity may offer or occasion may be given — for all volunteer mediation is strictly to be avoided — it may be now and then our blessed privilege to allay the embitterment of social conflicts, and to make men feel that they are brethren, members of the dear Lord who redeemed them, and members of one another. It is only thus, under these limitations, and with the one pure aim of making men feel, however faintly and feebly, the out-flowing powers of the Incarnation, that we can ever hope to do any good in the conflicts that are deepening around us.¹¹

Such was the theory. Yet, despite these noble aims, the conviction persisted among many of the working classes that the Church was actually on the side of the rich and powerful, The Revd. James Tetley told the Diocesan Conference of 1888 that it was “a silly libel on the English Church” that she was “an exclusive fold for the well-born and the well-to-do”.¹² Yet the fact that he made this comment in the context of a plea for a greater involvement of “the peasantry and the artisan class” in the councils and deliberations of the church indicates the force of the criticism. Over 20 years later, delegates to the Diocesan Conference were to hear an explicit accusation from Albert Mansbridge,¹³ that:

The gulf between the men who laboured and the Church was both wide and deep — it was only those who moved among both who could realise how wide and deep. The Church could only draw the men and women of today when its members were careless for the ease of this world and were passionate for the common good, realising that the hurt of one member of the body was the hurt of the whole body. One cause of justifiable labour unrest was the contempt in which labour was held by the professional and

¹⁰ Ellicott, *The Church and the Rural Poor*, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-9

¹¹ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1891, p.155

¹² *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1889, p.163

¹³ Secretary of the Workers' Educational Association, (W.E.A.) *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1913, p. 260. The W.E.A. “was founded in 1903 with the object of setting up classes for working people in every locality where University talent was available.” Cole and Postgate, *The Common People*, *op. cit.*, p. 483.

leisured classes. How was it, then, that boys in the public schools thought boys of another class were species apart? ¹⁴

That opinion was corroborated by another speaker, speaking “as a public school man” who said that “until he was a certain age, he did not recognise that boys working with their hands were exactly the same as — and very likely better than — boys in public schools.” ¹⁵ Mr Mansbridge held that the Church, with its mission to impart the Gospel to all men should realise that

The great obstruction which men had erected was this economic injustice of today; and it seemed that the Church had agreed, and acquiesced in it and even argued on its behalf; and so men living apart had come to the conclusion that the church was a great conspiracy on the part of those who wished to keep the masses of the people in subjection. ¹⁶

It was an opinion which Joseph Arch, the founder of the National Agricultural Labourers’ Union, ¹⁷ could well have endorsed. He showed little understanding of or gratitude for clergy attempts at conciliation between master and man and considered Bishop Ellicott to be one of his “worst enemies in the early days” of the Agricultural Workers’ movement.

¹⁸ As a Primitive Methodist preacher, Arch’s quarrel was not with Christianity but with the Church of England, or at least with its officers. Even before Ellicott’s careless incitement to employers to throw Union agitators into the horse pond ¹⁹ Arch had developed an antipathy towards the national church. He maintained that he “never took the Communion in the parish church” of Barford in his life because, in the early 1830s, as

¹⁴ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1913, p. 260

¹⁵ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1913, p. 262

¹⁶ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1913, p. 261

¹⁷ Joseph Arch (1826-1919). Born and died at Barford, Warwickshire (between Stratford on Avon and Leamington Spa). Founder (1872) and President (1872-96) of the Agricultural Labourers’ Union. Member of Parliament, 1885-86, 1892-1900.

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 64

¹⁹ See Chapter 2.

a seven year old, he had witnessed how even in the administration of the Blessed Sacrament the divisions of society prevailed:

First, up walked the squire to the communion rails; the farmers went up next; then up went the tradesmen, the shopkeepers, the wheelwright and the blacksmith; and then, the very last of all, went the poor agricultural labourers [who included Arch's father] in their smock frocks. They walked up by themselves; nobody else knelt with them; it was as if they were unclean — and at that sight the iron entered straight into my poor little heart and remained fast embedded there. I said to myself "If that's what goes on — never for me!"²⁰

His low opinion of the Church and its officers was not improved by an incident at Ascott under Wychwood, Oxfordshire,²¹ in the 1870s when the farm labourers went on strike, causing their employer to lock them out and engage outside labour. The strikers' wives obstructed the newcomers who were forced to work under police protection. The women were then arraigned to appear before the magistrates at Chipping Norton, where their judges, two clergymen, or "squarsons" in Arch's description, sentenced seven of the women to imprisonment with ten days' hard labour and nine to seven days' hard labour. Arch's comment on "this scandalous decision" was forthright. "Here was a sentence to be passed by clergymen of the Church of England on respectable working women, some of whom had children at the breast."²²

It was no accident that in general the clergy should gravitate towards the life style of the upper levels of society. Some of the family links between incumbents and prestigious patrons have already been mentioned.²³ Other associations were established

²⁰ O'Leary. J.G. (editor): *The Autobiography of Joseph Arch, op. cit.*, pp.25-26

²¹ A few miles from the border with Gloucestershire

²² O'Leary. J.G. (editor): *The Autobiography of Joseph Arch, op. cit.*, p. 74

²³ Cf. Chapter 1.

through marriage.²⁴ More common associations than those of marriage or family were forged by the education system shared by many clergy and their lay friends. As Vicar of Cirencester, Henry Hayward trained a succession of former public schoolboys as curates.²⁵ That the public school route to ordination was considered normative is suggested by the obituary of Oswald Wardell-Yerburgh, the former Vicar of Tewkesbury, which explained that, because of an asthmatic condition, he had been considered too delicate to be sent to public school and had been educated at grammar schools.²⁶ In turn, many clergy utilised the same system for educating their own sons. Thomas Hodson, (*cf.* Illustration) sent all of his seven sons to Cheltenham College.²⁷ How the six sons of Robert Le Marchant, Vicar of Little Rissington, were educated is not known but a public school route is suggested by the fact that were all regular servicemen, at least two reaching the rank of Colonel.²⁸ It was thus not unnatural for Bishop Arthur Winnington-Ingram, addressing a men's service at Gloucester Cathedral in 1913, to invoke "the public school spirit" when seeking to inspire his audience.²⁹

In the opinion of the Archdeacon John Sheringham of Gloucester, it was not only natural or inevitable, but also highly desirable that the clergy should aspire to the status and life style of the upper echelons of society. In a Charge to the Gloucester clergy in 1889, he argued that it was virtually a duty for the clergy to be "in close friendly

²⁴ Two of John Dearman Birchall's daughters married diocesan clergymen, one of them John Sinclair, Vicar and later Archdeacon of Cirencester. Verey, *The Diary of a Victorian Squire, op. cit.*, pp. xiii, 218-219. While a curate at Minchinhampton, John Thomas, later the Rector of Westcote, met and subsequently married a local resident, Phyllis May Lawrence, who was the grand-daughter of Lord Lawrence, the former Viceroy and Governor-General of India. *The Westcote Convent, op. cit.*, p.3

²⁵ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1913, p. 7

²⁶ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, January, 1914

²⁷ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, December, 1915

²⁸ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1915, p.44

²⁹ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1914. p. 274

communion with the cultured and wealthy classes” because the latter set the standards which the lower levels of society followed.

True that the highest and noblest mission of the Church is to the poor; but what shall we say of the rich if “their eyes shall not see their teachers?” May not an incalculable injury be done to the poor by the spiritual neglect and moral corruption of those which should be the example of good instead of evil? ³⁰

Furthermore, the need for the clergy to maintain their position among the higher levels of society raised important implications for such issues as disendowment. He quoted in support of his argument the assertion of Isaac Barrow, the seventeenth century divine, that the moral exhortations of an impoverished clergyman would be disregarded by the wealthy: “With what hope of success in his forlorn habit, shall he venture to check the vicious extravagances of a ruffled gallant?” ³¹ Thus, he contended, disendowment of the Church would be a calamity because “it would make it impossible for the clergy to mix on equal terms with the richer classes; that, as we have seen, is no small evil in itself.” ³² In consequence they would develop a lack of sympathy with the upper classes:

... the clergy, ostracised by the very circumstances of life from the richer and more cultured classes would not be very apt to regard them with a lenient eye. This is only human nature ... a man’s views are moulded by his companionships. Dwelling almost entirely among the poorer classes, would they not infallibly imbibe their prejudices, and be roused to indignation by their fancied wrongs? ... Thus the alienation between rich and poor would become only embittered by the mediator turned partizan — the link broken, — the bridge removed. As things are now, the bridge which spans the social chasm is the Church. ³³

³⁰ J.W. Sheringham, *The Church and Social Life*, Gloucester, Davies and Son, 1889, p. 3. The quotation is probably from Isa. 30.20: “And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity ... your eyes shall see your Teacher.”

³¹ *ibid.*, p. 6

³² *ibid.*, pp. 12-13

³³ *ibid.*, p. 13

The Charge revealed the Archdeacon's presumably unconscious assumption that only the views and behaviour of the upper classes had any validity. So anxious did he seem to preserve the clergy from viewing the world through working class eyes that the possibility that an association mainly with the upper classes could bias them in the other direction and blind them to upper class failings was completely disregarded.

As suggested above, whatever the intention, it was difficult, if not impossible, for the majority of the clergy, firmly bound to a particular level of society by ties of family, education and marriage, to attain that theoretical position of wise and lofty independence which their leaders had set for them to attain. The priest who could transcend society's barriers was admired by his contemporaries.³⁴

Politics and the Clergy

At the start of the twentieth century, branches of the Christian Social Union [C.S.U.] existed in both Cheltenham and Gloucester and the organisation held its national Annual meeting in Cheltenham in 1908.³⁵ Yet all the (admittedly slender) evidence available suggests that the branches did not attract large followings³⁶ and their activities went unreported in the Diocesan Magazine for long periods. For the C.S.U. was anxious to steer clear of any political controversy, as in 1908 when it dissociated itself from the views of certain clergy who had stated that the State ownership of industries was the only

³⁴ Such was Archdeacon Hayward of Cirencester who reportedly had "common ground with squire and farmer alike." *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1913, p. 6. Similarly, Archdeacon Scobell of Gloucester, (who successively held livings in the city of Gloucester and in the village of Upton St. Leonards) was said to have had "the tact of manner and quick grasp of character" which enabled him to deal successfully with "manufacturers, artisans and dock labourers" as well as with "landowners, farmers and farm labourers." *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1917, p. 58

³⁵ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1908 p.99, 1909, pp. 4-7. Cheltenham branch had 93 members in 1914. *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1914, p.44

³⁶ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1906, p. 32

Christian solution to the Labour problem³⁷ and an address by the Revd. Charles Sharpe in 1908 to the Gloucester branch with a provocative yet probably fundamental title, "Can a Christian be a Socialist?" was reportedly heard by a "rather small" audience.³⁸ In the Gloucester diocese, the members of the C.S.U., attempting to understand the workers of the country and their motivation were, by their own admission, a minority. In December 1908, the Gloucester city branch even considered disbandment but decided to continue after having checked its membership list with that of other towns and concluding that it compared favourably with them.³⁹

There is insufficient information to determine the political beliefs of all of the diocesan clergy. For most of this period, the only realistic political choice was between the Conservative and Liberal parties.⁴⁰ Many clergy adopted a neutral stance. A clerical speaker at the Diocesan Conference in 1894 dismissed all political organisations as "most bitterly anti-church."⁴¹ And Bishop Gibson, while not taking such a jaundiced view, considered that it would be "disastrous" for the Church to be "tied to the chariot wheels of either the Conservative or the Liberal party."⁴² Before the General Election of 1910 he directed the clergy not to use their pulpits, which had been provided to preach the Gospel of Christ, to disseminate political opinions.⁴³ However, the Liberals' espousal of causes such as education and the disestablishment of the Church in Wales presented a potential dilemma for many clergy, particularly when in 1910 their bishop advised all churchmen who had Liberal sympathies "to refuse to vote for any candidate who declines to pledge

³⁷ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1908, p. 31

³⁸ *ibid.*, p.15

³⁹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1909, p.7

⁴⁰ The Labour Party did not become a significant political force in the country until after the First World War.

⁴¹ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1895, p. 175

himself not to vote for any measure inimical” to Church interests in the forthcoming Parliament.⁴⁴ The conflict between his political and religious convictions seems to have been a real issue for George Fox, the Vicar of Stroud from 1892 to 1911. His obituarist revealed that

In former days he held on political subjects views commonly known as Liberal, but of late he viewed with concern and distress, as a loyal and staunch Churchman the proposals which would deprive the Church of the country of her vested and inherited position and privileges.⁴⁵

Some clergy, like Ernest Smith, the Vicar of Tewkesbury, expressed indifference to party political passions. In 1914 his opinion was that the country’s two main political parties had “become as obsolete and faded as the white and red roses of York and Lancashire.”⁴⁶

But a number of his colleagues were not guarded about their convictions. Thomas Crook Gibbs, the Rector of Coates, was said to be “strongly Conservative in his political opinions” although always “ready to make allowances for the convictions of others.”⁴⁷

John Evans, the Rector of Stow, was less conciliatory. His magazine in April, 1900 extolled 27 Conservative Members of Parliament who had gone to “the Front” in the South African War:

These are true specimens of real Conservatives — men who translate their political name into action in the field as well as in the House of Commons. The working man who loves his country and his comrades at the Front will take note of these things and will act accordingly.⁴⁸

⁴² *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1913, p. 268

⁴³ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1910, p. 5

⁴⁴ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1910, p. 4

⁴⁵ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1911, p.206

⁴⁶ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, October, 1914

⁴⁷ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1915, p. 20

⁴⁸ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, April, 1900. It is not clear who the author was but it is almost certain that Mr Evans approved of the sentiments expressed. His father, Titus Evans was “one of the strongest supporters of the Conservative party” in Pembrokeshire. *Stow Deanery Magazine*, January, 1915

Freemasonry and the Church

At the level discussed above, clerical involvement in Gloucestershire society was overt. But there was also a covert association between some senior laymen and clergy of the diocese through their membership of the Freemasonry movement. In 1827, Francis Close, as Rector of Cheltenham, had forbidden the burial of a Mason according to Masonic rites⁴⁹ but in the later nineteenth century the movement appears to have attained a high degree of acceptance within the diocese. Given the somewhat secretive nature of that Order, it is not possible accurately to measure the nature and extent of its influence but a number of indications of strong Masonic participation in the Church life of the period can be traced in contemporary records. Two Gloucestershire M.Ps who were also delegates to the Diocesan Conference, Sir John Dorington and Sir Michael Hicks Beach (later Lord St. Aldwyn) held important positions in the Order. Sir Michael also held a number of Cabinet posts in Conservative Governments in the late nineteenth century.⁵⁰

At least 50 diocesan clergy have been identified as holding office, either as Lodge Masters or Grand Chaplains during the period.⁵¹ Among them are such prominent names in diocesan circles as Henry Spence-Jones, the Dean of Gloucester, a past Provincial Chaplain,⁵² Archdeacon John Sinclair of Cirencester,⁵³ who held the posts of Grand Chaplain of the Order for both England and Gloucestershire, Christopher Venn Childe,

⁴⁹ George Norman, *The Provincial Grand Lodge of Gloucestershire*, Cheltenham, private publication, 1911, pp. 95-96

⁵⁰ Sir Michael Hicks Beach, 1837-1916. M.P. 1864-1905, Chief Secretary, Ireland, 1874-78 and 1886-87; Colonial Secretary 1878-80; Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1885-86 and 1895-1902. Created Viscount St Aldwyn 1905 and Earl St. Aldwyn 1914. In Opposition, his love for the Church of England led him to speak "forcibly against the Welsh Church Bill in 1911 and in favour of Prayer Book Revision in 1910." *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine* 1916, p.91

⁵¹ The list includes a number holding teaching posts at Cheltenham College.

⁵² Norman, G., *The Provincial Grand Lodge of Gloucestershire*, *op. cit.*, p. 340

⁵³ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*. 1919, p. 60

Vicar of the fashionable Christ Church, Cheltenham,⁵⁴ Charles Parker, sometime Principal of Gloucester Theological College, Edward Hawkins, Vicar of Holy Trinity, Stroud and Reginald Waterfield, Principal of Cheltenham College.

The help given to the diocese by the Order included donations to Gloucester Cathedral towards the restoration and decoration of the reredos⁵⁵ and restoration of the cloisters.⁵⁶ They also donated an East window of coloured glass to Cheltenham Parish Church⁵⁷ and in 1879 and 1898 they made two large contributions to restoration work at Tewkesbury Abbey. On the second occasion, the Revd. Christopher Venn Childe, preaching at a service in the Abbey for members of the Order, urged his listeners to respond to the Tewkesbury appeal, “an appeal to us as the descendants and successors of the great masons, architects and builders who first raised this glorious church to the honour and glory of the Most High.”⁵⁸ The Dean of Gloucester also incorporated Masonic imagery when preaching at another Masonic service:

Surely the Great Architect had lavished beauty upon us to teach us that there was something more than mere utility in the world and Masons loved with grateful hearts to make some response for all this and to decorate, adorn and make beautiful to the eye and to the ear His sanctuary and its holy furniture.⁵⁹

In 1861, the foundation ceremony of the memorial to the martyred Bishop John Hooper, near Gloucester Cathedral, was conducted according to “Masonic rites” and accompanied by “a public procession of Masons clothed with the badges of the Order.” There was,

⁵⁴ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, June, 1898

⁵⁵ Norman, G., *The Provincial Grand Lodge of Gloucestershire*, *op. cit.*, pp. 319 –323; Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1871, p. 5; Verey, *The Diary of a Victorian Squire*, *op. cit.*, p.61

⁵⁶ Norman, G., *The Provincial Grand Lodge of Gloucestershire*, *op. cit.* p. 324. A plaque commemorating the Masonic involvement in the restoration is fixed to the wall of the cloisters.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 336, 339

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p. 333

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p. 341

however, no Masonic involvement in the unveiling ceremony there in 1863 because they deemed it “a civic and religious” occasion.⁶⁰

Masonic involvement was also evident in the twentieth century with the building of two churches, St Catharine’s, Gloucester and All Saints’, Slad.⁶¹ On June 30, 1908 the Gloucester Provincial Grand Lodge held a special meeting to precede the laying of the foundation stone at All Saints’, about 150 members walking “in processional order” to the site of the new church where “the ceremony of laying the stone was performed by the Provincial Grand Master,⁶² assisted by his principal Officers, with full Masonic ritual.” After the ceremony, the Masons retired, again in procession.⁶³ A similar ceremony took place in 1912 at the site of the new church of St Catharine in Gloucester, where the designated vicar was Samuel Robertson, himself a Mason. A “very large number” of Gloucestershire Lodge members, led by Lord St. Aldwyn, responded to an invitation from Bishop Gibson to attend the laying of the foundation stone. The Bishop formally received them at the start of the ceremony and apparently encouraged the inclusion of Masonic ritual into the service:

Before actually performing the ceremony of stone-laying, Lord St. Aldwyn gave an interesting explanation of the origin of the masonic ritual and of its significance, and said how glad he was to be able to accept the Bishop’s invitation. He then proceeded to the stone, which is in the middle of the west wall of the church, and after the Provincial Grand Chaplain had offered prayer, he laid the stone, pouring upon it corn, wine and oil.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 193-198

⁶¹ The church, in the district of Uplands, was then within the parish of Slad. Both Slad and Uplands are now part of the parish of Stroud.

⁶² Lord St. Aldwyn

⁶³ Norman, G., *The Provincial Grand Lodge of Gloucestershire, op. cit.*, p. 271; *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1908 pp. 151-152

⁶⁴ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1912, pp. 55, 126-127

The Failings and Vices of Society

Archdeacon Sheringham was convinced that the influence of the clergy on the life of the upper reaches of society was wholesome. In the best interpretation of the term, he believed that the clergy should be men of the world; that is, they should deliberately and consciously mix with the leaders of society; the presence of a clergyman at a dinner party or ball could raise the tone of the occasion.⁶⁵ To what extent his assertion was justified must remain a matter for debate. At the Diocesan Conference later that same year, Canon Golightly, the Rector of Shipton Moyne, expressed doubts whether there were “any single class — the upper, middle or lower, of which it can be truthfully said that they are not very largely affected according to their habits and ways of life with the sins of impurity.”⁶⁶ Nevertheless, he appeared to regard working class impurity as particularly abhorrent because of the settings in which it occurred. Referring to the Whitechapel murders of 1888⁶⁷ he declaimed: “Lust and vice reign in those desolate places, and the miseries to which they lead are being increased by want and cold and disease and nakedness.” The killer’s victims were indeed to be pitied but, he asked rhetorically, “Which murder is the most terrible — that of the body, in which they perished; or that of the soul, which they had already suffered?”⁶⁸ It seems pertinent, therefore, to enquire whether the clergy were prepared to admonish all vice to the same degree, regardless of the social setting in which it occurred.

Sexual misconduct among the working classes was a subject on which Bishop Gibson held severe views. In the Charge to his clergy in 1910, he deplored the fact that in

⁶⁵ Sheringham, *The Church and Social Life*, *op. cit.*, p.9

⁶⁶ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1890, p. 168

⁶⁷ Commonly known as the ‘Jack the Ripper’ murders.

too many families parents chose to disregard their responsibilities concerning the sexual promiscuity of their children. The clergy were urged not to accept illegitimate births as inevitable but to proclaim them as sinful. Their brief was to extend to noting evidence of fornication as revealed in the time lapse between a marriage and the birth of a child and to be particularly watchful about locations which might provide opportunity for young people to sin:

There are industrial districts with mills and factories where women and girls are employed in large numbers, where they have far more liberty and freedom than elsewhere, and where their work does not in any way tend to domesticity, but rather the reverse. There are similar towns, with large houses in the neighbourhood with extensive stables and big hunting establishments which (unless the utmost care is taken), may easily become a source of danger; and there are purely agricultural districts where there is but little check from public opinion and where the tone (so far as it can be said to exist at all) is often deplorably low and where sin is hardly recognised as sin, but almost regarded as natural and inevitable. ⁶⁹

His view echoes that of Arthur Gibbs in 1898 who, when discussing the morals of the Gloucestershire peasants, claimed that they were "on the whole excellent" but in one respect, that of sexual morality, they were "rather casual, not to say prehistoric." ⁷⁰

At least one incumbent had anticipated his bishop's lead. In 1909, William Seddon, the Vicar of Painswick, told his Parish Council that, with the bishop's approval, he proposed to enforce a discipline

in all cases where a child is born out of wedlock or prematurely after marriage. In such cases the parents will be suspended from all church privileges for such a period as the Vicar may determine. During that period,

⁶⁸ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1890, p. 169

⁶⁹ Gibson, *The Diocese and the Parish*, *op. cit.* p.50

⁷⁰ Gibbs, J.A., *A Cotswold Village*, Gloucester, Alan Sutton, 1988 edition, p. 58. Gibbs recounts the episode of a village incumbent who visited a newly-married man "to speak seriously about the exceptionally premature arrival of an heir. 'This is a terrible affair,' said the parson on entering the cottage. 'Yaas, 'twere a bad job to be sure' replied the man. 'And what will yer take to drink.' "

they will, if communicants, be debarred from the Lord's Table; the Churching of the mother will be postponed until the sentence has expired, and if the child is brought in the interim for Public Baptism, it must not be presented by the parents, but by sponsors approved by the Vicar. ⁷¹

The proposed course of action was approved unanimously by the Council but the effect of its subsequent implementation on village life is not known.

Bishop Gibson's Charge was delivered in early October, 1910. Yet later that same month, on the death of King Edward VII, he chose to ignore the late monarch's blatant libertinism and extra-marital affairs, referring only to his "unfailing tact and diplomatic skill," his "devotion to public duty" and his "sympathy with his people". ⁷² Junior clergy joined in the chorus of praise. The Vicar of Painswick described the late sovereign as "the embodiment of political sagacity and goodness of heart" while his colleague at Harsecombe with Pitchcombe seemed to lose all sense of proportion in claiming that Edward VII had "never been surpassed in ability, perhaps never equalled, by any of his predecessors upon the throne." ⁷³ Since it may be doubted whether either of the two incumbents was intimately familiar with the activities of the Court or the Government, these tributes seem most likely to have been inspired by either the innate respect of one level of society for a higher one or a heavily partial assessment of the king's conduct. The more considered verdict of Sir Robert Ensor on the character of the King, at least when Prince of Wales, is much less indulgent:

Not only were many of his sex laxities common knowledge, and his extravagances in betting and gambling a matter of daily observation, but in minor ways he set himself to wear down a tradition which he disliked. Thus in the eighties he opened one of the first breaches in Sabbatarianism by

⁷¹ *Painswick Valley and Great Witcombe Church Magazine*, 1909, p.77

⁷² *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1910, p. 179

⁷³ *Painswick Valley and Great Witcombe Magazine*, 1910, pp. 50, 52

giving Sunday evening dinner parties at Marlborough House. Later he sponsored and perhaps invented the 'weekend'. In the twentieth century this institution is so familiar that few realise its late appearance in the nineteenth ... [Queen Victoria's] method of allotting the royal duties, which was to devolve all the social side upon him while closely retaining all the political side for herself, rendered him, and not her, the leader and exemplar of London. ⁷⁴

Furthermore, Sir Robert is dismissive of Edward's supposed contribution to diplomacy, arguing from a study of official documents that it was negligible and at times even inimical to Britain's interests. On the other hand, his long absences abroad had effectively excluded him from any detailed involvement in domestic issues. ⁷⁵ A modern historian, in commenting that the King "did not appear to set a conspicuous example of holy living" ⁷⁶ has basically endorsed Sir Robert Ensor's judgement, even if he prefers understatement. Sexual indulgence, betting, gambling, profaning the Lord's Day, ⁷⁷ a collection of vices which Bishop Gibson frequently deplored, were personified in King Edward. But the King was *par excellence* a leader of British society and popular with the masses and it would be an extremely brave Church leader who sought publicly to criticize him. ⁷⁸

It might be contended that it was not the business of a provincial bishop to draw attention to the moral shortcomings of a national figure like the king, least of all in the immediate aftermath of his death. Such an argument seems less compelling in the case of another member of the aristocracy — and a member of the then Prince of Wales' intimate

⁷⁴ Ensor, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-143

⁷⁵ Ensor, *ibid.*, pp 567-569

⁷⁶ Robbins, K., *History, Religion and Identity in Modern Britain*, Hambledon Press, London, 1993, p. 119

⁷⁷ A reference to "carelessness about the power of example" as an obstacle to proper observance of Sunday at the Diocesan Conference of 1908 (*Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1909, p. 238) may well have been an oblique allusion to royal and aristocratic behaviour,

circle — with roots very firmly in the county and diocese. Algernon Bertram Freeman-Mitford, created the first Baron Redesdale in 1902, was M.P. for Stratford on Avon from 1892 to 1895 and Secretary to the Board of Works for 12 years. In high society he was a much admired figure, “a sort of Prince Charming”, as one biographer describes him.⁷⁹ The family home was at Batsford Park, near Moreton in Marsh where Lord Redesdale was known as a generous benefactor to the community.⁸⁰ More pertinent to this study, he was also prominent in Gloucestershire church circles, both as a member of the Diocesan Conference where he served from 1888 to 1892 on the Parliamentary Committee⁸¹ and as patron of the two livings of Batsford with Moreton-in Marsh and of Bourton on the Hill. His death in August, 1916 caused the respective rectors of those two parishes to exude admiration for their late patron. To the Revd. Edmund Murray of Bourton on the Hill:

His loss will be keenly felt in the public life of the neighbourhood, in which he took so able a lead on great occasions. His picturesque personality, distinguished bearing and powerful eloquence were an ornament and an influence far beyond what is generally the lot of country districts to enjoy. It was a constant source of inspiration to be led by a man of such brilliant gifts and undisputed eminence.

His colleague at Batsford, the Revd. Spencer Jones, was equally fulsome in his praise:

... the word that occurs to my mind always when I think of our late Squire is the word ‘distinguished’. Certainly he was distinguished by his appearance and any one would have singled him out of the largest and most various assembly of men; but he was distinguished also by his mental gifts, more

⁷⁸ “By the time he [Edward] came to the throne one Liverpool minister even went so far as to accuse him publicly of licentiousness”. The aged Archbishop of Canterbury, Frederick Temple, “was more reticent but did not greatly care for Court goings-on.” Robbins: *op.cit.*, p.119

⁷⁹ *Dictionary of National Biography, 1912- 1921*, p. 382. Lord Redesdale was the grandfather of the six Mitford girls prominent in literary and society circles in this country, mainly in the 1930s to 1960s. Nancy, Jessica, Unity, Diana and Deborah all attained fame in different fields.

⁸⁰ *Victoria County History of Gloucestershire*, Vol. vi., *op. cit.*, pp. 242, 243, 248

⁸¹ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendars* for the years in question. He presumably withdrew from the Committee on being elected to Parliament.

particularly by his gift of languages and by his delicate and exquisite taste in art.⁸²

To contemporaries, Lord Redesdale therefore stood as a shining example of a leader of society. But more recently it has been alleged that this pillar of Church and society was guilty of repeated adulterous incest. The charge is that, with his wife's agreement, he fathered the four children of his sister in law, Lady Blanche Hozier. One of those children, Clementine, later married Winston Churchill. Although it was believed that the refusal of Lady Blanche's husband, Sir Henry Hozier, to give her children was the cause of their separation, all four offspring were born before the split. According to a recent biography of Winston Churchill, Lady Blanche admitted to a friend, the poet and writer Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, that both Clementine and her older sister Katherine had been fathered, not by Sir Henry, but by a Captain George Middleton. Blunt was reportedly not at all shocked by the revelation but made the sympathetic reply: "It is much wiser for a woman who has an inferior husband to choose a suitable sire for her children, and both these girls were delightful, refined and superior in every way."⁸³ However, another biographer of the Churchill family has asserted that there was a family agreement, with which his wife concurred, that Lord Redesdale should act as a surrogate husband to his sister-in-law and that therefore he was really the father of all four of Lady Blanche's children.⁸⁴ This cannot be dismissed as mere sensationalism. The author was a respected biographer⁸⁵ and appeared to be continuing a contemporary belief since in 1916 Margot

⁸² *Stow Deanery Magazine*, September, 1916

⁸³ Rose, N., *Churchill: An Unruly Life*, London, Simon and Schuster, 1994, p. 60

⁸⁴ Hough R; *Winston and Clementine, The Triumph of the Churchills*, London, Bantam Books, 1990, pp.5, 162, 204.

⁸⁵ Richard Hough, who died in October 1999, was the official historian to the Mountbatten family, wrote a biography of Lord Mountbatten and was an authority on Winston Churchill, producing nine books

Asquith (wife of the Prime Minister) is recorded as recounting a rumour that Clementine (Hozier) Churchill was Lord Redesdale's daughter.⁸⁶

This study is concerned less with the legitimacy of the parentage of Clementine Churchill and her siblings than with the light which, if true, this story sheds on the relationship between the clergy and certain sections of society. Lady Blanche Hozier's children were born in the period 1885 to 1888 and her husband implicitly acknowledged their illegitimacy by refusing to accept full responsibility for their maintenance after the separation.⁸⁷ Lord Redesdale inherited Batsford Park from his cousin in 1886 and appointed the Revd. Spencer Jones as Rector of the parish in the following year. That the Rector was at least on the fringes of the social circle centred around Batsford Park can be inferred from the fact that he felt sufficiently familiar with the family to include in the Deanery magazine for 1908 congratulations to Clementine Hozier, first on her engagement and then on her subsequent marriage to Winston Churchill.⁸⁸ However, there is no evidence that the Rector was implicated in or condoned the events described above. It is far more likely that he was completely ignorant of the actions of which the patron of his living stands accused and that the family would have seen no reason to involve their parish priest in what they considered an intimate family matter. Even if they

concerning the statesman. *Winston and Clementine* contains a family tree, clearly showing Lord Redesdale as the father of the Hozier children.

⁸⁶ Rose, *op. cit.*, p.356, fn. 55. Unfortunately, Lady Blanche's reference to Captain Middleton cannot be considered conclusive evidence. In questions of adultery and divorce at that time, collusion was not uncommon and she may well have preferred involving another person than admitting, even to a sympathetic listener, a sexual relationship with her own brother in law.

⁸⁷ The Colonel threatened publicly to brand his wife as an adulteress if he were pressured to provide more maintenance than he thought appropriate and in face of the threat Lady Blanche and her family did not pursue the claim, even though she and her children had then to live in straitened circumstances. Another possible confirmation of the children's illegitimacy is that Hozier made no mention of them in his *Who's Who* entry. This apparently odd behaviour on the Colonel's part makes more sense if it is accepted that he did not father the children who bore his name.

⁸⁸ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, September, October, 1908

had, it is arguable that, given the awe with which he obviously regarded his patron, the rector was probably incapable of criticizing the squire's morals. The comments of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, quoted above, indicate that at least some sections of the upper classes placed sexual liaisons outside marriage in the amoral rather than immoral category. The exclusion of the clergy from this area clearly undermines any claim that they were able to be impartial guardians of the national morality, regardless of status, wealth or class.

From the nineteenth until well into the twentieth century, the lay opinion heeded by Church leaders was that expressed by the upper classes. When Bishop Ellicott expressed fears in 1878 that the laity were becoming outraged at a growth of clergy "sacerdotalism," the laity whom he had in mind were the members of Parliament. The observation was prompted by an address to the Bishops by "forty or fifty of the most representative Churchmen in the House of Commons," protesting against a clergy petition asking for confessors to receive formal training. Ellicott's comment was: "When leading members of the House of Commons put their hands to such a declaration, it may be certainly considered that the lay mind of the country is thoroughly aroused."⁸⁹ However, Ellicott's definition of the "lay mind" was selective. In 1877 a "society of working men" protested that a judgement by the Court of Final Appeal on a ritual question was "clearly intended as a compromise to satisfy public opinion and not in accordance with the plain letter of the law." The bishop considered this protest to be not a legitimate expression of lay opinion but a form of subversion and he categorised it as "a sign of the times to impugn the honour of our judges."⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Ellicott, *Some Present Dangers of the Church of England*, *op. cit.*, p. 47

⁹⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 82-83

When, in 1872, Ellicott notoriously hinted at a farmers' dinner that Agricultural Trades Union "agitators" should be thrown into the village horse pond, he was addressing an audience with whom he shared common assumptions.⁹¹ All wanted to preserve the existing class structure of the country and Trade Unionism represented a threat to that structure. For the bishop, resistance to that threat could even be construed as a religious duty. It was, he believed, being "faithful to Him who blessed the peacemakers," whereas men like Joseph Arch could be branded as anti-Christian because they brought "not peace among us, but discord and antagonism."⁹² In the face of widespread criticism for his "horse pond" remark, he later attempted to atone by meeting a delegation of complainant labourers but the encounter served only to harden his position. He was outraged that the labourers had proposed that the question "to whom did the land of the country really belong?" should first be addressed. His condemnation was unequivocal: "Of such speakers and actors, it is impossible not to speak in measured terms of reprehension" and he concluded that the whole Union movement was a threat to the stability of society:

... they have frequently so spoken and acted as, on the one hand to stir up hostility and bitterness in our parishes between the labourers and their employers, and, on the other to raise hopes and stimulate expectations which charity itself cannot deny are closely linked with democracy and communism.⁹³

A number of contemporaries considered Bishop Ellicott's references to horse ponds to have been at best imprudent⁹⁴ but they were considered to be fully justified by

⁹¹ Scotland, N. *Agricultural Trade Unionism in Gloucestershire, 1872-1950*, Cheltenham, Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education, 1991, pp. 23-26; Kitson Clark, *Churchmen and the Condition of England*, *op. cit.*, pp. 247-248; Chadwick, *The Victorian Church, Part II*, p. 284; Bowen, D., *The Idea of the Victorian Church*, Montreal, McGill University Press, 1968, p. 248:

⁹² Ellicott, *The Church and the Rural Poor*, *op. cit.*, p. 9

⁹³ *ibid.*, pp. 8. Marx and Engels' *Communist Manifesto* was published in 1848. It is not entirely clear how the bishop defined 'democracy' but he obviously employed the term pejoratively.

⁹⁴ Scotland, *op. cit.* pp. 23-26

at least one leading layman in the diocese. Thomas Lloyd Baker of Hardwick Court,⁹⁵ injected his own views into the controversy in a letter to the *Gloucestershire Chronicle* in February, 1873:

Great and very absurd offence has been taken lately at the notion of a ducking in a horsepond but I think that Arch and his friends will agree with me that had I, with a knowledge of the truth, tried to set one class against another as they have done, — I trust in ignorance, — not a horsepond but a horsewhip or a halter, would have been nearer to my deserts.⁹⁶

The Diocesan Conference

For the greater part of the period under review, the annual Diocesan Conference and the various committees which it engendered was the medium through which lay and clerical views and opinions could be exchanged at a formal and official level and decisions taken which would affect the church life of all classes in the Diocese. The views which were expressed there were inevitably those of the male members of the higher classes of society; inevitably, because women were excluded from representation until 1921 and because attendance at the Conference alone involved the sacrifice of at least two working days per year. Only the leisured and self-employed classes were in a position to give their time to such requirements and, especially in the country deaneries, the choice of representatives was consequently limited.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Thomas Barwick Lloyd Baker (1807-86), a writer of pamphlets on industrial, penal and religious topics, was the senior of three generations of the family who were prominent in Gloucestershire church circles. His son, Granville Edwin Lloyd Baker (1841-1924) and grandson Michael Granville (1873-1916) continued his work for the Church.]

⁹⁶ Brett, P., *The Agricultural Labourers Question*. Gloucester, Nest, (no date) [1873 ?] p. 34

⁹⁷ In 1905, the Deanery of Stow elected to the Conference a Mr Simpson Hayward of Icomb who was at the time touring the West Indies with a cricket team. His social status can be inferred from the fact that he was restoring the Manor House at Icomb and that during the cricket tour he became engaged to the Governor of Barbados' daughter. *Stow Deanery Magazine*, May 1905

To a large extent, the lay composition of the Conference reflected a societal structure in which those leaders of society and business who placed their talents at the service of the Church and community were afforded admiration and respect. As his Rector (himself a member of an aristocratic family), said of Edward Egerton Leigh of Broadwell, a member of the Diocesan Committee on Poverty, “a staunch Conservative,” “a loyal Churchman” and “a pattern country gentleman,”

Country folk in these days keep a keen eye upon the gentry, and never stint their regard for one whom they can respect for his readiness to respond to the calls of duty, and in all concerns of public usefulness to give that lead which only a gentleman after all who deserves the name can do. ⁹⁸

Similarly, Gardner Sebastian Bazley of Hatherop Castle, Fairford could be praised for “the conscientious discharge of those numerous responsibilities which property, wealth and social position bring with them.” As his obituarist rhetorically asked, “How many men would go home, as he often did, in the middle of a day’s hunting or shooting, in order to be present at a Committee meeting in a little country town?” ⁹⁹ So too Sir John Dorington, a former M.P. and Chairman of Gloucestershire County Council, was lauded by the Dean of Gloucester as “a good and kindly landlord, an active and painstaking magistrate, deeply interested in all the affairs of his county, ever ready to devote his really great powers to any public business.” ¹⁰⁰

The absence in the growing Empire of such public-spirited men of leisure was held by Bishop of Carpentaria, visiting Gloucester in 1908, to be a serious defect. In Australia, he told a Gloucestershire meeting of S.P.G. supporters, there were special

⁹⁸ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1913, p. 132

⁹⁹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1911, p. 150

¹⁰⁰ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1911, p.85

difficulties in inculcating high ideals in such a young nation, as there was “no leisured class, such as you find in an old country, to take up the work of the legislature, which therefore is liable to get into the hands of professional politicians, while *the best men*, busy with their own affairs, stood aloof from public life.”¹⁰¹

It was thus natural that until after the First World War the composition of the Diocesan Conference should reflect that section of society which acted under the motto of *noblesse oblige*. Until 1920, the Conference Constitution provided for the election of one representative for each 3,000 of population in a Rural Deanery, with the number of lay representatives to be not less than the number of clerical representatives but not more than double that number. Taking 1906 as an example, an analysis of the 81 elected lay members shows that 15 were occupants of Principal Seats,¹⁰² 22 were magistrates and 11 held senior (presumably retired) ranks in the Armed Forces. It was a group bound by social as well as ecclesiastical ties. John Dearman Birchall’s diary entries show that he moved in a circle which included many prominent local churchmen and their families. The names of the Lloyd Baker, Gambier Parry, Ackers and Curtis Hayward families appear frequently. They hunted together and attended each other’s dinners, balls and parties. Since Birchall’s social circle also included the Ellicott family, it is likely that the bishop and other senior church leaders were also included in the same wider circle.¹⁰³

The Constitution also allowed the bishop to nominate twelve un-elected members to the Conference. It was usually this group which took the lead in Conference debates and it was dominated by the gentry, as illustrated at Appendix A by Bishop Ellicott’s

¹⁰¹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1908, p. 218. The italics are mine.

¹⁰² The term used in *Kelly’s Directory* to denote the major country houses of the county.

Nominees for 1900 and his successor's choice in 1906. Within the Conference, clerical and lay members operated on a broadly equal footing with laymen playing their full part in debates and often serving as Chairmen of committees. Archdeacon Sheringham's contention that "a man's views are moulded by his companionships" could certainly be borne out by the reaction of the more prominent laity to current issues, even if not quite in the way he had envisaged. Generally speaking, the opinions which they expressed reflected the values and practices of the gentry. They were occasionally simplistic as when Colonel Granville Browne cut through the complexities of a debate on "Church Discipline and the Episcopate" in 1898 with the observation of a soldier trained to obey orders. The Church, he maintained, was a form of Army with the Bishops as its chief officers; therefore what they decided in matters of liturgy and conduct ought to be obeyed.¹⁰⁴ The somewhat obsequious position of E.R. Salwey who considered it "a great privilege to Laymen to be invited to confer with the Clergy" when religious topics were under discussion¹⁰⁵ seems to have been exceptional. Other laymen were more robust in their attitudes and not overawed by the presence of the clergy.¹⁰⁶

At Diocesan Conference level, the clergy therefore found no shortage of lay opinion but the problem of determining how representative were the lay views expressed at the Conference is well illustrated by two discussions on the value of the *Book of Common Prayer* held in 1899 and 1908. At the former, Colonel the Hon. G. Dutton described the Prayer Book as "as magnificent a liturgy as any country could wish to

¹⁰³ Verey, *The Diary of a Victorian Squire*, op. cit. *passim*. A local professional historian recently jokingly described this group to me as "the Gloucestershire Mafia, who had the county sewn up."

¹⁰⁴ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar* 1899, p. 155

¹⁰⁵ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1900, p.160

have” and claimed to speak “on behalf of the great body of the Laity” in asking “for nothing more than that the Prayer Book should be adhered to.”¹⁰⁷ Yet in 1908 H. Jenner Fust, in a far more critical vein, thought that he voiced the opinion of “the man in the street” by stating that “the use of the Prayer Book as a devotional guide for daily life was seriously interfered with by the frequently obscure and archaic manner in which the prayers and praises were couched” and he went on to draw attention to the use of archaisms in the prayers and “unChristian” sentiments contained in the Psalms. In his opinion, what was needed was “a Book of Common Prayer so worded that the generality of worshippers could understand it and free from expressions which at face value were opposed to Christian teaching.”¹⁰⁸

It is of course possible that these apparently contradictory lay views of the value of the Prayer Book represent nothing more than a shift of opinion in the intervening period. An equally possible explanation is that the speakers were echoing the known opinions of the presiding bishop. Bishop Ellicott was known to be a great admirer of the Prayer Book and earlier in 1899 had extolled its “vast and varied material.”¹⁰⁹ However, in his first Charge to the Diocese in 1906 Bishop Gibson had shown sympathy with those clergy who complained that the instructions and regulations of the Prayer Book were “ill

¹⁰⁶ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1902, pp. 170-171 records a heated exchange concerning the Athanasian Creed between the Revd. George Bayfield Roberts, leader of the Anglo-Catholic clergy of the diocese and Sir William Marling in which accusations of heresy filled the air.

¹⁰⁷ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1900 p. 161

¹⁰⁸ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1909 p. 246

¹⁰⁹ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress* 1899, p. 18

adapted to the needs of the people”¹¹⁰ and had already drawn attention to one, albeit minor, deficiency in the book.¹¹¹

Since moral failings such as intemperance, gambling and sexual misconduct were likely to affect all classes of society,¹¹² they caused little disagreement between the lay and clerical members of the Conference. But there was often less unanimity on the question of Sunday observance. Leading a debate in 1890 on “The Observance of the Lord’s Day,” Colonel Granville Browne accepted that some Sunday travel was inevitable and said that he would further restrict the sale of intoxicating liquors in England on Sundays. But then, more controversially, and wondering aloud if he would even find a seconder for his motion, he argued that since the working man might reasonably say “one can’t go to church all day long,” he proposed: that “with a view to providing innocent and useful recreation for the people, it is desirable that such institutions as picture galleries, museums and free libraries, should be thrown open to the public on Sunday within certain regulated hours.”¹¹³ Mr E. Stafford Howard, who had shown himself at an earlier Conference as being resolutely opposed to gambling and urging police intervention wherever it was discovered,¹¹⁴ was willing to second this liberal motion but it was defeated by 28 votes to 13. The differences displayed on Sunday observance in the Gloucester Diocese were mirrored elsewhere in England. Objections to any treatment of Sunday which would characterise it with “Puritanical moroseness” were voiced at the

¹¹⁰ Gibson, E.C.S.: *Standards and Practice*, p.14

¹¹¹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1906. p. 67 where he describes the Prayer Book Burial Service as being unsuitable for the burial of a child.

¹¹² *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1890, p. 173. “We must purify our drawing-rooms if we would purify our streets,” asserted a speaker at the Diocesan Conference of 1889.

¹¹³ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1891, p. 178

¹¹⁴ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1890, pp. 176-182

Church Congress in 1866¹¹⁵ but it is difficult to determine the strength of truly religious feeling on the topic since the real (and less popular) religious issue of Sunday observance could always be disguised in church circles as concern for the welfare of the worker.¹¹⁶

But it was on the inter-related questions of unemployment and poverty that class differences, even prejudice, were most evident. It was almost a maxim among the more influential classes that, except for a minority, the working classes were thriftless. This attitude inevitably restricted the amount of sympathy which was accorded them and it followed that any poverty which workers experienced was largely their own fault for being improvident. The Rector of Cheltenham, Edward Walker, encountered this objection when in 1862 he sought to awaken the townsfolk to the relief of distress among the workers in Lancashire, caused by the effect of the American Civil War on the import of raw materials. In a sermon, he pointed out that the sufferers could not be classed as the idle and improvident, and quoted a letter from the Vicar of a manufacturing village:

The suffering extends to the respectable poor, the churchgoers and communicants who have never been beggars. It is a touching sight to see these old churchgoers and communicants among the families who are being relieved with soup and bread. I have been here 24 years and I never saw these Christian people begging before.¹¹⁷

Nevertheless, within Gloucestershire it was difficult to shift the suspicion that poverty was the inevitable consequence of improvidence and, since it was the tradition that farm

¹¹⁵ Norman, E.R., *Church and Society in England, 1770-1970. op. cit.*, p. 152

¹¹⁶ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1909, p.238

¹¹⁷ Walker, E., *A Sermon Preached in the Temporary Church, Cheltenham on Sunday, May 25, 1862 in Aid of the Fund for Relieving the Distress of the Manufacturing Districts*. Cheltenham, Cheltenham Chronicle, 1862, p. 18

workers should receive part of their wages in cider, the sin of intemperance could be coupled to that of improvidence.¹¹⁸

The Diocesan authority on matters of Poverty and Unemployment seems to have been Colonel Curtis Hayward, J.P., of Quedgeley House, a sometime Chairman of the Gloucestershire Bench of Magistrates, whose frequently expressed opinion was that poverty was essentially a moral issue and that greater self-discipline by the working class and a more efficient administration of the Poor Laws would transform the situation.¹¹⁹ In his opinion, the granting of out-door relief to applicants tended only to perpetuate the problem, but where charity was “organised, and out-door relief is only given in exceptional circumstances, then pauperism gradually disappears.”¹²⁰ Furthermore, “the restriction of out-door relief does not drive the poor into the workhouse, but on the contrary conduces to thrift and independence.”¹²¹ Two years later, in 1894, he maintained that “if the Church would preach and teach thrift to the thriftless, the present poverty would be greatly lessened.” He further claimed that a large proportion of those claiming relief were in fact workshy: “Crowds were tramping the country, nominally in search of work, which would not take it when offered. They had Divine authority for saying, ‘He that will not work neither shall he eat.’”¹²² Curtis Hayward’s judgement was not exceptionally harsh by contemporary standards. The Church Army may have believed

¹¹⁸ Intervening in an argument on the level of agricultural wages in 1872, Thomas Lloyd Baker showed little sympathy with any complaints about their allegedly low level in the county. For, he contended, not only should the cider allowance be taken into account in any assessment, but also the cheaper rural living costs in Gloucester, compared with those in London or Manchester. Thomas Barwick Lloyd Baker, ‘Labourers’ Combinations and the Clergy’, a Letter to *The Guardian*, August 28, 1872.

¹¹⁹ The view that “poverty was a result of sin, and a reason for shame” was quite common in nineteenth century Britain. McLeod, H.: *Religion and the Working Class in Nineteenth Century Britain*, *op. cit.* p. 60.

¹²⁰ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1893, p.176

¹²¹ *ibid.*, p. 177

that it had a special commitment to the working classes but Victor Carlile, the founder's son, told a Cheltenham audience in 1906 that their policy was to help not the shirker but those who were willing to work but could not get employment. He explained that "he would like to see all workshies — tramps and vagrants who were the enemy of the genuine working man — put away to colonies where they would be forced to earn their daily bread."¹²³

Curtis Hayward was not a member of the Diocesan Committee which reported on 'Aids to Thrift' in 1886 but Granville E. Lloyd Baker (son of Thomas Lloyd Baker) was its Chairman and the same link between poverty and temperance is prominent in the report. Assuming a farm labourer's weekly expenditure on cider to be 1s.6d per week or about £4 to £5 per year,¹²⁴ the Report argued that the money, if invested wisely, would amount at the end of a working life to over £280:

A very good temperance leaflet pointed out that a man swallowed a yard of land with every pint of beer. Perhaps it is a more striking fact that an agricultural labourer of 60 has generally swallowed a yard of land with every pint of beer. ... It cannot be too strongly impressed on young men that here is a gold mine at their feet. Without stinting themselves in food, clothing or fire, they may at 60 be possessed of a sum of money which in their position is positive wealth.¹²⁵

¹²² *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1895, p. 176. The Scriptural reference is to II Thess. 3.10. The injunction is actually St. Paul's but the distinction would be irrelevant under certain beliefs in the nature of Scriptural inspiration.

¹²³ *Cheltenham Examiner*, December 19, 1906

¹²⁴ An allowance was made for expenditure on "extras."

¹²⁵ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1887, p.154

The Report concluded with the confident assertion: "There is reason to believe that if an earnest desire to save money were aroused in the working class, it would in a few years abolish pauperism, except in the case of accident or ill-health."¹²⁶

In 1907, Colonel Curtis Hayward was appointed by Bishop Gibson to head a Committee to investigate the extent of poverty in the diocese. The Committee's conclusions, on the basis of evidence provided by 262 of the diocese's 323 incumbents repeated some familiar themes:

The Committee are of opinion that the returns received show that there is no exceptional distress in the rural parts of this diocese. Poor people there will always be, but their poverty is rather decreasing than increasing; and that [sic] the periodical seasons of exceptional distress in the large towns is mainly caused by the casual or seasonal nature of the employment of so many; to the want of thrift; and the large amount of money spent in drink; and to the fact that when in employment they spend all the wages they earn and lay by nothing for the many days when they are out of employment.¹²⁷

There was therefore nothing in the evidence presented to his Committee to cause Curtis Hayward radically to change his opinions. As he repeated to the Diocesan Conference of 1909, "the causes of distress are not only economic and industrial; in their origin and character they are largely moral." The poor should be disabused of any idea that they were entitled to aid, family members should be taught their duty to each other and charitable relief should not be given unless there was a chance of doing permanent good. He had two "sound principles" of practical advice to offer clergy engaged in charitable activities:

First, those engaged in the work of the ministry should never be the bearer of alms; the association of the dole with the pastoral visit was an encouragement to hypocrisy, Second, that little should be done with the

¹²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 155

¹²⁷ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1909, p. 190

dispensing hand; much with the helping one, and nothing should be given without careful inquiry. ¹²⁸

Little in the above was peculiar to the diocese of Gloucester. As Edward Norman has pointed out, “the effect of intemperance on the domestic budgets of the working classes, as well as on the general stability of family life, were persistent themes in sermons and pamphlet literature” at the time throughout the country. ¹²⁹

Parishioners and Parish Priests

Despite the bishops’ reservations about their zeal, in a diocese of predominantly small rural parishes, the more conscientious rural parson would often attempt to exercise a degree of close control over his flock. Bishop Ellicott reminded country incumbents in 1887 that “the fewer in number these souls may be, the greater the responsibility, because the less the claims upon our time and opportunities.” ¹³⁰ Many took this advice seriously and kept a watchful eye on the practice of church going, a form of monitoring not possible in the larger town parishes. ¹³¹

¹²⁸ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1910, p. 256

¹²⁹ Norman, *op.cit.*, p. 150

¹³⁰ Ellicott, *Spiritual Needs in Country Parishes*, *op. cit.*, p. 20

¹³¹ In August 1895 the Revd. Solomon Cambrie greeted the annual Church Parade of Foresters and Oddfellows at Newent with the welcome that he knew that many of them had not been inside a church since the previous year’s Parade and told them, somewhat mysteriously, that they would have to give “an account” for their conduct that evening, presumably on the Day of Judgement. *Newent District Magazine*, August, 1895. The following year he noted “with pain” that his own parishioners at Gorsley with Clifford’s Mesne (on the Herefordshire border) were “very irregular in their attendance at the Holy Table.” *Newent District Magazine*, October, 1896. Similarly, in 1909, the incumbent of Harescombe with Pitchcombe reproached his flock with the accusation that there were “still in each parish some parishioners who have not been in church during the last three months.” *Painswick Valley and Great Witcombe Church Magazine*, 1909, p. 80. Those worshippers who rented pews ran the risk that their absences from church were more obvious than those in the free seats. The curate at Stow observed “with some concern” in 1899 that certain parishioners were often absent from their pews, “particularly at the Morning Service.” *Stow Parish Magazine*, May, 1899. It was common for neglectful parishioners to be told that they had a duty to God to attend divine worship; the Vicar of Harescombe with Pitchcombe in 1910 had a variation on this theme, changing the focus from God to himself by telling his parishioners not to “forget the fact of your duty to your clergyman in the thought of his duty to you.” *Painswick Valley and Great Witcombe Magazine*, 1910, p.8.

Lapses in sexual discipline, domestic economy and church attendance were favourite subjects on which the clergy felt obliged to lecture their flock. Such strictures could apply to all residents within a parish, regardless of church membership, but the faithful could additionally be blamed for not exercising their spiritual powers. Ernest Smith, the Vicar of Tewkesbury suggested in 1916 that his parishioners might be at fault for his difficulties in recruiting a suitable assistant curate, the only replies to his advertisement of the vacancy having come from "the too young or the too old." "Can this be," he enquired, "because you have not prayed earnestly that the right man may be sent us?"¹³² In similar circumstances, Edward Kimber who in 1910 was about to vacate the living of Great Witcombe in the Stroud Valley was more direct, chiding his parishioners not only for the fact that no successor had yet been appointed but also for the vagaries of the weather:

Perhaps if we were to pray a little more that God in his own good time would send a faithful priest to work here, in all probability our prayer would be answered, but unfortunately we are not a praying lot of people; we expect to have blessings sent to us without taking the trouble to ask for them. Rogation days, when we ought to pray for God's blessing on the fruits of the earth were allowed to pass without almost any notice at all, and yet we expect to have fruitful harvests, and grumble at the weather when we ought to be blaming ourselves.¹³³

Mr Kimber's complaint was that the parish had failed to observe the special days prescribed in the Prayer Book as 'Days of Fasting and Abstinence'.¹³⁴ At the beginning of the twentieth century, open-air Rogation services were revived in Gloucestershire and proved popular with many farmers and their workers. For example, in May, 1908, the

¹³² *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, September, 1916

¹³³ *Painswick Valley and Great Witcombe Magazine*, 1910, p. 54

¹³⁴ viz., "The Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday before Holy Thursday or The Ascension of our Lord"

parishes of Beverston, Kingscote and Newington Bagpath in Dursley Deanery combined to hold "brief open-air services" for Rogationtide in each parish.¹³⁵ The parishes reported:

The widespread revival of such services is much to be desired, as calculated to help people to realise that, when men have done all that is in them lies to secure a bountiful ingathering, the increase of the seed sown rests with God through whose blessing alone the earth is enabled to yield its fruits "some thirty-fold, some sixty, some an hundred."¹³⁶

Later in 1910 a priest arrived at Great Witcombe to replace Mr Kimber and the summer of 1911 was one of such "wondrous sunshine" that the harvest was gathered early.¹³⁷ From these two facts, it might be inferred that the people of the parish had taken their Vicar's censures to heart. However, 1912 proved "so disastrous a season" that the new Vicar of Great Witcombe abandoned the annual Harvest Thanksgiving services because he believed that "in such a solemn matter as the worship of God there should be no unreality for the sake of keeping up a custom."¹³⁸ Significantly, there is no evidence that the new priest blamed his parishioners for the disastrous harvest.

Where a rural incumbent himself embodied both religious and social authority, he possessed the potential for wielding control over most aspects of village life. Canon Frederick Dutton, the Vicar of Bibury from 1874 to 1916, was the brother of James, Lord Sherborne and inherited the title himself in 1906. J. Arthur Gibbs, who was his churchwarden, described him as:

¹³⁵ As prescribed by the Prayer Book, the services were held on Monday, May 25; Ascension Day that year fell on Thursday, May 28

¹³⁶ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1908, p. 112

¹³⁷ *Painswick Valley and Great Witcombe Church Magazine*, 1911, p. 87

¹³⁸ *Painswick Valley and Great Witcombe Church Magazine*, 1912, p. 80

An excellent man in every way, and having his duty at heart, he is one of the very few Tories of the old school that are left to us. Ruling his parish with a rod of iron, he is loved and respected by most of his flock. In the Parish Council, at the Board of Guardians, his word is law. ...his affections are entirely centred on the little Cotswold village, which he has ruled for a quarter of a century. ¹³⁹

Canon Dutton was apparently not pleased by the implication that his behaviour was autocratic but his obituarist, who recorded his subject's umbrage, did little to dissipate the churchwarden's impression by stating that the late Vicar "was an admirable chairman" of the organisations on which he served "and having expressed his own usually rather decided views on any question, he always left it to the meeting to decide, but somehow their views nearly always coincided with his." ¹⁴⁰

A similar social structure existed at Broadwell with Adlestrop in Stow Deanery where the Rector, Canon Cholmondeley, was the son-in-law of Lord Leigh, the sole landowner, patron of the living and an absentee landlord, residing at Stoneleigh in Warwickshire. The Rector may thus be regarded as the surrogate landlord. Canon Cholmondeley had an acknowledged status in society and his personal attributes were highly regarded. "By right of parentage, education, physical and intellectual endowments," wrote his obituarist, "he might have taken his place in any walk of life.

¹³⁹ Gibbs, *A Cotswold Village*, *op. cit.*, p. 53. It was obviously Arthur Gibbs' particular acquaintance with Canon Dutton which led him to generalise, perhaps not wholly seriously, about the misfortunes of churchwardens in general: "I do not recommend any of my readers to become churchwardens. You become a sort of aide-de-camp to the parson, liable to be called out on duty at a moment's notice. No: a young man might with some advantage to others and credit to himself take upon himself the office of Parish Councillor, Poor Law Guardian, Inspector of Lunatic Asylums, High Sheriff, or even Public Hangman; but save, oh, save us from being churchwardens! To be obliged to attend those terrible institutions called 'vestry meetings' and to receive each year an examination paper from the archdeacon of the diocese propounding such questions as, 'Do you attend church regularly? If not, why not?' etc. etc. is the natural destiny of a churchwarden, and is more than human nature can stand: in short, my advice to those thinking of becoming churchwardens is 'Don't' with a very big D." *ibid.*, p.54

¹⁴⁰ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1920, p. 20

But his heart from early childhood was given to God.”¹⁴¹ But despite these advantages, the villagers of Adlestrop were not absolutely subservient to him. In the vignettes of the villagers which his daughter penned in 1876 and 1877 may be seen some small stirrings of an egalitarian spirit in the community.¹⁴² The Howes family, for example, were “Dissenters and Unionists” and had “a sort of ‘I’m as good as you are’ look about their faces.” The father of the family, being asthmatic, did little work, “was a great admirer of Joseph Arch” and spent much of his time reading “chiefly cheaply circulated literature against landlords and clergy.”¹⁴³ Similarly, William Webb who had been the head gardener at the Rectory left “to better himself” and became a day labourer. More significantly, he then stopped going to church and called himself a Trade Unionist and a Dissenter.¹⁴⁴ The existence in the village of criticisms of the Rector and his family is implied by Rose Cholmondeley’s commendation of Mrs Keane, the wife of the Head Mason, because she would not “hear a word spoken against any of us.”¹⁴⁵

Educated at Eton and Christ Church, Oxford and the squire of the small village of Ablington, Arthur Gibbs’ background placed him firmly in the ranks of the gentry, but he had a strong sympathy with the labouring class in his area¹⁴⁶ and he was also a sensitive observer of their conduct. Writing towards the end of the nineteenth century, he noted that “in the spirit of independence generally, country folk have much altered” but he was disappointed to find “that whilst paying but little deference either to men of estate or men

¹⁴¹ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, May 1905. He was a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford from 1841-1848.

¹⁴² Cholmondeley, R.E., *Adlestrop, its Cottagers and their Inmates 1876-1877*. Privately published, 1935

¹⁴³ *ibid.*, pp. 30, 31. It is noteworthy that in that household at least landlords and clergy were both classed as ‘the opposition.’

¹⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. 22. A day labourer did not have a regular wage but was paid for each day’s work. Mr Webb appears to have had some literacy. He reportedly christened his son as Arba because that was the first word he found in a Biblical Concordance which appealed to him!

¹⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p. 11

¹⁴⁶ Gibbs, *A Cotswold Village*, *op. cit.*, p.11

of learning, they yet allow themselves to be bamboozled by the promises and claptrap of the paid agitator.”¹⁴⁷

Bibury and Adlestrop were small villages¹⁴⁸ where there was a wide social gap between the gentry and the labourers. Apathy, a “kind of rough counterpart of the more clearly-defined agnosticism of the better-educated”¹⁴⁹ was, in Bishop Ellicott’s opinion, a characteristic of the countryman. As the bishop detected subversion within agnosticism, for him at least there was a close link between religious indifference and social disruption. Arthur Gibbs offered a different perspective. In his opinion the country labourer was more stolid than apathetic.¹⁵⁰

In the towns and larger villages power and influence were more diffused and the middle classes, interposed between the highest and lowest levels of society, were more capable of organising and expressing any grievances that they felt against the clergy. For example, the 16 townsfolk of Winchcombe who publicly supported the complaint of discrimination against the Vicar¹⁵¹ included a solicitor, tradesmen, farmers and artisans.¹⁵² At Charlton Kings in 1906, a time when denominational education was a burning issue in the country, a parent complained that his daughter had been given a religious book by Thomas Hodson, the Vicar, which commended prayers for the departed and

¹⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p.61

¹⁴⁸ At the 1901 Census Bibury had a population of 655 and Adlestrop 175.

¹⁴⁹ Ellicott, C.J. *Spiritual Needs in Country Parishes*, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-83

¹⁵⁰ Recalling an occasion when he addressed a political meeting at Northleach, he wrote: “Unless you happen to be a very taking speaker — which his greatest friends could not accuse the present writer of being — agricultural labourers are a most unsympathetic audience. They will sit solemnly through a long speech without even winking an eye, and your best ‘hits’ are passed by in a solemn silence. To the nervous speaker a little applause occasionally is doubtless encouraging; but if you want to get it, you must put somebody down among the audience, and pay them half a crown to make a noise.” Gibbs, *A Cotswold Village*, *op. cit.*, p. 59

¹⁵¹ Cf. Chapter 3

instructed how to make a confession before a priest. The local Free Church Council then took up his grievance with the County Education Committee, and expanded the charge by claiming that at Charlton Kings' School, the children of Anglican parents were unfairly given preference over the others in the distribution of "treats and prizes." After investigation, the Secretary of the Education Committee dismissed the complaints, but that they could be brought at all was symptomatic both of the suspicion and ill-will prevalent at the time and of the lack of a deferential spirit among the lower middle classes.¹⁵³ It is possible that the episode helped to influence Thomas Hodson's decision to resign the benefice a few months later because, he told his parishioners, "there have been rather diminishing than increasing signs of responsiveness on your part generally."¹⁵⁴ From Charlton Kings (1901 population 3,700) Mr Hodson subsequently moved to a less populous living at Oddington (402) in Stow Deanery.

But possibly the most sustained and acrimonious dispute in the diocese between a clergyman and his parishioners revolved around neither religion, morals or Labour *versus* Capital. According to a history of the town, Robert Hippisley, the Vicar of Stow from 1844 to 1899, was at odds with the townsfolk over civic matters for most of his incumbency. A "man of very strong will" but "too assertive" he seems to have tried to assert himself in a manner which might have encountered less resistance in one of the neighbouring villages. "He frequently found himself in antagonism with his parishioners. Litigation occurred, which laid heavy toll upon his resources, and towards the end of his

¹⁵² The signatories were a Cheltenham solicitor and, from the Winchcombe area, four farmers, two drapers, an agent, a foreman, a baker, a tanner and currier, a baker, a bootmaker, a watchmaker, a grocer, a tailor and a stationer. *Cheltenham Examiner*, July 10, 1878

¹⁵³ *Cheltenham Examiner*, March 21, April 4, 11, May 30, 1906

¹⁵⁴ *Cheltenham Examiner*, August 8, 1906

career, public feeling was very much embittered against him.”¹⁵⁵ Richard Vavasour, Mr Hippisley’s predecessor had been “eminently a man of peace”,¹⁵⁶ but with the arrival of the latter as Rector, “an element of discord was introduced and from thenceforward there was neither efficiency nor peace.”¹⁵⁷ The Rector was first involved in a dispute about the local schools.¹⁵⁸ but the chief cause of contention was the supply of water to the town.¹⁵⁹ Unfortunately for the townspeople, the Rector and a committee of ratepayers were constantly bickering over the best solution to the problem. At a time when inter-denominational rivalry was rarely far from the surface, in another civic issue the Rector provided bad publicity for the Church of England, compared with nonconformity. This was the saga of the town’s fire alarm, which ran for nearly twenty years. The town fire brigade had asked the Rector for access to the church’s bell tower so that they could use the church bells to alarm the town in emergencies. But from 1876 onwards Mr Hippisley continually obstructed the plan. As Stow’s historian explained, “the reverend gentleman did not refuse but imposed conditions which the Brigade Committee felt they could not accept.” However, in 1886, with the permission of the Trustees, the Brigade found an alternative expedient at the local Wesleyan Chapel and rigged a rope to a bell in the Chapel turret. Finally, in 1895 a local benefactor provided the funds for the erection of an alarm bell in a specially-built tower in the centre of the town.¹⁶⁰ The continual quarrelling was bound to colour the attitude of Stow’s inhabitants towards their parish

¹⁵⁵ Bartlett, W., *Nineteenth Century Stow*, Stow, Clift and Ryland, 1911, p. 12

¹⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p. 34

¹⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p. 40

¹⁵⁸ *Victoria County History of Gloucestershire*, Vol. VI, p. 151

¹⁵⁹ For most of the nineteenth century, the inhabitants of Stow were obliged to fetch their water from a well.

Bartlett, *Nineteenth Century Stow*, *op. cit.*, p.7

¹⁶⁰ *ibid.*, p. 60

church and at one point the townspeople hung their Rector's effigy¹⁶¹ but the potential for damage was apparently mitigated to some degree:

During the last years of Mr Hippisley's rectorate, the work of the parish was undertaken by his curate, the Rev. E. Lyon Harrison, and it was particularly gratifying to see how the Church workers rallied round him and the influence of the church was revived.¹⁶²

There was little argument that class barriers permeated all levels of society, not exempting the Church. As has been noted, Archdeacon Sheringham proposed that these divisions should be utilised to the advantage of all with the upper classes exerting a wholesome influence on their inferiors. Others appeared less content to accept the situation. In Arthur Gibbs' opinion, at the end of the nineteenth century, "even in these democratic days there is too great a gulf fixed between all classes."¹⁶³ The reviewer for the Diocesan Magazine of William Temple's *The Challenge to the Church, Being an Account of the National Mission 1916 and Thoughts Suggested By It* opined that "the Bishop in his diocese and the parson in his parish stand for the feudal rather than the democratic ideal."¹⁶⁴

Others feared that the lower classes were becoming hostile or indifferent not only to the Church but to Christianity in any form. In 1891, the Vicar of Thornbury drew the attention of the Diocesan Conference to

the simple fact that around our restored Churches and within earshot of our revived services, the farm-labourers, the mill-hands and artisans are living impartially hostile or impartially indifferent to Church and Chapel alike; the terrible leakage by which the scholars in our Sunday Schools, the members

¹⁶¹ *Victoria County History*, Vol. vi., *op. cit.*, p. 151

¹⁶² Bartlett, *Nineteenth Century Stow*, *op. cit.*, p. 34

¹⁶³ Gibbs, *A Cotswold Village*, *op. cit.*, p. 34

¹⁶⁴ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1917, p. 147

of our Confirmation and Bible Classes pass continually on to swell the ranks of the indifferent and profane, if not of the openly wicked. ¹⁶⁵

And, like Bishop Ellicott, some clerical minds saw a close association between religious indifference and criminal behaviour among the labouring classes. When John Evans, the newly-appointed Rector of Stow in succession to Robert Hippisley, praised the magistrates in 1901 for convicting two Sunday poachers, it seemed to be the desecration of the day rather than the offence which caused him the most anger: "It is shameful that any amongst us should be permitted with impunity to violate the sanctity of the Lord's Day in this manner." Similarly, he regarded a group of Sunday idlers in the town more as potential criminals than as souls needing to be attracted into his church. He had noted

in our midst a small coterie of men and youths who habitually loiter about the roads and fields on Sundays. The Police Court may prove a salutary means of putting a stop to this practice which brings discredit upon every Christian man and woman in the parish."

Mr Evans would not stop at involving the legal system; he thought that poachers and others guilty of "the many glaring vices amongst us" should be tried by Church opinion, as prescribed in the Gospels (Matt.xviii.17-18). If the offender persisted in his vice, "Treat him as an outsider, an alien — ostracise him — have no dealings whatever with him. If we were but men enough to do that, what a change, what a revolution there would be among all classes of society!" ¹⁶⁶

The Case Studies which follow are intended to show the effect of the class divisions of society on the Church's witness. The one from Wyck Rissington, a Cotswold village, illustrates the influence of a local squire on the religious life of the inhabitants.

¹⁶⁵ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1892, p. 161

¹⁶⁶ *Stow Parish Magazine*, October, 1901

The other, from central Cheltenham, recounts a blatant attempt to divide a parish according to social class. It is not contended that either is wholly representative of Church life of the period; rather that they show how difficult it was for Christian leaders and parishioners to escape the restraints (of which they were frequently unconscious) imposed on them by their respective places in society.

Study 1: Wyck Rissington

Wyck Rissington is a small village south of Stow on the Wold. Census returns from 1851 to 1921 inclusive showed only minor variations in the size of its population, from a minimum of 168 in 1871 to a maximum of 226 in 1891. In many respects, the focal point of the village was not so much the church but Wick Hill House, “much the largest house in the parish, and one of much social consequence in the parish and in a wider area.”¹⁶⁷

In 1905, W.F. de Vismes Kane wrote an account of life in the village in the 1850s when he had been a private pupil of the then Rector. He recalled a social scale in which “the Squire was a great potentate, generous and easily approachable. The Parson came next in authority, and also in his vocation, executed in gentleness and courtesy, an autocrat.” At a typical Sunday service, the villagers would await the arrival at the church door of the Squire and his lady and follow them into the church. A block of seats would have been allocated to the Squire’s household and the great man would keep a close eye on the behaviour of his servants during the service and attract attention to any offender “by coughing loudly.” At the end of the service, the congregation would respectfully wait

¹⁶⁷ *Victoria County History of Gloucestershire* Vol. vi. *op. cit.*, p. 115. The village was variously described as ‘Wick’ or ‘Wyck’ during the period and some believed that its second name should more properly be

for the Squire and his wife to leave and then see them off the church premises.¹⁶⁸ It is difficult to be sure how far the situation at Wyck Rissington was replicated in small villages at that time but it seems possible that it was not wholly untypical.¹⁶⁹

In 1875, ownership of Wick Hill House was acquired by one Paul Butler who died shortly after moving there. His widow, who died in 1913 at the age of 93, spent much on restoring the village church in memory of her husband¹⁷⁰ and there are indications that her family remained at the House for a few years after her death.¹⁷¹ As the estate owners and main employers the family had a marked influence, both religious and secular, on village life.¹⁷²

The family's influence on the religious life of Wyck Rissington continued to be significant up to the eve of the First World War, as is illustrated by a curious episode in 1914. In the February of that year, a ten day Diocesan Mission, held in the village, was deemed to have been a great success. The Rector reported with great satisfaction that out of a total village population of 206, the average attendance at the daily evening services

Risington, from the Anglo-Saxon for "rushy down." *Stow Deanery Magazine*, July 1914. At times, it was known as Rissington Wyck.

¹⁶⁸ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, June, 1905

¹⁶⁹ The description of the Sunday churchyard ritual with the Squire monitoring the conduct of the congregation is mirrored almost exactly by Joseph Addison's description in 1711 of his fictitious squire Sir Roger de Coverley at church, suggesting that either the scene was not confined to a particular period or location or possibly that Mr Kane's recollection had been influenced by Addison. *The Spectator*, No. 112, July 9, 1711. London, Dent and Sons, 1907, Vol I, p. 340. The comparisons between Addison's and Kane's descriptions are too numerous to be listed.

¹⁷⁰ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, January, 1914

¹⁷¹ The Colonel Butler who paid off a Church deficit in 1916 and left the area with his family later that year was presumably Mrs Butler's son. (*Stow Deanery Magazine*, June, Sept. 1916). In September, 1915, "the whole village" of Wyck Rissington was reported to have turned out for the homecoming of Capt. J.P.F. Butler, (presumably the Colonel's son), who had been awarded the V.C. "for conspicuous gallantry" in the Cameroons. *Stow Deanery Magazine*, Sept., Oct., 1915

¹⁷² In 1906, for example, the Annual Parish Meeting responded with alacrity to a complaint from Colonel F. Butler about rubbish being deposited on the village green, *Stow Deanery Magazine*, May, 1906 and there were at least two occasions when members of the family at Wick House paid off shortfalls in the parish church's annual accounts. *Stow Deanery Magazine*, June, 1908, June, 1916.

was 81, proof in his view that it was worthwhile conducting a Mission in even so small a village. Attendances on Good Friday were “above average” but at Easter they were poor and on Ascension Day. they were “lamentably small”¹⁷³ The Rector understood perfectly the reason for the sudden decline as from Easter Day. It was, he explained, “owing to the absence of the family at Wick Hill.”¹⁷⁴

2: Cheltenham Parish Church

By the middle of the nineteenth century it had become evident that St Mary’s, the medieval parish church of Cheltenham, with accommodation for 600 worshippers, was no longer large enough to cope with the congregations which gathered there, partly as a consequence of the growth of the town and the successful ministry of the Revd. Francis Close.¹⁷⁵ Accordingly, plans were set in motion to build a modern, larger church in the town centre and the foundation stone of St Matthew’s, within easy walking distance of St. Mary’s, was laid in 1877.

Within a short time of its coming into use, criticisms began to be voiced over the decision of the then Rector, Canon Charles Bell, to send a curate to serve St Mary’s while he ministered to the congregation at the new church. Bell’s explanation for this practice was that he did not feel “justified in leaving a larger congregation of 1,400 for a church holding 600.”¹⁷⁶ Moreover, he proposed to separate the two churches into discrete parishes. The new St Matthew’s would become the mother church of the town and absorb all the historic endowments and emoluments formerly bestowed on St Mary’s and the

¹⁷³ 50 communicants out of a Communicants’ Roll of 96 made their communions at Easter; the Ascension Day totals are not available. *Diocesan Statistics, op. cit.*, 1913-14

¹⁷⁴ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, May, June, 1914

¹⁷⁵ Rector of Cheltenham 1826 to 1856 and subsequently Dean of Carlisle.

latter would be formed into a new parish with 300 free seats and an endowment of £200. An application to support the new parish financially would be made to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

Whatever were Canon Bell's motives for this proposal, it was clear to local observers that the proposed parish of St Mary's would be "chiefly of the trading and poorer classes" while St Matthew's would obviously be catering for the more wealthy population of the town. 1,000 appropriated seats would be available there but only 400 free seats had been provided, "all remote from the clergy."¹⁷⁷ It was thus not difficult for the plan to be depicted as an example of the Church of England courting the wealthy and giving lesser attention to the poor. As the *Cheltenham Examiner* informed its readers:

... when the Rector of Cheltenham has accumulated upon himself all the emoluments and all the advantages of the two churches of St Mary and St Matthew, together with all the responsibilities — pecuniary, pastoral and administrative — of the two churches, and of the parochial district of 8,500 persons, in which he alone has the cure of souls, he will then proceed to divest himself of one half of the responsibilities, while retaining the whole of the advantage. After that has been done, he will appeal to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to compensate old St Mary's by a grant, of less than one half its own rightful possessions — and that, too, a grant to be drawn from the national trust fund, set apart for the spiritual good of the poor and destitute and unendowed or partially unendowed parishes.

In the newspaper's opinion, the whole proposition was based on a false premise,

that the Rector of an ecclesiastical parish, charged with the cure of souls within the parish, may devote his energies to gather about him a congregation of personal followers from every quarter, and, having done so, may use this fact as a plea for neglecting and treating as insignificant the church and people whom he had formerly undertaken to serve.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ *Cheltenham Examiner*, June 4, 1879

¹⁷⁷ *ibid.*, June 11, 1879

¹⁷⁸ *ibid.*, July 2, 1879

Antagonism to the plan quickly arose, as did champions of the ancient church of St Mary's which was considered to be in danger of "degradation" and "spoliation." The Parish Church Committee voted unanimously to oppose Canon Bell's plan and mustered a petition of 1,082 parishioners against it. In addition, the 'Free and Open Church' movement announced that it would be carefully monitoring developments in this project which appeared to be fundamentally opposed to all its principles. *The Examiner*, which had a reputation for radicalism, delighted in the Rector's discomfort: "Clergymen, as a rule, accustomed to the immunity of the pulpit, do not like stepping down into the arena and relish not the handling to which others of us are accustomed."¹⁷⁹

In the face of such opposition, the Rector decided to suspend the project until public opinion proved to be more amenable. Unfortunately, however, relations in the town between the church and the public were damaged and suspicions about the Rector's good faith were difficult to dispel. In anticipation of a future revival of the idea, one Alderman W.N. Skillicorne wrote to the Bishop asking him to refuse his consent if the proposal re-surfaced at some future date.¹⁸⁰ Later that year, when the Revd. Jonathan Seaver, the curate who had been serving St Mary's, resigned his position, *The Examiner* immediately concluded that the resignation was a consequence of the Rector having alienated the St Mary's congregation and sought to compare Charles Bell's pastoral manner unfavourably with that of his curate.¹⁸¹ Seaver's later explanation that he had no quarrel with the Rector, that his resignation had been prompted by an inadequate stipend

¹⁷⁹ *ibid.*, June 18, 1879

¹⁸⁰ *ibid.*, August 6, 1879

¹⁸¹ *ibid.*, December 24, 1879

and that, since that problem had been rectified, he had withdrawn his resignation, must have come as a big disappointment to the newspaper's Editor.¹⁸²

Parson and Squire seemed to work together harmoniously at Wyck Rissington but such a liaison to the benefit of the Established Church could not always be assumed. As Arthur Heber Browne, the former Vicar of Northleach, told the Diocesan Conference in 1894, in the Cotswold parishes of the time, "there might be no squire, or he might be either bellicose, patronising or indifferent."¹⁸³ In a country parish, it could literally pay the incumbent to be on friendly terms with the squire. In 1915, the Vicar of All Saints', Cheltenham received £106 in Easter Offerings from his congregation;¹⁸⁴ at the same time, gifts to his colleague at Temple Guiting totalled £11 17s 5d, £1 17s 5d in coins and two five pound notes, suggesting only two or possibly even one major individual benefactors.¹⁸⁵

Changing Attitudes

Up to the end of the nineteenth century, it would not be unreasonable to state that the most influential laymen in Church life in Gloucestershire were those from the upper levels of society. But attitudes were changing, even if slowly. Some politicians had come to realise that the Reform Acts of 1884 and 1885, which extended the franchise to workers in the countryside, would change forever the political landscape. As Joseph Chamberlain acknowledged, Socialism was "not a stigma, but a modern tendency,

¹⁸² The churches of St. Mary and St. Matthew are now part of a team ministry in the centre of the town, and there is current controversy over a plan to close St. Mary's.

¹⁸³ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1895, p. 185

¹⁸⁴ *All Saints' Cheltenham Parish Meeting*, April 7, 1915

¹⁸⁵ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, May 1915. The gift at All Saints' was exceptionally large; many incumbents did not receive a penny through the Easter Offering.

pressing for recognition” and “the path of legislative progress in England has been for years, and must continue to be, distinctly Socialistic.”¹⁸⁶

More perceptive Churchmen realised the implications of these political changes for the life of society and the Church. The Revd. James Tetley reminded the Diocesan Conference in 1888 that, “from the very nature of the case, the immense majority of the faithful are the laity”¹⁸⁷ and that “the main body of the Church, the lay-folk of England, hold her future in their hands.”¹⁸⁸ There were implications, he thought, for the future government of the Church: “The diocese, the Church at large, needs their regular attendance at Rural Decanal Conferences, their intelligent interest, their sustained active part in the business from time to time laid before them.”¹⁸⁹ Even more radically, he urged that the invitation to share in the government of the Church should be extended to the working classes, not as a favour to them, but because they could make a positive contribution:

Nor, my lord, let us commit the fatal blunder of ignoring the peasantry and artisan class in laying the foundations firm and deep of a really representative system. There is a masculine Christianity among the working men which oftentimes puts to shame the polite indifferentism of a more leisured section. Enlist the energy, evoke the strong affection, attach the loyalty, of these men.¹⁹⁰

Mr Tetley’s address was the precursor to a Conference decision to investigate whether lay representation in the conduct of Church affairs in the diocese could be extended. But it was to be over 20 years later before serious attempts were made in Gloucestershire to implement these ideas. By that time, the whole issue of self-

¹⁸⁶ Cole and Postgate: *The Common People, 1746-1946, op. cit.*, p. 411]

¹⁸⁷ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1889, p. 159

¹⁸⁸ *ibid.*, p. 164

¹⁸⁹ *ibid.*, p. 163

government for the Church ¹⁹¹ had been taken up at a national level. But if Roger Lloyd is correct in stating that the impetus behind the activity which led to the Enabling Act of 1919 ¹⁹² had its genesis in Charles Gore's 1899 book *Essays on Church Reform*, ¹⁹³ then Mr. Tetley's address to the Gloucester Diocesan Conference of 1889 and the reaction to it shows that the Gloucester diocese contained at least some very advanced thinkers.

At the Diocesan Conference of 1909, Mr Gardner Bazley of Hatherop Castle, Fairford moved a motion, which was carried unanimously, "that in the opinion of this Conference the laity should be encouraged to take a more active part than at present in the work of the Church." ¹⁹⁴ It is noteworthy that the mood of that Conference was generally much in favour of greater lay involvement in Church life. Archdeacon Hayward, (ordained in 1856) was certainly sceptical about the value of Parochial Church Councils [P.C.Cs], holding that where parish life was going well they were unnecessary and where there were difficulties, they would inflame them, ¹⁹⁵ but the Rector of Leckhampton, Canon Henry Proctor, (ordained 1875). representing a later generation, expressed the general mood of the meeting in stating that the present system of church councils was not utilising lay power as it ought:

It gave to the individual faithful lay communicants of the parishes very little interest in the concerns of the Church as a whole. It did very little to increase their knowledge of the work of the Church generally and, above all, it was not calculated to arouse any sense of responsibility for the welfare of the whole Church. ¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 163

¹⁹¹ i.e. minimising the involvement of Parliament in Church legislation

¹⁹² Full title : The Church of England Assembly (Powers) Act, 1919 which created the Church Assembly and gave it power to prepare ecclesiastical measures and present them to Parliament and prescribed the qualification for membership of Parochial Church Councils.

¹⁹³ Lloyd, R., *The Church of England, 1900-1965*, London, S.C.M. Press, 1966, p. 233

¹⁹⁴ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar* 1910, p. 247

¹⁹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 251

¹⁹⁶ *ibid.*, p.253

Mr Gardner Bazley's motion was then carried unanimously and a committee was appointed to investigate the broad question of lay ministry.

The result of its deliberations emerged at the Conference of 1913 when the Bishop proposed major changes to the composition of the Conference. Every parish in the diocese was to be represented and the Conference would increase in size from 180 to 900 (400 clergy and 500 lay).¹⁹⁷ That the reconstituted Conference was to invite working class participation was clearly indicated by Mr Jack Dearman Birchall who advocated that a sum be set aside for the expenses incurred for attendance at the Conference by working men. Their exclusion from its deliberations would be (and by implication had been in the past) to the detriment of the Conference's work:

At present, the Conference had a limited outlook, which was a grievous handicap in their discussions. All the present members spoke at second hand with reference to weekly wage-earners. The Conference would be stronger and would carry more weight if there was a distinct representation of labour.¹⁹⁸

The outbreak of War in 1914 meant that plans had to be suspended but the experience of many service chaplains during that conflict served to reinforce the message that the time was ripe for the Church to try to seek some *rapprochement* with the common man. A Naval Chaplain wrote to the *Church Times* in 1916 that "an ordinary Anglican religion" was ineffective; "it doesn't save souls in any volume." Presumably, he did not have the Gloucester diocese particularly in mind but his letter so impressed the Vicar of Tewkesbury that the latter reproduced it in full in his Parish magazine. One

¹⁹⁷ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1914, p. 282

¹⁹⁸ *ibid.*.

section of the letter could certainly be applied to the Gloucester diocese of the past half-century:

And the surprising, terrifying thing is that dignified clergy do not know this. They are hypnotised in the cathedral by the little bodies of educated and rather ecclesiastical laity. They simply do not know the masses and their utter, complete dissociation from and ignorance of, vital religion. ¹⁹⁹

But it is to the credit of Gloucester diocese that having recognised the existence of the problem, it determined to do something about it. When the issue was again taken up in 1919, Jack Dearman Birchall, obviously speaking with the approval of the diocesan hierarchy, offered membership of the Conference not only to the working men but to women as well. In that interval enforced by the War, women over 30 had won the Parliamentary franchise and, as he explained:

When women had the right to sit in the House of Commons, a right which had not been generally used at present, but no doubt would be, (*laughter*) it would be a retrograde step if that Conference were to say that they were not going to allow women to be members of that body. ²⁰⁰

But his main object was the now familiar one:

They wanted to increase the number of men and women who could take their proper share in the work of the Church. Hitherto, it had been confined to the well-to-do, all others being prevented from doing what they might have been doing for the Church. They wanted to put an end to that, and they could only do so by giving men and women the right to claim that any out-of-pocket expenses which might have been incurred should be refunded to them. ²⁰¹

The initiative was not without its critics. There were those who foresaw practical difficulties, such as whether the expanded Conference would be too large to be effective

¹⁹⁹ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, February, 1916

and whether suitable lay people could be found in the country districts for such work.²⁰² In 1920, however the Gloucester Diocesan Conference began to operate under its new Constitution with 378 clerical and 545 lay members, the latter including over 100 women.²⁰³

The composition and effectiveness of the revised Conference are outside the scope of this study but two points may be noted concerning its early meetings. After the first session in 1920, even the official record tacitly admitted that there was some substance in the previously expressed misgiving that it would be too large to be fully effective:

It could not be a Conference in any proper sense of the word, for in the first few hours of its three sittings, the larger part of the time was necessarily given to selected speakers and the obligation laid upon the vast majority was to give a tacit and silent acquiescence to the proceedings.

Nevertheless, on the positive side,

... the meetings were unquestionably inspiring and Churchmen should carry back to their parishes a very much broader conception of the Church, its work and its claim than was possible under the old system which left many parishes without a thorough consciousness of their essential participation in the wider life of the Church.²⁰⁴

Although it is beyond the parameters of this study, the response of the newly-constituted Conference to the first real test of its collective mind in 1924 when it was invited to vote on various topics connected with Prayer Book Revision forms a kind of epilogue to this chapter. The results, at Appendix B, show broad agreement between lay

²⁰⁰ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1920, p. 136

²⁰¹ *ibid.*, p.137

²⁰² *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1920, pp.. 137, 138

and clerical members on such matters as modernisation of the liturgy and some of the more contentious issues surrounding the Eucharist.

²⁰³ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1921, p. 153; 1922, p.142

²⁰⁴ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1921, p. 142

APPENDIX A

THE BISHOPS' NOMINEES TO THE DIOCESAN CONFERENCE

A 'Principal Seat,' *Kelly's Directory* description of the more important houses in the county, is denoted by *.

Bishop Ellicott's Nominees, 1900 ²⁰⁵
--

Earl Bathurst, J.P., Cirencester House, Cirencester, *
 Sir Michael Hicks Beach, J.P., Williamstrip Park, Coln St Aldwyn, Fairford, *
 F. Hannam Clark, Brookfield, Hucclecote
 A.J. Morton Ball, The Green, Stroud.
 Wilfred J. Cripps, J.P., F.S.A., The Walnut Tree, Cirencester
 F.A. Hyett. J.P., Painswick House, Painswick *
 Russell J. Kerr, J.P., The Haie, Newnham *
 F.K. Seymour Metford, The Manor, Whaddon
 E.H. Percival, J.P., Kimsbury House, Upton St Leonards *
 T. Trewen Vizard, Ferney Hill, Dursley *
 Wilfred S. de Winton, 4, Palace Yard, Gloucester
 M.W. Colchester Wemyss, J.P. The Court, Westbury on Severn *

Bishop Gibson's Nominees 1906 ²⁰⁶

Earl Bathurst, J.P., Cirencester House, Cirencester, . *
 Earl of Harrowby, Norton House, Campden *
 Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Bart., J.P., M.P., Manor House, Coln St Aldwyn, Fairford, *
 Sir Thomas H. Crawley-Boevey, Bart., J.P. Flaxley House, Newnham, *
 Sir G. Jenkinson, Bart., J.P., Eastwood, Falfield *
 G.E. Lloyd Baker, Hardwicke Court, Gloucester *
 Gardner S. Bazley, J.P., Hatherop Castle, Fairford *
 H. Dent Brocklehurst, J.P., Sudeley Castle, Winchcombe *
 F. Hannam Clark, Brookfield, Hucclecote
 F.A. Hyett. J.P., Painswick House, Painswick *
 Russell J. Kerr, J.P., The Haie, Newnham *
 M.W. Colchester Wemyss, J.P. The Court, Westbury on Severn *

²⁰⁵ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1900

²⁰⁶ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1906

APPENDIX B

1: Prayer Book Revision: Gloucester Diocese Response

The columns headed Clergy ? and Laity ? indicate where the voter was uncertain or gave a qualified answer.

Clergy yes	Clergy no	Clergy ?	Laity yes	Laity no	Laity ?
<i>A. Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer: Are you in favour of permitting alternative prayers and additions designed to make the services more easily intelligible to the mass of the people and more closely related to the needs and aspirations of our time?</i>					
172	2	2	198	26	1
<i>B1. Holy Communion: Are you in favour of permitting any alternative forms of Holy Communion service?</i>					
48	125	2	33	177	1
<i>B2. Holy Communion: Are you in favour of postponing all consideration of the revision of this service?</i>					
92	71	3	117	33	1
<i>B3. Holy Communion: Are you in favour of permitting the use of 'Vestments' ?</i>					
139	30	2	126	76	4
<i>C1. Reservation: Are you in favour of permitting Reservation for the purposes of Communion?</i>					
136	38	2	147	74	7
<i>C2. Are you in favour of permitting Reservation for any other purposes?</i>					
24	127	2	40	173	1
<i>D. Prayers for the departed: Are you in favour of such prayers being authorised?</i>					
157	16	1	171	46	-
<i>E. Occasional Offices: Are you in favour of permitting alternative forms more intelligible to the mass of the people, especially such as have little or no training in the traditional language of Christian devotion?</i>					
157	13	2	179	35	1

For comparison purposes, the diocese published voting figures for the Manchester

Diocese as follows:

2: Prayer Book Revision: Manchester Diocese Response

Clergy yes	Clergy no	Clergy ?	Laity yes	Laity no	Laity ?
<i>A. Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer: Are you in favour of permitting alternative prayers and additions designed to make the services more easily intelligible to the mass of the people and more closely related to the needs and aspirations of our time?</i>					
139	19	16	191	187	8
<i>B1. Holy Communion: Are you in favour of permitting any alternative forms of Holy Communion service?</i>					
94	64	6	120	253	17
<i>B2. Holy Communion: Are you in favour of postponing all consideration of the revision of this service?</i>					
34	109	6	77	269	13
<i>B3. Holy Communion: Are you in favour of permitting the use of 'Vestments' ?</i>					
101	56	6	131	238	18
<i>C1. Reservation: Are you in favour of permitting Reservation for the purposes of Communion?</i>					
81	71	6	117	254	20
<i>C2. Are you in favour of permitting Reservation for any other purposes?</i>					
6	135	2	29	319	24
<i>D. Prayers for the departed: Are you in favour of such prayers being authorised?</i>					
108	40	8	146	205	18
<i>E. Occasional Offices: Are you in favour of permitting alternative forms more intelligible to the mass of the people, especially such as have little or no training in the traditional language of Christian devotion?</i>					
109	15	13	186	116	9

²⁰⁷ Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar, 1925, p. 78

Chapter 5

**A Woman's Place:
In Society and the Church**

The Implications of Scripture

Regardless of wealth, attainments, social status or intellectual ability, women were excluded from any public position of control or decision-making in the life of the Church of England for most of this period. Except when dealing with children, they were also excluded from formal teaching or preaching. Brian Heeney¹ has identified many of the characteristics of this situation and has rightly drawn attention to its origins in the Bible itself, notably the Book of *Genesis* and St. Paul's *Epistles*. To a large extent, the national situation was reflected in the Gloucester diocese although towards the end of the period there were indications that women there were being given a more significant role in the life of the Church.

The Missionary Women

The agitation by women to claim social and political rights in the late Victorian and early Edwardian periods forced churchmen to consider what their response ought to be. Many started with the conviction that, in the context of world religions and cultures, the spread of Christianity had already enhanced the status of women. Addressing a meeting of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (S.P.G.) at Upper Slaughter in September, 1908, the Revd. Armstrong Buck, a former missionary in Ceylon and India, laid stress on "the great benefit and advance of the status of women in those countries where Christianity was taught."² Bishop Frodsham, formerly Bishop of the then missionary diocese of North Queensland, and later an Assistant Bishop at Gloucester, went even further. He told the 1914 Festival of the Gloucester Diocesan Board of Missions that Christian Missions had won two great "victories for Christ." Alongside

¹ Heeney, Brian, *The Women's Movement in the Church of England, 1850-1930*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, , 1988

“the practical destruction throughout the world of the threat of evil spirits and of the curse” could be placed

The general improvement in the position of women ... Among the wild Aborigines in Australia it is abject in the extreme. The ceremonial treatment of girls on the verge of womanhood is so ghastly that few have dared to describe it and were there no other reason for supporting Missionary enterprise, an adequate one would be found in the position of women. ³

Women were an important and sometimes an essential component in foreign missionary work. As Heeney has pointed out, ⁴ early in the twentieth century, it was recognised that because of ‘purdah’, ⁵ only female missionaries would have the opportunity of preaching the Gospel to native women. Preaching at Gloucester Cathedral in June, 1908, the Archbishop of Brisbane appealed for young men *and women* to respond “in the day of their strength” to the call to serve God as missionaries, ⁶ A month later, Canon Brown, the Superior of the Oxford Mission to Calcutta, informed a Minsterworth gathering that his community comprised eleven clergy, four laymen and eleven sisters who were “giving their lives to the glory of God and the work of the Mission.” ⁷

However, an earlier generation of Churchmen had considered it impious to admit that women held any position of equality with men since it was obvious from Scripture that women were intended to be in a subordinate position. Brian Heeney has quoted Bishop Christopher Wordsworth of Lincoln (1869-85) castigating those who encouraged women to claim “an independent position and one in all respects of equality to that of

² *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1908, p. 200

³ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1914, p. 122

⁴ Heeney, *The Women's Movement in the Church of England, 1850-1930*, *op. cit.*, p.60

⁵ The practice in Muslim and some Hindu countries whereby women were secluded from public observation.

⁶ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1908, p.118. My italics.

man.” In an obvious reference to the account of the creation of Adam and Eve in the Book of Genesis, the bishop maintained that woman’s “existence was not only subsequent to that of man, but was derived from it.” It therefore followed that “anything that disturbs that subordination weakens her authority and mars her dignity and beauty. Her true strength is in loyal submission.”⁸ Bishop Ellicott shared this attitude. He told his Diocesan Conference of 1895 that “the Scriptural view of woman undoubtedly was that she should be a helpmate to man but *distinctly in a position of tempered subordination* and that this relation was being seriously endangered by modern conditions of life and education.”⁹

Women, Marriage and the Home

Such views were not confined to the Church hierarchy but could also be found among the junior clergy and among some women themselves. Marianne Farningham was a prolific writer of advice to women on matters of faith and conduct and, given the wide circulation of her work, was presumably very influential in those fields.¹⁰ In 1878 she addressed a meeting¹¹ in Cheltenham on the topic, ‘The Woman of Today’ which could certainly be construed as reinforcing the concept of female subordination. The modern woman, her listeners were told, should have a serious approach to life, be busy and strive

⁷ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1908, p. 166

⁸ Heeney, *The Women's Movement in the Church of England, 1850-1930*, *op. cit.* p. 7. It was not made clear to whom women should submit, God or the male sex.

⁹ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1896 p.183. My italics.

¹⁰ Marianne Farningham was the pseudonym of Mary Anne Hearn, (1834-1910) who relinquished a teaching career in order to devote herself to writing. She was initially a contributor to *Christian World* and later became editor of the *Sunday School Times*. She was a keen supporter of Christian education and much in demand as a speaker at Nonconformist meetings. Although her family were Calvinist Baptists and her usual milieu was Nonconformity, it is likely that Anglicans were numbered among her readers and listeners. She published nearly 40 volumes of advice, hymns and poems and her work *Girlhood* ran to five editions and 25,000 copies. Although today she is a largely forgotten figure, her contemporaries considered her significant enough to merit an entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. (D.N.B. 1901-11, p. 233)

¹¹ Attended by “a considerable number of men” according to the report. *Cheltenham Examiner*, February, 13, 1878

for attainments. "It had come to be understood that frivolity, idleness and self-indulgence were unworthy of modern womanhood and that a diligent devotion to attainments was to be eagerly inculcated and practised."¹² Regrettably, she commented, some young women "went to extremes" and, as a result, "modesty, submission and obedience to God" with some were not "regarded so much as they ought to be, or were formerly."

Women fulfilled their destiny most clearly in service, particularly "in the cause of temperance and nursing the sick, which seemed to be the most womanly and Christ-like occupations in which they could engage." Miss Farningham was aware that not all women were motivated by high ideals but, even at a lower level, service to others should be the guiding principle. Poor girls could enter domestic service and those from "the class which had known better days" could become ladies' helps.¹³

As Miss Farningham had noted, suitable paid employment in this country for more educated women was limited. The profession of governesses, a fairly natural outlet, was over-subscribed and poorly paid. But for ladies of presumably some independent means "suitable" employment could be found as members of School Boards, District Visitors and Sunday School teachers. Her concluding remarks seemed to suggest that all of these activities could be considered as a form of apprenticeship for the ultimate goal of marriage, an institution for which women were apparently selected according to merit:

¹² *Cheltenham Examiner*, February 13, 1878

¹³ There is evidence that, some thirty years later, this latter function continued to be an outlet for certain young women. A notice in the *Stow Deanery Magazine* for June, 1905 announced that a "Reverend Lord Dawson of Bradford" had "openings" for fifty young ladies as "Lady-helpers" in Canada at a salary of about £25 per annum. Their duties would comprise "cooking, baking, washing and the care of children." The notice expressed the belief that "many educated, cultured and domesticated ladies" would welcome this opportunity of finding in the Empire employment opportunities which were limited in England. Presumably, free board and lodgings would be additional to the salary, although this was not specified.

... having remarked upon women in their several relations as daughters, sisters, wives, mothers and grandmothers, she pointed out some of the characteristics and qualifications of good women, suggesting as *most worthy to be chosen as wives* those who were active and attentive in the discharge of home duties, and kind to their parents. Women should be noticeable for sweetness of temper and kindness of speech. ¹⁴

Despite such idealised conceptions of the role of women in society, however, Miss Farningham was realistic enough to acknowledge that there was a shortage of domestic servants because poorer girls were becoming less inclined to enter domestic service when factory work offered them better pay, some independence and the advantages of living at home.

The trend towards female independence was a development which perturbed a number of clergy, such as the Revd. Arthur Goodrick, Vicar of Winterbourne, near Bristol who led a discussion on 'The Relative Position of Men and Women' at the Diocesan Conference of 1895. Mr Goodrick was probably a comparatively young man at the time ¹⁵ and therefore an unlikely representative of early Victorian views. Nevertheless, his concept of women was idealistic: "no brighter, purer or better example of God's creation walked on earth" than "English womanhood" was his claim.¹⁶ and he spent most of his address in lamenting the fact that many women were failing to attain the level which he had set for them. In essence, he saw the desire of women for independence as the root cause of unwelcome shifts in the balance of society. These changes were all evident in developments in employment, legislation, education and leisure activities. He deplored "the spirit of free agency which makes women of the lower classes take to even

¹⁴ *Cheltenham Examiner*, February 13, 1878. My italics.

¹⁵ Although his exact age then is not known, he took his first degree in 1879 and was ordained in 1881. Assuming that these two events occurred in his early twenties, he is thus likely to have been in his late thirties or early forties.

the roughest and most degrading employment so that it procured them immunity from the obscure self-sacrifice of household duty.”¹⁷ Those who worked in the Bristol area, he said, could “sorrowfully” testify to the fact that

In some places the sewing had well-nigh driven out cleanliness, comfort and care and had far gone to produce an unlovely variety of the New Woman, undreamt of by the hierophants of the new principles in exalted society. The labourer's wife would deliberately refuse to nurse her own child and pay a stranger to look after it, while she was busy with her independent wage-earning, and would even shirk the necessary cleansing of her husband's clothing, soiled from the coalpit or the quarry.

and (echoing Miss Farningham) he noted that girls were refusing to go to domestic service, “for the ‘sewing work’, they say, gave them so much more liberty.”¹⁸

He also had misgivings about legal developments which altered the relationship between the sexes. The “separation of interests in respect of property,” which to a modern mind seems like an act of natural justice, he considered a threat to the stability of the marriage bond.¹⁹

Mr Goodrick was also critical of the movement for equal education for men and women,²⁰ on the grounds that it would disrupt that delicate balance of “diversity of character, of aims and of modes of thought” between the sexes:

With identity of education would come, and had come indeed, competition. Where competition began, chivalry ended and with chivalry to women disappeared what had thus far been a saving characteristic of English

¹⁶ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1896, p. 182

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 179

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 179

¹⁹ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1896, p. 180

²⁰ In his words, “the assimilation of the education of the sexes.” The movement for the higher education of women would have had a particular resonance in the Gloucester diocese where Cheltenham housed the Ladies' College, established in 1854. By the time Mr Goodrick addressed the Conference, women's colleges had been founded at Oxford and Cambridge and they had been permitted to attend lectures and to take degrees there, although they had not been granted the status of members of the University.

manhood. As a necessary corollary to the question of education, they had that of amusement and employment. The altered attitude of women towards these and their participation in pursuits and professions once considered the exclusive domain of men, were, of course, striking. ²¹

Although prepared to concede that some of the proponents of feminism were "pure and high-minded," he was more concerned with the harmful effect of their philosophy on their sisters of coarser character :

He would only be quoting the opinion of wise and good women if he asserted that much of the recent deplorable change in manners, the laxity of conversation, the levity of conduct, above all, the appalling toleration of language ambiguous or worse, was due to the desperate desire to secure admiration or its ulterior advantages. ²²

In his view, such developments had religious as well as social consequences. "Such manners reacted upon the prospects of matrimony" and led to "a contempt, sometimes veiled, sometimes outspoken, for the God-sent union of man and woman, and for that same function of maternity which the incarnate Lord Himself had consecrated."

However,

it was the abnegation of the Christian idea of marriage as duty that had produced its logical result in the belief that the contract of marriage was a mere matter of inclination, and therefore its dissolution should be the same. Such was the real doctrine which underlay the theories of the so-called New Women on the subject. ²³

Mr Goodrick's views can readily be placed within the framework of female subordination expressed by Miss Farningham nearly twenty years earlier. ²⁴ It was in concluding this debate that Bishop Ellicott implicitly endorsed the received wisdom by

²¹ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1896, p.180

²² *ibid.*, p. 181

²³ *ibid.*, p. 182

²⁴ Mr Goodrick had not even graduated when Miss Farningham made her Cheltenham speech.

describing woman, as already quoted, as “a helpmate to man but distinctly in a position of tempered subordination.”²⁵ But if the Conference Report fully and accurately reflects the mood of the members, not all of Mr Goodrick’s fellow-clergy shared his distaste for modern trends in the education and employment of women. Even colleagues from the Bristol area, who presumably also had first hand experience of women in the city workforce, expressed their dissent. One saw “many advantages” in the “modern system of education, both physical and intellectual” and thought that, far from being dealt a mortal blow, chivalry in modern society seemed to be on the increase.²⁶ Another “spoke in defence of factory life”, especially where employers made efforts to improve the welfare of their workers²⁷ and a colleague also defended factory life “as a necessary and useful product of modern civilisation” and “felt strongly the necessity for advancing the education of women, in order that their homes might become more attractive and their husbands kept from the public house.”²⁸ The virtue of companionship between married couples was also mentioned by the Vicar of Dymock who regarded the education of women as leading to an increase of “comradeship” in married life. He “rejoiced to see the many ‘openings’ which now lay before unmarried women — literary work, clerkships, professorships (of cookery), district visiting etc.”²⁹

Where Mr Goodrick had foreseen threats and forebodings, Archdeacon John Sheringham of Gloucester saw opportunities and stated that

he could not look with disfavour on the increase of industrial and higher employment of women, for he thought that the more women found honest

²⁵ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1896, p. 183, “qualified” because the Bishop was not satisfied that the discussion had fully addressed the relationship between the sexes.

²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 182

²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 183

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 183

²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 183. It is presumed that the “professorship of cookery” which he mentioned was not intended to be facetious.

and honourable employment, the better it would be for society. Then, too, the more they were educated, the better it would be for the boys, because a spirit of healthy rivalry was thus created between boys and girls. The same applied to games and he would even like to see more political power entrusted to women. ³⁰

A similarly positive line was taken by the prominent layman Granville Lloyd Baker who stated that

Female independence was a good thing in itself and, economically, female labour was a great benefit to the State. Familiarity between the sexes was undoubtedly increased, but the probable result would be fewer unhappy marriages. The parties were able to gauge each other's characters better, and did not marry in a hurry. The increased taste for athletics was undoubtedly a good thing: stronger physique and healthier offspring would be the result. ³¹

Only one contribution from the floor could be assessed as giving some qualified support to Mr Goodrick's position. A Shirehampton incumbent feared that the "extensive employment of female labour" had had the practical effect of significantly "lowering the rate of wages" but even he admitted that "theoretically" it should be welcomed. ³² Despite the Bishop's rather dampening comments, the general mood of the Conference thus seemed to favour those modern developments which provided greater opportunities for women.

This is not to suggest that the earlier concept which assigned women to a position at the heart of domestic bliss had been completely eradicated. In 1909, addressing the Diocesan Conference on 'The Sanctification of Family Life', the Revd. Percy Nash, Vicar of St James', Cheltenham, took the view that contemporary moves to permit women to have a greater share in political life would "almost of necessity, involve the

³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 182

³¹ *ibid.*, p. 182. Mr Lloyd Baker was a Diocesan Trustee as well as a member of the Conference.

lowering of the great ideal that woman's sphere of work (save in some exceptional cases) lies in her home." ³³ In this context, the current fashion "for people to dine at restaurants and live largely in public" was an unwelcome trend because "it must mean a serious loss to the home life of many, especially as far as the children are concerned." In his view, women attained their highest destiny as wives and mothers

It is a commonplace to assert that the mother makes the home. It has been said that you can hardly have a "home" unless there is a woman in it worthy of the name. Woman finds her supreme opportunity and her life's work there. That instinct in her which is never satisfied until she has someone to devote her life to, is one of the most sacred things in her nature. Accordingly home and family life give her proper sphere of work for God, and supply her with the realm in which she can reign supreme. ³⁴

If it is assumed that Mr Nash was directing his remarks to married women and especially mothers only, the views expressed at the Diocesan Conferences of 1895 and 1909 can be reconciled. Women should have opportunities to express themselves in industrial and professional life but the highest purpose and the one for which they had been created was to be at the centre of a sanctified domestic circle.

This belief gave impetus to the Mothers' Union (M.U.) as a movement for training women to uphold the Christian ideal of marriage. After its foundation in 1876 this movement spread rapidly throughout the Anglican Communion. By 1910 about 90 Gloucestershire parishes had M.U. branches and about a thousand members gathered each year for their annual service in the Cathedral. ³⁵

³² *ibid.*, p. 183

³³ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1910, p.254. *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1909, p.208

³⁴ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1909, p. 208

³⁵ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1910, p. 27

Women in the Congregation

Without the involvement and enthusiasm of women supporters, the foreign missionary work of the Church would have been severely handicapped. In a speech to an S.P.G. meeting in Gloucester in 1907, Mr W.D. Hollis, a member of the York House of Laymen criticised the indifference towards missionary enterprises shown by most male laity:

They have looked upon their parochial Missionary Meeting as a mixture of a Temperance Meeting, Sewing Meeting and Mothers' Meeting which it was beneath their dignity to attend. They have allowed their wives and daughters to go whilst they have, perhaps, stayed at home or in their Club³⁶

In a similar vein, Colonel Jenkins from S.P.G. Head Office at another Gloucester meeting of the Society in 1911 "laid stress on the influence that women can have upon the men in their homes, and urged them to use that influence to spread enthusiasm for Foreign Missions among the men of the Church."³⁷ Probably unconsciously, but nevertheless revealing his prejudices, Mr Hollis in his address had warmed to his theme of encouraging greater lay involvement in missionary activity by virtually excluding women from consideration:

The Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men — not clergymen only, but *men*, and every layman when confirmed undertakes duties and responsibilities quite as binding upon him as those undertaken by the clergy when they are ordained, to help forward in every way the Church's work.³⁸

Nevertheless, there are occasional hints in the available evidence throughout the period that younger women in particular often failed to conform to the models of piety to

³⁶ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1907, p. 219

³⁷ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1911, p. 40

³⁸ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1907, p. 219. The italics are in the original report. It is possible, of course, that the speaker was using men as a synonym for mankind, but since he had begun his talk by

which they were required to aspire. The "sanctification" of home life was a laudable attainment except when it was used as an excuse for avoiding religious obligations. In the Cotswold village of Icomb in 1904, the Vicar noted the absence of members of the Women's Help Society from the Christmas services and was not impressed by the explanations offered: "Babies are an excellent reason for non-attendance, but there are not babies everywhere and the absence of some of our friends is at present a mystery, Will they think the matter over and see if they can explain it to themselves?"³⁹ On occasions, too, there were complaints about the behaviour of young female worshippers. At All Saints', Cheltenham in 1902 objections were raised at the Annual Church Meeting that they were creating disturbances before the Sunday evening service.⁴⁰ Even more regrettable behaviour was noted on Sunday evenings at Tewkesbury Abbey at the beginning of the century where there were complaints for a number of years⁴¹ about the practice of young people, including girls "over 12", to leave the church before the sermon.⁴² Another instance comes from Painswick in 1894 where the clergy resisted

drawing a clear distinction between women, who supported Missions, and men who did not, he was at least careless about his language.

³⁹ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, January, 1905

⁴⁰ Apparently, the best seats in the centre of the church were rented, and it had become the practice for the those seated in the side aisles to watch whether the centre seats had been occupied by the start of the service and then move "tumultuously" to fill any vacancies. The worst offenders were alleged to be girls from the Cheltenham Ladies' College. "Remonstrances" were said to have had no effect and the Vicar was asked to "try the effect of persuasion and admonition." *All Saints' Cheltenham Parish Meeting*, April 1, 1902

⁴¹ *Tewkesbury Parish Magazine*, November, 1901, November 1902, February, 1903, January, 1904

⁴² On October 26, 1902, it was estimated that some 40 young people, "about a twentieth of the congregation," were guilty of this offence and they were thus reproved: "This state of things is highly discreditable to the persons concerned, for it means that their conception of Church worship is an extremely selfish one and it is anything but complimentary to the preacher, whoever he may happen to be." *Tewkesbury Parish Magazine*, November, 1902,

calls for the restoration of a Watch Night Service on New Year's Eve because of past behaviour, especially by young girls, outside the church after the service.⁴³

In general, however, it was a matter of common observation that women were more likely to be attracted to attend a church and to support its activities than men. Whether this was a matter of psychology — that they were innately more susceptible to religious influences⁴⁴ — or because of practical considerations — the clergy mostly made their parish visits at times when only women were at home⁴⁵ — cannot be definitively resolved. But the reliance of local parish churches on the enthusiasm of their female members is well attested. A mission at Ampney Crucis in 1912 held afternoon services for women throughout the week and reported “excellent and well-maintained” attendances.⁴⁶ At Tewkesbury Abbey, it was usually the women of the parish who supported special services, such as during Advent and Lent⁴⁷ and in 1920, 52 ladies of the parish petitioned the Vicar to provide a course of readings or lectures during the winter months.⁴⁸

Females and Confirmations

For most of his time in the diocese, Bishop Ellicott conducted an annual analysis of the Confirmation figures, apparently to check whether the Church was winning the allegiance of young men at a satisfactory rate. These figures were remarkably consistent.

⁴³ “People are worked up during the service to an unusual pitch of religious fervour; but the reaction sets in the moment they leave the church and meet their friends outside, and those who know anything of young people, girls especially, know well the *harm* such a reaction is bound to work. ...We cannot enter further into detail, but it is quite out of the question that a custom which has been tried and condemned as undesirable should be re-introduced, at any rate in Painswick.” *Painswick, Edge, Sheepscombe and Pitchcombe Church Magazine*, January, 1894. The italicised word was in the original text.

⁴⁴ Sheringham, *The Church and Social Life*, *op. cit.* p.11

⁴⁵ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1906, p. 89

⁴⁶ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1912, p.8

⁴⁷ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, March, 1904; January, 1909; January, 1911

⁴⁸ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, November, 1920

Statistics available for the diocese covering the period 1868 to 1922 show that, subject to a fluctuation of plus or minus one or two percentage points, the ratio of Confirmations according to gender was in most years 60:40 in favour of females.⁴⁹ This pattern was sustained even after the separation of Bristol from the diocese in 1897. From a demographic viewpoint, this was a not unlikely outcome since Census returns from 1861 to 1921 inclusive showed a greater proportion of females than males in the county of Gloucestershire, as indicated in the following table which shows the ratio of females to 1,000 males in each Census year:

Table 5.1 Female/Male Ratios in Gloucestershire

<i>Census Year</i>	<i>Females per 1,000 males</i>
1861	1,133
1871	1,128
1881	1,138
1891	1,150
1901	1,137
1911	1,142
1921	1,143

50

The figures tabled above are intended only to indicate a trend since it is not possible to make a direct correlation between the Census and Confirmation figures.⁵¹ Regardless of the demographic picture, Bishop Ellicott was greatly exercised by what the annual Confirmation figures apparently indicated. In 1880, he observed that in the cities and towns of the diocese,

⁴⁹ Cf. Appendix

⁵⁰ Data extracted from the Census Reports for the year, published by H.M.S.O.

⁵¹ Apart from the obvious problems such as measuring annual figures against those for a decade and comparing a particular section of the population with a general range, the areas defined in the respective totals are not identical. The Census figures define Gloucestershire as including Bristol and its immediate area, even after the separation of Bristol and its environs from the Gloucester diocese in 1897, while before that date, the diocese also included a sizeable portion of Wiltshire.

... the disproportion between the sexes is becoming greater rather than less. What does this mean? Does it mean that the Church is losing her hold on the young men in our populous places, and that we have here to recognise one of the dread signs of that infidelity which is stealing in amid the masses of our rapidly growing towns and cities? ⁵²

In 1889 he hailed a relatively minor shift (42.8: 57.2) in the normal ratio of 40:60 as “the best ratio of male to female for 20 years.” ⁵³ but despondency soon returned. In 1891, he expressed his concern about a “marked decrease” in the proportion (36.8: 63.2) of male confirmands: “My fear is that it may be due to an increasing difficulty in getting hold of the younger male portion in our larger parishes.” ⁵⁴ The following year, he admitted to being “forced to draw” the inference “that our numbers are slowly declining, and especially in the case of the male candidates”, ⁵⁵ despite the fact that the proportion of males to females that year (40.75: 59.25) was fairly close to the annual norm.

The bishop's annual exercise is valuable, not as a model of statistical analysis, but as revelation of his prejudices. His deductions are completely consonant with his expressed view of woman as man's subordinate. His preoccupation becomes even more apparent when it is realised that, even discounting his apparent disregard of demographic patterns, he had adopted a flawed methodology. It might be assumed that his comparison of successive annual Confirmation figures would at least have some value in revealing trends, but such theoretical value was impaired in practice by the existence of the Triennium, ⁵⁶ that is his custom of holding Confirmation services at three year intervals mainly in certain rural parishes. The effect of this practice was that the base for the

⁵² Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1880, p.5

⁵³ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1889, p.8

⁵⁴ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1891, p.6

⁵⁵ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1892, p. 7

⁵⁶ This was the Bishop's own term for the practice.

Confirmation figures was not constant and shifted each year. The influence of the Triennium on the totals is illustrated below:

Table 5.2: Effect of the 'Triennium' on Annual Confirmation Figures

<i>Year 1</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Year 2</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Year 3</i>	<i>Total</i>
1872	3,761	1873	4,785	1874	5,410
1875	4,063	1876	4,563	1877	7,251
1878	4,620	1879	5,874	1880	7,003
1881	6,327	1882	6,180	1883	7,523
1884	5,961	1885	5,475	1886	7,763
1887	5,989	1888	6,180	1889	7,528
1890	5,726	1891	6,084	1892	7,208
1893	6,303	1894	6,245	1895	6,823

It was apparently not until 1899, however, that Bishop Ellicott realised the limitations of the Triennium as a basis for his conclusions. He announced that year that, although the totals for 1898 had exceeded those for 1897 (4,130 as against 3,343), he would draw “no inferences” and in future base his comparisons on the “triennium year.”⁵⁷ In the event, he did not carry out his intention. The division of the diocese in 1897, his illness, a population decline in country parishes and a greater care in selecting confirmands seemed to erode his earlier confidence in interpreting the data and he made no further public attempt during his episcopate to compare male and female Confirmation figures.

Ellicott's apparent prejudice in this matter is emphasised by the fact that Bishop Gibson, while carefully monitoring the annual Confirmation returns, showed little inclination to continue the practices adopted by his predecessor. He drew no conclusions based on the gender of those confirmed and in 1910 announced that he would abandon the three year cycle of confirmations, not because it distorted the figures, but because he

⁵⁷ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress* 1898, p.7. Presumably, he intended to compare totals every three years instead of annually.

believed the custom to be bad pastoral practice. He was not impressed by the explanation that “candidates like to be confirmed in their own parish” and considered that there was a danger that some potential candidates would “drift away” while awaiting the episcopal visit.⁵⁸

Church Care for Young Women

He shared with Ellicott, however, a concern for the moral welfare of women, particularly young women. Bishop Ellicott valued so highly the work of the ‘Working Girls’ Club’ in Gloucester that in 1883 he took the initiative in purchasing the property in St Mary’s Square used by the Club so that the occupants might “not be disturbed by any change of ownership.”⁵⁹ The Institution merited his approval because it was doing “a spiritual as well as a benevolent work.”⁶⁰ The former category included Bible and temperance classes and lectures on Church history. When its Lady Superintendent for 25 years died in 1906, the records showed that 845 girls had passed through the Club since its inception and that it had a current membership of over 80.⁶¹ Archdeacon Edward Scobell was almost certainly referring to the Club in his obituary of Mrs Ellicott in 1914 where he described the “club for girls working at the Match Factory on Bristol Road” as “a lasting witness of her sympathy with the daughters of toil.”⁶²

The influence of clergy wives was even more evident in the diocesan branches of the Girls’ Friendly Society (G.F.S.), a national organisation, which by 1910 had 29

⁵⁸ Gibson, *The Diocese and the Parish*, *op. cit.*, p.45

⁵⁹ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1883, p.10.

⁶⁰ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1884, p.11. In this report, the bishop explained that, with the aid of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners he had bought the property for a “moderate” fee of £300, and sold it back to the Club for £250. £200 of that sum was raised, partly by the bishop’s wife and friends and partly from a legacy.

⁶¹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1906, p. 151.

⁶² *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1914, p.71. The reference is to Moreland’s Match Factory, Bristol Road, Gloucester

branches in the Gloucester diocese, being represented in most of the larger centres of population.⁶³ The society had been founded in 1875 with the intention of providing "guidance and protection" for "girls of good character." and of offering Members and Associates "mutual help (religious and secular)," as well as "sympathy and prayer."⁶⁴ The following extracts from the Society's Constitution showed that its membership involved the obligation to follow a strict moral code:

Object 2. To encourage purity of life, dutifulness to parents, faithfulness to employers, temperance and thrift.

Central Rule III. No girl who has not borne a virtuous character to be admitted as a Member; such character being lost, the Member to forfeit her card.⁶⁵

The definitely religious emphasis of the Society is shown by the fact that within the diocese from 1907 onwards it held special 'Quiet Days' or 'Devotional Mornings.' In her review of social life in Bristol at this time, Helen Meller has remarked that parochial branches of the G.F.S. were usually run by the Vicar's wife and directed mainly towards girls in domestic service.⁶⁶ This conclusion largely accords with that of Brian Heeney, surveying G.F.S. activities nationally: "The objective of this vast society was very largely to bring the working class members under the supervision of the upper-class lady, in order to unite country girls coming to the city with the better aspects of urban living."⁶⁷

⁶³ Branches existed at Gloucester, Campden Rural Deanery, Charlton Kings, Cheltenham Central and Cheltenham East, Cirencester, Coleford, Dumbleton, Dursley, Fairford, Hardwick, Kemerton, Leckhampton Parish, Leckhampton (St Phillip and St James), Longhope, Minchinhampton, Moreton in the Marsh, Nailsworth, Newent, Northleach Rural Deanery, Painswick, Stonehouse, Stow, Stroud, Tetbury, Tewkesbury, Thornbury, Wickwar and Wotton under Edge.

⁶⁴ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine* 1906, p.113. 'Associates' had to belong to the Church of England but no such restriction was placed on 'Members'.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*

⁶⁶ Meller, H.E., *Leisure and the Changing City, 1870-1914*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1976, p. 174.

⁶⁷ Heeney, *The Women's Movement in the Church of England, 1850-1930, op. cit.*, p. 40

The religious tone of the society is reflected in the composition of its Gloucester Diocesan Council which in 1910 had a preponderance of clergy wives.⁶⁸ If they represented the "upper class lady," some indication of the quality of the rank and file of the G.F.S. may be inferred from the "prizewinning essay" of one Ada Coates whose description of the movement in 1904 was partly a paraphrase of its published Objects, but also showed that some of these Objects had been either imperfectly taught or understood:

There are three things which the G.F.S. candidates ought to try and have. One is Purity, which means we ought to be modest and steady in everything we do. Next is dutifulness to Parents. This means that we should always obey them and try to make our home happy. After this is Faithfulness to Employers which means that we ought not to waste anything that belongs to them. Then there is Temperance and Thrift. Temperance means to have power to say that we will not do anything that is wrong, whatever punishment is offered. Thrift means to be very saving with our money and not to waste it on dress which we do not need.⁶⁹

The Importance of Clergy Families

But the G.F.S. was only one of the activities in which the women of many clergy families became involved. In 1910 the Vicar of Tewkesbury, cautioned against a policy of uniting small benefices, emphasising "the influence of the family of a married priest in a parish."⁷⁰ He may well have had in mind the fact that many clergy families were closely involved in the social and educational, as well as the religious life of a parish. In addition to conducting the Bible class for married women⁷¹ his wife, apparently in the face of some local criticism, also held French language classes. The *Tewkesbury Parochial*

⁶⁸ *President*: Mrs Gibson (the Bishop's wife); *Vice-Presidents*: Mrs Spence-Jones (the Dean's wife); Mrs Salwey, Staverton Vicarage Daventry (formerly a Stonehouse resident and presumably a clergy wife); Mrs Browne, Peers Court, Dursley; *Life Member*: Mrs Jerome Mercier, Kemerton (wife of the Vicar of Kemerton); *Honorary Diocesan Secretary*: Miss C. Lloyd Baker, Hardwick Court, Gloucester (The Lloyd Baker family was prominent in Gloucestershire Church affairs.); *Honorary Diocesan Treasurer*: The Honourable Mrs Sinclair, (wife of the Vicar of Hempsted)

⁶⁹ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, May 1909. It is not clear at what level, national, diocesan or parochial, the prize was awarded.

⁷⁰ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1910, p.245

Magazine was proud of the number of activities sponsored by the Abbey: "A local boy recently remarked, 'There is something for us to come to every night in the week now, except Saturdays' " but adopted a somewhat defensive tone regarding the language classes:

People sometimes ask, — What do they want to learn French for? The answer is, — it cannot do them any harm. It will almost certainly do them some good by keeping them out of harm's way and giving them something to interest them in their leisure hours. ⁷²

In the nearby parish of Kemerton, Anne Mercier, the Vicar's wife, gave "energetic support" to her husband's calling and was herself prominent in a number of parochial and national movements. Much of her time was given to the cause of the G.F.S. and, as well as publicising it at many meetings of "educated women," she founded the Society's 'Home of Rest' at Malvern, spending some months there as 'Lady Resident'. With Henning Robeson, the then Vicar of Tewkesbury, she founded the Church of England High School for Girls in the town, was Vice-President of the Diocesan Council of the Mothers' Union and "raised money for charitable and philanthropic causes through fetes and concerts." In addition, she enjoyed some national fame as an author, mainly of fiction with a moral or religious theme. ⁷³ The Revd. Ernest F. Smith, was unmarried but he brought his mother and unmarried sister to live with him at Tewkesbury and the latter seems to have assumed some of the activities of a clergyman's wife, instructing in

⁷¹ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine* March, 1901

⁷² *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine* November, 1901

⁷³ Her most successful work, however, was *Our Mother Church: Being Simple Talk on High Topics*, which went into 10 editions from 1872 to 1888. Most of this information about Mrs Mercier's activities comes from her obituary notice in the *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1917, p. 44. A list of her many writings is contained in the *British Library Catalogue*.

embroidery techniques,⁷⁴ advising housewives on home economics⁷⁵ and organising fund-raising on behalf of the Abbey.⁷⁶

Another industrious clergy sister was Eliza Mary Eales, sister of the Rector of the Cotswold village of Naunton. Miss Eales was her brother's "constant companion" in a ministry which took him from Bristol to Bream and thence to Naunton. At Naunton she taught regularly in the Sunday School, mornings and afternoons, held a weekly Mother's meeting, formed a branch of the Women's Help Society and was founder and Scoutmistress of the local Scout troop. She was also a member of the Cotswold Nursing Association, a member of the Visiting Committee of the Stow Board of Guardians, Secretary/Treasurer of the local Red Cross Committee and, during the First World War, a member of the Belgian Refugee Committee.⁷⁷

Women and Sunday Schools

Family support was undoubtedly a great asset for clergy such as Henry Hoitt, for 42 years Vicar of Lydbrook, "a difficult parish" where he had "the assistance of his devoted wife and daughters."⁷⁸ The daughter of George Lewis, the Rector of Icomb, was Superintendent of the parish Sunday School,⁷⁹ married a Tewkesbury Abbey curate (also named Lewis) and went with him to undertake missionary work in Canada.⁸⁰ When in 1912 the Diocesan Sunday School Association offered a bursary of £40 to any lady who would accept a place on a training course in the Sunday School Teachers' and

⁷⁴ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, July 1914

⁷⁵ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, March, 1917

⁷⁶ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, November, 1922

⁷⁷ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, February, 1915

⁷⁸ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1908, p.170

⁷⁹ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, September, 1908

⁸⁰ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, September, 1910

Superintendents' Training Department at Cheltenham Ladies' College⁸¹ the first candidate was Miss Gwladys Wynn Lloyd, daughter of the Rector of Bromsberrow.⁸² The second bursary was initially accepted by Miss Pratt, the daughter of the Vicar of Great Rissington but she was obliged to relinquish it when her father accepted a living in another diocese⁸³ and it was then awarded to a Miss Muskett of Kemerton who, as far as is known, did not come from a clerical family but almost certainly had been influenced by the Vicar's wife.⁸⁴ At the Ladies' College, the Organiser of the Sunday School Training Department was Miss Maud Winnington-Ingram, a niece of Bishop Winnington-Ingram and herself the daughter of a clergyman. It was therefore reasonable that Bishop Gibson should conclude that all too often responsibility for the success of individual Sunday Schools "depended on the parson's wife and daughters."⁸⁵ A particular illustration of that observation is provided by the Revd. Phillip Crick who arrived in the parish of Edge in 1909 (as a temporary replacement while the Vicar took a break in Switzerland for health reasons) and announced his intention of maintaining the existing parish organisations "with the help of Mrs Crick and my daughters."⁸⁶

The reliance on clergy families in Sunday School work was most evident in the rural parishes where the availability of suitable teachers was usually limited. At an Inter-Diocesan Sunday School Conference in 1913 one of the speakers stressed that the parish priest must take a direct involvement in Sunday School work, teaching the teachers and

⁸¹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1912, p.196

⁸² Gibson, *The Work of the Diocese*, *op. cit.*, p. 24

⁸³ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1914 p. 57

⁸⁴ This seems a reasonable speculation. Kemerton was a small village (population 468 at the 1911 Census) with only one parish church, and it seems highly likely that a woman so active and so influential in Church affairs as Anne Mercier played a part in Miss Muskett's application.

⁸⁵ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1915, p. 69

⁸⁶ *Painswick Valley and Great Witcombe Magazine*, 1909, p. 107

learning from them. But one clerical observer from the Gloucester Diocese, reporting on the Conference, found this recommendation much too utopian:

No practical suggestion, however, was made as to how all this is to be done. Whereas in many villages the only teachers available are girls whose work lasts from early in the morning till late in the evening, and where no two have the same hours of work, a regular teacher's training class is almost impracticable, and so is the very desirable suggestion that all teachers should regularly visit all their scholars in their homes.⁸⁷

In the more populous areas there was no apparent shortage of teachers. Diocesan Statistics show 36 parishes where 20 or more Sunday School teachers were employed in 1907, with 1,335 teachers for 20,607 pupils, an average of one teacher for 15 pupils. by 1923, the respective totals were 961 teachers and 9,082 pupils, an average of a teacher for every 9 pupils. The fall in teachers was most noticeable in those parishes such as Cirencester, Tewkesbury and Cheltenham Parish Church which had had large numbers of teachers before the Great War. The table below shows the number of teachers and scholars in sample pre-war, wartime and post-war years throughout the whole diocese. These show that the largest numerical decline occurred during and after the war years, although the ratio of teachers to scholars remained fairly constant throughout:

**Table 5.3: Sunday School Teachers and Scholars in Gloucester Diocese
Sample Years⁸⁸**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Teachers</i>	<i>Scholars</i>	<i>Ratio of Teachers to Scholars</i>
1906	2,957	30,817	1: 10.4
1910	2,972	30,387	1: 10.2
1914	2,825	28,184	1: 9.9
1920	2,215	23,758	1: 10.7
1923	2,264	23,756	1: 10.5

⁸⁷ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1913, p.108

⁸⁸ *Diocesan Statistics* for the years mentioned

In 1888, a survey based on 65% of the then combined diocese showed that 27 per cent of the 4,335 Sunday School teachers were male and 73 per cent female.⁸⁹ In 1904, after the diocese had been divided, the proportions had increased in favour of females: 21% male and 79% female.⁹⁰ The statistical returns for Sunday Schools after 1905 did not distinguish between the sexes so it is not possible to quantify precisely any shift in the male/female ratio of teachers, but there are suggestions that the female involvement became more prevalent in the second decade of the twentieth century. For example, in 1915 Miss Maud Winnington-Ingram, speaking about the problem of training teachers, told an Inter-Diocesan Sunday School Conference at Gloucester: "One point of great difficulty was the lack of ladies of independent means willing to be trained. It was necessary that such ladies should come forward as the stipend paid to trained workers was insufficient to live upon."⁹¹

It is very probable that the War had played a large part in the presumed preponderance of female teachers. In 1912, four men and 14 women from parishes throughout the diocese passed the Diocesan Sunday School Association Teachers' Examination.⁹² By 1921 the pattern had changed. 21 candidates sat the same examination and, reporting a shortage of teachers, the Diocesan Sunday School Secretary stated that "All the candidates were women and all came either from Cheltenham or Gloucester. We hope that other centres will be enthusiastic enough to enter, and that some male teachers may make an attempt."⁹³ Tewkesbury Abbey was one parish unable to respond to this invitation as its Magazine that year reported that it had only female

⁸⁹ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar.*, 1889, p. 149

⁹⁰ *Diocesan Statistics*, 1903/1904

⁹¹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1915, p. 70

⁹² *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1913, p. 27

teachers for ten girls' and six boys' classes.⁹⁴ His "standing anxiety" concerning Sunday Schools and the general shortage of teachers for them were addressed by Bishop Gibson in what was to prove his last Charge to the diocese in 1921. As he again pointed out, "the difficulty of securing teachers appears to be as great as, if not greater than ever, and in many country places, the incumbent and his wife seem to be struggling on almost alone."

⁹⁵ He concluded his remarks by placing a great deal of responsibility on the clergy to effect improvements:

[I] ask you in conclusion to remember how much the efficiency of the Sunday School depends upon the interest that is shewn by the Clergy. If nothing more than a perfunctory interest is taken by the Incumbent the teachers will not be slow to discover it, and the fact will not be lost upon them. The school will languish and become ineffective. It is where the clergy are keen about it that the school becomes a power, and teachers are much more readily found, when they can see that the Incumbent really cares about the school, is ready to put himself out for it, and to help teachers in whatever way he can.⁹⁶

In his study, Brian Heeney has claimed both that "Sunday School teaching in the nineteenth century was a widespread form of female volunteer activity within the Church of England"⁹⁷ and that the parish priest exercised a "controlling" function over his teachers.⁹⁸ Bishop Gibson's remarks quoted above suggest that many priests neglected to exercise such control. A hint of some tension between incumbents and teachers was revealed just once in the diocese when in 1919 Miss Gwladys Wynn Lloyd delivered her Annual report as Organising Visitor. Normally, this took the form of an account of the number of Sunday Schools she had visited throughout the year and a general comment on

⁹³ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1922, p. 7

⁹⁴ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, February, 1921

⁹⁵ Gibson, E.C.S., *A Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Gloucester*, Gloucester, Osborne, [1921?], p. 32

⁹⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 33-34

⁹⁷ Heeney, *op. cit.*, p.33

⁹⁸ *ibid.*, p.36

their efficiency. On this occasion, she broke with tradition and accused many clergy of being obstacles to better Sunday Schools:

As the result of nearly six years' work in your Lordship's diocese, I have been led to the conclusion that many clergy do not welcome the Sunday School movement for reform because they fear that it may hinder definite teaching, and that too much attention is given to organisation and methods rather than the spiritual development of the child. I would say that Sunday School reform, as I have known it and seen it, makes it both possible to give definite teaching, a love for religion and a desire for the service of God in a way that attracts and is quite natural to the child and above all it gives every scope for that training in worship of which your Lordship spoke at the Diocesan Sunday School Conference in September. ⁹⁹

Miss Wynn Lloyd spoke not only as the Diocesan Sunday School Organiser but also as a clergyman's daughter. ¹⁰⁰ It is not known what impact, if any, her remarks had but her subsequent annual reports reverted to their previous formula of recording visits made and lectures and demonstrations given. This suggests that either that the points at issue were resolved or that she had been told that it was not appropriate to make them in public.

District Visitors

One large area of Church work for the laity was District Visiting. Visitors were described at the Diocesan Conference of 1886 as, "an important body of workers in many parishes." ¹⁰¹ This task appears to have been almost entirely a female preserve. Although the diocesan returns do not distinguish between male and female visitors after 1905, they show that in 1904 1,258 female and 20 male volunteer visitors were working in the diocese plus one male and two female paid visitors, the latter presumably serving in some supervisory capacity. By 1923 the diocesan totals showed a drop to four paid and 1,111

⁹⁹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1920, p. 12

¹⁰⁰ Numerically speaking, her father's own parish Sunday School at Bromsberrow was not particularly impressive. In 1920, it had three teachers and 24 pupils out of a village population of 269, whereas the village day school had a roll of 55 children. (*Diocesan Statistics*, 1920)

volunteers. In comparison with Sunday School teachers, who were to be found in almost every parish, District Visitors were employed in only about a third of parishes and in total they are fewer than Sunday School teachers, as shown in the following table:

Table 5.4 Comparison of Total Number of District Visitors and Sunday School Teachers

<i>Year</i>	<i>1904</i>	<i>1907</i>	<i>1908</i>	<i>1909</i>	<i>1920</i>	<i>1923</i>
Visitors	1,281	1,150	1,203	1,169	1,190	1,115
Teachers	3,049	2,957	2,957	2,985	2,215	2,264

As it was a purely voluntary activity, the number of District Visitors varied greatly from one parish to another and only approximately one third of the parishes of the diocese used their services. Their function was to go round a parish, identifying areas of social or medical, rather than spiritual, need, and initiating measures to improve whatever condition was discovered. "Collecting savings, giving help and obtaining information for subsequent action" was how their duties were described in the parish of All Saints' Cheltenham in 1913¹⁰² and they appeared to be much the same in that parish after the Great War when the 32 Visitors were reported to have "collected club money" and to have ensured that "among the large number of poor in the parish, no deserving cause lacked assistance."¹⁰³ In theory, the employment of Visitors freed incumbents to concentrate on spiritual matters during their parish visits and to follow Colonel Curtis Hayward's dictum that "ministers should never carry alms because the association of a pastoral visit with the dole encouraged hypocrisy."¹⁰⁴ It also provided the clergy with an

¹⁰¹ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1887, p. 159

¹⁰² *All Saints', Cheltenham Parish Meeting*, April 2, 1913

¹⁰³ *All Saints', Cheltenham Parish Meeting*, April 19, 1922

¹⁰⁴ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1910, p. 256, But *cf.* Chapter 6; one of the failings by the clergy identified during the National Mission was their neglect in visiting their parishioners.

opportunity to stand aside from any unpopular decisions made by the Visitors who in certain parishes at least enjoyed some autonomy. At Tewkesbury, for example, the Visitors decided in the summer of 1916 that because of the War, the children of the parish should forego their annual "treat"¹⁰⁵ and in 1919 they decided to inaugurate "radical" administrative arrangements to the parish 'Provident Club', which had apparently grown so popular with savers that it had become unmanageable.¹⁰⁶ It should be noted, however, that the Vicar of Tewkesbury supported the Visitors' 1916 decision because it accorded with his own conviction that it was inappropriate for public displays of jollity to be held at a time of national crisis. A survey of 81% of the diocese in 1909¹⁰⁷ showed that in 202 parishes charitable relief was given by the clergy alone, in 29 by the clergy and District Visitors together, in 23 by the Visitors alone and in eight by a 'Relief Committee'.

'Rescue and Preventive Work'

Women predominated in one specialist area, that of 'Rescue and Preventive Work', dedicated to the moral protection of women and the rehabilitation of those who had fallen into immorality. Bishop Gibson distinguished between these two complementary approaches in his Charge to the clergy of 1910. Preventive work, he explained, was the general work of

... raising the tone of public opinion and implanting the principles of purity, of bettering the conditions of life, and removing the occasions of temptation, so as thereby to shield and shelter from falling those who as yet have, by God's grace, been kept free from the taint of this deadly evil and guard future generations against it.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, July, 1916. The Vicar supported and may even have inspired that decision.

¹⁰⁶ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, November 1919.

¹⁰⁷ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1909, pp.188-190. The survey's conclusions were based on returns from 262 of the 323 incumbents canvassed.

¹⁰⁸ Gibson, *The Diocese and the Parish*, op.cit., p.51

while Rescue work involved the restoration of the erring and those who had fallen into sexual sin, often young girls of 15, 16 or younger, “who have fallen victims to the selfish and horrible lusts of men.”¹⁰⁹ In his experience, women were best fitted for these tasks; the effect of a talk to adolescent girls by “a cultured and earnest lady,” speaking “as only a woman could give to women” could only be salutary.

However, while acknowledging that much of this work should be done by women to women, the Bishop also expressed his conviction that since “the sin and the misery is due to the lust and selfishness of men, it seems as if, as a simple act of reparation to the weaker sex, whom they have so grievously wronged, men ought to take the foremost part in the work.”¹¹⁰ Whatever the Bishop may have intended to convey by the term “foremost”, all the available evidence, however, suggests that the support given by men to this work was mainly behind the scenes. Thomas Gambier Parry, squire of Highnam, founded St. Lucy's House in Hare Lane, Gloucester in 1872. This establishment was intended to give some rudimentary education to and train girls for domestic service and to care for invalids.¹¹¹ St. Lucy's House was staffed by sisters from the Community of St. John the Baptist, Clewer¹¹² and was one of nine homes or institutions classified by the Diocese in 1913 as “Preventive and Training Homes” and mostly located in Cheltenham and Gloucester. In addition, there were five homes devoted to “Rescue” work. Four were in either Cheltenham or Gloucester, the exception (and the largest) being a ‘House of Mercy’ in the village of Bussage, near Stroud.¹¹³ In 1912 the Diocese appointed a Miss

¹⁰⁹ Gibson, *The Diocese and the Parish*, *op. cit.*, p. 51

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 56

¹¹¹ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, November 1888; *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1922, pp.69-70;

¹¹² Founded at Clewer in 1852 by Thomas Thellusson Carter, the Rector of the parish.

¹¹³ Gibson, *The Diocese and the Parish*, *op. cit.*, Appendix 3

Dowding, formerly Lady Superintendent of a Home for girls in Hampstead as its first woman worker with special responsibility for Preventive and Rescue Work and the post was filled at least until Bishop Gibson left the diocese.

Women as Spiritual Leaders

Most of the work for women so far described might reasonably be classified as the work of Martha rather than Mary,¹¹⁴ essentially practical rather than spiritual. Teaching in Sunday Schools is a probable exception to that rule. It was not until the war years that women were encouraged to take an active role in adult worship. During the National Mission of 1916, both laymen and laywomen were included in the so-called 'Flying Squadrons' which conducted missions in various rural parishes under the direction of visiting priests and Church Army officers.¹¹⁵ The value of women in this venture was sufficient to lead the Bishop to draw attention to the "rightful increase in the importance attached to women's work for the Church"¹¹⁶ and to lead him in 1921 to announce the creation of three classes of women's work in the diocese, all evangelistic in nature but all requiring his licence and all involving some limitations of scope. These were as Diocesan Woman Messenger, Woman Catechist and Parochial Woman Worker.

Nevertheless, one avenue of Christian ministry remained barred to women of the Diocese. Bishop Gibson was quite ready to acknowledge an order of Deaconesses for women but stated that "there is no shadow of evidence that from the earliest days down to the present time it has been regarded as even possible that a woman should be held to be capable of being admitted to the priesthood in the Catholic Church."¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Luke 10, vv. 40-42

¹¹⁵ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1916, p.134. Cf. Chapter 6 for a fuller description.

¹¹⁶ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1917, p. 6

¹¹⁷ Gibson, *Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese*, 1921, *op. cit.*, p. 21

Although some clergy feared that recognition of an order of deaconesses could be “the thin end of the wedge” leading to the priesting of women,¹¹⁸ there is no evidence that there was any serious agitation in the diocese at this time for such a move. Miss Lillian Faithfull, the Headmistress of Cheltenham Ladies College, had provoked the clergy intervention by proposing a motion at the Diocesan Conference of 1921. While considering it “unfortunate” that a small group of women were pressing claims in the country for admission to the priesthood, she nevertheless asked that lay women should be afforded the same conditions for preaching in churches as lay men:

The Church as a body belonged to men and women alike. It was not only the property of the clergy; it was the property of the whole congregation ... When permission existed for a layman to take part in special services in the church and to preach (not exactly from the pulpit), it seemed quite impossible to maintain that women should be excluded from such privileges.¹¹⁹

With the support of the Bishop, her resolution was carried by the Conference. Miss Faithfull's very presence at the Diocesan Conference of 1921 was, of course, a consequence of the widening of the franchise in Church government to women. The greatly expanded Conference of that year contained over 100 women¹²⁰ and large numbers of women were to be found among the electors on the parochial rolls.¹²¹

Bishop Gibson's judgement on the validity of women priests, as quoted above, may be said to have based on his recognition of historical practice within the Catholic Church but the attitude that it was an intrinsically unnatural activity can be found in a sermon preached by Ernest Smith, the Vicar of Tewkesbury at a Mothers' Union Festival

¹¹⁸ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar* 1922, p. 148

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 145

¹²⁰ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1922, p. 143

at the Cathedral in June, 1921 in which he asserted that women had already been "ordained" and consecrated by God. The vocation of motherhood was

the purpose for which God made her a woman, the sublime prerogative of her sex. Assuredly, it is a ministry not less august or less reverend than that of priest or prelate! The woman who seeks other priesthood than is hers by Divine right is as perverse and blind as a man who should covet her unique maternal joy. ¹²²

By the time Bishop Gibson retired from the diocese in 1923, the Gloucester churchman could well have concluded that, in parallel with their advances in employment, education and politics, the opportunities for ministry of women in the Church had been extended to the fullest extent permissible. All that remained was for that ministry to be developed and encouraged. As the bishop himself expressed it in his Charge to the clergy in 1921:

[Women] take their place naturally and rightly in our Parochial Church Councils, our Diocesan Conferences and the National Assembly you, my brethren, can do so much by way of encouragement and suggestion as well as by furnishing opportunities for these earnest and devoted women who in your judgement are properly qualified to exercise the gifts which God has bestowed upon them, in the different ways which are indicated in the new Regulations. ¹²³

¹²¹ This is discussed more fully in Chapter 7

¹²² *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, August, 1921

¹²³ Gibson, *Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese*, 1921, *op. cit.*, pp. 27, 28

APPENDIX
Annual Confirmation Totals
1: Diocese of Gloucester and Bristol 1868-1896¹²⁴

Year	Male	Female	Total	%Male	%Female
1868	2202	2625	4827	45.69	54.38
1869	1612	2691	4302	37.46	62.54
1870	1858	2795	4653	39.93	60.07
1871	2259	3405	5664	39.88	60.12
1872	1487	2274	3761	39.54	60.46
1873	1824	2961	4785	38.12	61.88
1874	2241	3169	5410	41.42	58.58
1875	1632	2431	4063	40.16	59.83
1876	1682	2881	4563	38.86	63.14
1877	2891	4360	7251	39.87	60.13
1878	1816	2804	4620	39.30	60.69
1879	2208	3666	5874	37.59	62.41
1880	2819	4184	7003	40.25	59.75
1881	2438	3889	6327	38.53	61.47
1882	2408	3772	6180	38.96	61.04
1883	3124	4399	7523	41.52	58.47
1884	2345	3636	5981	39.20	60.79
1885	2048	3427	5475	37.41	60.59
1886	3227	4526	7763	41.57	58.43
1887	2275	3714	5989	37.99	62.01
1888	2462	3718	6180	39.84	60.16
1889	3222	4306	7528	42.80	57.20
1890	2263	3463	5726	39.52	60.48
1891	2237	3847	6084	36.77	63.23
1892	2937	4261	7208	40.75	59.25
1893	2524	3779	6303	40.04	59.96
1894	2391	3854	6245	38.29	61.71
1895	2742	4081	6823	40.19	59.81
1896	2539	3859	6398	39.68	60.32

¹²⁴ Collated from a variety of sources, including *Diocesan Progress*, *Diocesan Statistics* and *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*

**2: Annual Confirmation Totals
Diocese of Gloucester 1897-1922**

Year	Male	Female	Total	%Male	%Female
1897	1357	1986	3343	40.59	59.41
1898	1775	2355	4130	42.98	57.02
1899	1707	1734	3441	49.61	50.39
1900	1179	1785	2964	39.78	60.22
1901	1579	1931	3510	44.99	55.01
1902	1316	1729	3045	43.22	56.78
1903	1210	1820	3030	39.93	60.07
1904	1576	1913	3489	45.17	54.83
1905	1272	1683	2955	43.05	56.95
1906	1730	2207	3937	43.94	56.06
1907	1625	2258	3883	41.85	58.15
1908	1619	2175	3794	42.67	57.33
1909	-	-	3670	-	-
1910	1414	2029	3443	41.06	58.93
1911	1581	2220	3801	41.59	58.41
1912	1528	2123	3651	41.85	58.15
1913	1608	2112	3721	43.21	56.79
1914	1419	2003	3422	41.47	58.53
1915	1363	1920	3283	41.56	58.48
1916	1181	1785	2966	39.82	60.18
1917	1261	1888	3149	40.04	59.96
1918	1380	2026	3406	40.52	59.48
1919	1143	1578	2721	42.01	59.99
1920	1345	1815	3160	42.66	57.44
1921	1426	1786	3212	44.40	55.60
1922	1397	1897	3294	42.41	57.59

¹²⁵ Collated from *Diocesan Progress, Diocesan Statistics, Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*

Chapter 6

**A Mission to
Gloucester**

Parochial Missions and Mission Rooms

A popular method for reviving parochial church life in the period under review was to hold parish missions, usually a relatively short period of sustained exhortation and instruction and conducted by clergy (or sometimes laymen) from outside the parish.¹ In that sense, “missions” were distinguished from the “mission rooms,” permanent buildings attached to many parishes and often supported by public schools and universities. The latter were usually set in areas of population density and were intended to offer the poorer and less well educated sections of the population a less inhibiting form of worship than that conducted in the parish church. Services in these buildings were sometimes conducted by laymen.² In Cheltenham, the parish of All Saints' had two such buildings.³ Bishop Ellicott regarded mission rooms as “the sort of seed plot from which we must be continually transplanting.” On one visit to address a Mission Room in a Bristol parish, he found an unexpectedly small congregation. The explanation he was offered was that most of the mission congregation had joined the parish church.⁴

The other, visit type of mission was well established in the diocese before Bishop Ellicott's arrival and reportedly attracted large numbers of people. In the spring of 1870 an estimated congregation of 6,000 each night attended a series of missions held at 12

¹ Inglis, K.S. : *Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England*, *op. cit.*, 1963, p. 30 quotes the Revd. George Body, “pioneer of the movement,” as saying that “The Parish clergy use Missions as a means of raising the church life of their people, rather than of gathering in the ungodly.”

² Chadwick, *The Victorian Church, Part II*, *op. cit.* pp. 163-164.

³ St Faith's, which could accommodate 250 people and St Michael's which was “worked up” by C.E.M.S. members. *All Saints', Cheltenham Parish Meeting*, *op.cit.*, April 21, 1908. St Michael's has since become a separate parish church; St Faith's has been converted for secular use.

⁴ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1870, p. 10

Bristol churches ⁵ and in 1873, the bishop himself took part in a large mission at Cheltenham where there were 300 communicants at the opening service. ⁶

The Diocesan Mission is Established

In 1885, the mission movement in the combined dioceses received a boost when the Rector of Cowley in Cheltenham Deanery donated £1,000, which was then supplemented by a subscription list, and used to establish a diocesan missionary for an experimental period of three years. The latter's duties were to hold missions "and by visits to parishes that may apply for his help to quicken and develop spiritual work generally." ⁷ At the end of that trial period, a Cheltenham barrister donated £5,000 Railway Preference Stock to the diocese so that one of the suspended canonries at the Cathedral could be refounded and held by the Missioner. ⁸ Mission effort in the diocese was thus placed under the ultimate control of the bishop.

The Diocesan Missioners from 1885 to 1923 were Canon John Bowers until 1902; Canon Sidney Alexander, 1902-1910; Canon Charles Ridsdale, 1910-1917; Canon Henderson 1917-1919 and Canon Francis Peacock from 1919. ⁹ By 1907, the leader of the Diocesan Mission had gathered together a team of six full-time mission priests, nine "honorary" clergy missioners who were also incumbents in the diocese and seven other clergy who gave assistance on a part-time basis. The prospect of joining the mission team, with its opportunities for detachment from the humdrum aspects of parish life and the chance to meet more people and develop friendships, were attractive to many keen

⁵ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress, op. cit.*, 1870, p.13

⁶ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress, op. cit.* 1873, p.8

⁷ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress, op. cit.*, 1885, p. 6

⁸ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress, 1900, op. cit.*, p.5; Bowers, *Diocesan Mission Colleges, op. cit.*, p.28

⁹ For a number, the post proved to be a stepping stone to promotion. Canon Alexander became a canon at St Paul's Cathedral and Bowers and Ridsdale were consecrated as bishops, for Thetford and Colchester respectively.

young priests ¹⁰ and the “large number of able and devoted men”, ¹¹ already holding incumbencies, but willing to act as honorary mission priests. Laymen were also included in the persons of six Diocesan Readers, laymen who held the bishop’s licence to preach in consecrated buildings at “extra” services. ¹² In addition, the Canon Missioner directed and advised two Church Army evangelists who moved around the diocese in their van ¹³ holding evangelistic meetings ¹⁴ but tended to operate independently of the formal mission services and to remain in areas, “depending on local needs and opportunities,” for longer than the conventional mission, usually for about a fortnight. ¹⁵ One distinctive feature of their ministry was that, as laymen, they could not conduct services in consecrated building ¹⁶ and so had to operate either in the open air or in a suitable hall or barn. That in itself did not necessarily impair their effectiveness. ¹⁷ In 1907 their activities were described as “outdoor meetings, services in school rooms and similar buildings, lantern lectures, the sale of literature and personal visits from house to house”. Probably in deference to any lingering suspicions about their doctrinal orthodoxy, it was

¹⁰ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1906, p. 195

¹¹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1909, p. 46

¹² *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1907, p.66

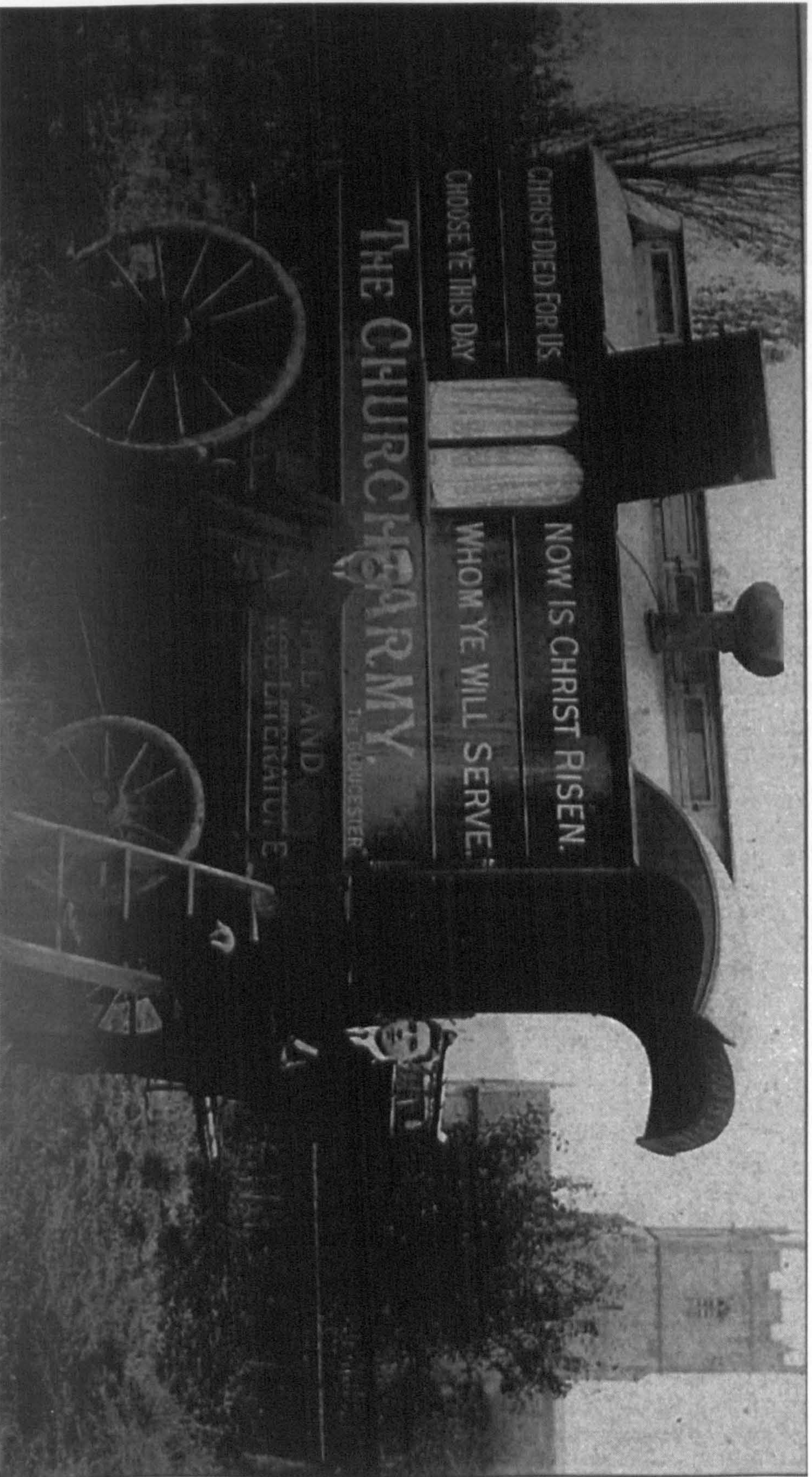
¹³ The van required to be drawn by horses and could not operate in hilly regions during the winter months. *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1906, p. 37

¹⁴ cf. Chapter 1

¹⁵ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1906, p. 37

¹⁶ The Canon Missioner suggested to incumbents that it would be “helpful” if the Church Army officers could be asked to read the lessons in the parish churches where they were conducting missions. *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1906, p. 171

¹⁷ Tributes to their work were received from the incumbents of many parishes where they worked. A selection was printed in *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1907, pp. 12-13



Susan Fletcher: *Britain in Old Photographs: Charlton Kings*, p. 45

The Church Army Van was commissioned by the Bishop in 1906 for evangelistic work in the diocese, under the direction of the Canon Missioner. It would spend long periods away from Gloucester, visiting a succession of parishes in various deaneries, but always at the invitation of the incumbent. The Canon Missioner explained in 1906 that: "It should be understood that a Van possesses no permanent means of transport, and that, therefore, it cannot be despatched to isolated parishes here and there in the diocese, but must follow a line of route more or less definitely fixed." *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1906, p.37

emphasised that they were “trained members of the Church of England, and teach on the lines of the Church.”¹⁸

A summary of the activities of the Diocesan Mission team from 1895 to 1914 at Appendix A shows that they were more extensive than simply leading “missions,” as commonly understood. However, since that term can carry a number of different connotations within the Christian churches, it should be pointed out that, in the words of its first leader, the Gloucester team put a strong emphasis on “the teaching aspect of the Mission, as distinct from the emotional or sensational” :

Yes, the days demand definite teaching, instead of those well meant but foggy Mission phrases, “Are you saved?” “Come to Jesus,” and the like, which convey, I fear, no definite or intelligent meaning to nine people out of ten. People know they *ought* to be saved, and be *good* and *earnest*, and they want to be so, but they want to be taught, “*How*.”¹⁹

And what was offered was definite Anglican teaching. Canon Bowers was sceptical whether the nonconformist churches could meet the need for clear, definite teaching. In his view, they were “honey-combed through and through with politics” and “in the ranks of the 230 odd different sects” listed in Whittaker’s Almanac there was “a great unsettlement, not on mere views but on some of the great fundamentals of Christianity.”

²⁰ The same point was made, in a different way, by his successor, Canon Alexander who warned in 1907 of the perils awaiting an unwary convert who might “slip back into indifference or worldliness or become attached to other religious bodies.” If this did

¹⁸ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1906, p. 37. Chadwick, *The Victorian Church, Part II*, *op. cit.* p. 297 and Inglis, *Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England*, *op. cit.*, p.44 describe early opposition to the Church Army (and to the kindred organisation, the Salvation Army) from within the Church of England.

¹⁹ Bowers, *Diocesan Mission Colleges*, *op. cit.*, p. 15. The italicised words are in the original.

²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 9

happen, he wrote, the fault might lie, less with the missionary who had awoken the latent spirit, and more with the incumbent of the parish, who had failed to nourish it.²¹ This was an important tenet of the team's work. They conducted missions or gave talks only with the express permission of the incumbent and they relied on the latter to sustain the interest which they had generated after they had left the area.

The Diocesan Mission at Work

Despite the range of its activities, the heart of the Team's commitment lay in the "long" or "Parochial Missions" and the "short" "Mission Visits." These lasted for ten days (from the Saturday to the Tuesday week) and for three days (Saturday to Monday) respectively. The aim was to instruct those attending in the basic doctrines of the Christian faith, the Bible and "the Church and the historical continuity of the latter." An important component of both the missions themselves and of separate talks was

The history of the Christian ministry, showing the people that it is not a wicked and petty jealousy that prevents our recognising the ministry of our Dissenting brethren. God forbid! but that a vital principle is involved, showing them that while we are tied, God is not.²²

Their experiences convinced the leaders of the team that they were fulfilling a need. Canon Ridsdale in 1910 stated that

The need of Mission work is obvious to any who note the signs of the times and the temper of the age. The number of people who, in all classes, are practical atheists, *i.e.* in their love of self, or of money, or still more of pleasure, banish God entirely from their ken, is simply appalling. And yet never was there a time more full of hope, as any who have taken part in Mission work know. There is a readiness to hear and a capacity for better things that the Church of England must take full advantage of.²³

²¹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1906, p. 38

²² Bowers, *Diocesan Mission Colleges*, *op. cit.*, p.14

²³ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1910, p. 59

Canon Bowers pondered on the machinery for effective mission; he had a vision of a "Mission College," almost a religious order, in each diocese and in 1893 read a paper to the Church Congress, meeting in Birmingham, in which he outlined his plan. Because the ordinary parish priest could not be expected to do everything, specialists, as well as general workers, were needed. Improvements in preaching might be achieved by more frequent exchanges of pulpits or a change of livings every ten years but, he still believed "that a preaching Order, founded by proper authority, would receive from the great majority of the parochial clergy the warmest and most brotherly welcome."²⁴ His vision was never realised.

In their post-Mission reports, the evangelists frequently singled out for mention groups of people whose presence at the Mission they had particularly noted, thereby signifying those elements of society which the Church normally failed to reach. Satisfaction is repeatedly recorded at the presence of men, the working class and the poor. The presence of women and children normally excited no particular comment.²⁵

In some Anglican quarters it was held that missions were not "useful in country parishes"²⁶ but Canon Bowers maintained that "no parish is too small for a mission"²⁷ and Canon Alexander found "good reason to believe that, especially in small and isolated country parishes a lasting impression" had been left by the missionaries.²⁸ It is very likely that he was supported in that view by Bishop Gibson who, when Principal of Wells Theological College, had encouraged his students to carry out short "missions" in the

²⁴ *Official Report of the Church Congress, Birmingham, 1893*, London, Bemrose and Sons, 1893, p. 155

²⁵ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine* 1906, p. 78; 1912, p. 43; 1912, p. 180; 1911, p. 120; 1907, p. 55. *Newent Parish Magazine*, April, 1892

²⁶ Chadwick, *The Victorian Church, Part II, op. cit.*, p. 299

²⁷ Bowers, *Diocesan Mission Colleges, op. cit.*, p.14

²⁸ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1908, p. 87

surrounding villages.²⁹ The success of a parochial mission at Wyck Rissington, with a population of 206, in February, 1914 was hailed by the Rector as a vindication of the concept of a “small parish” mission.³⁰ However, the poor response of the parishioners at Easter and Ascension Day³¹ that year may well have caused him later to revise his opinion.

The eventual outcome at Wyck Rissington, in which social factors appear to have played a major part,³² prompts further consideration of the lasting value of the parochial mission movement. Bishop Ellicott had a strong aversion to intoxication, whether induced by alcohol³³ or religious fervour.³⁴ It is therefore not surprising that early in his episcopate, before the foundation of the Diocesan team, he established principles for the conduct of missions which led great stress on thorough preparation within the parish, careful choice of the missionary; the opportunity for those attending to have private conversations with the mission leaders, —so long as they were not pressured to make confessions—; and post-mission care by the incumbent of the parish. Without these, “a mission will be a mere flashing up of broken lights, devoid of real glow and enduring warmth.” The object would be “not to present excitement, but future Christian practice.” Immediate results were not to be sought. The “truest test” would be additions to the

²⁹ Elwes, *The History of Wells Theological College*, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-50

³⁰ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, March, 1914

³¹ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, May, June, 1914

³² Cf. Chapter 4

³³ He was a strong advocate of the temperance cause, later coming to champion total abstinence. Hayter, G: *Famous Fanatics*, London, Funk and Wagnalls, 1911, p. 71

³⁴ He insisted, that contrary to popular understanding, St Paul's conversion had not been sudden, but a more lengthy process. *Newent Parish Magazine*, February, 1896

number of communicants.³⁵ Early experiences seemed to satisfy these criteria. In 1891, the Canon Missioner reported:

The Diocese is, in many parts — if I may use the expression — aglow; and the glow is no longer as it commonly used to be under the old system of Missions, transitory, and resultless but, in nearly all cases, shows signs of permanence in the quickening of existing work and the development of new efforts.³⁶

In 1894, the bishop confessed that he could not “sufficiently express” his “heartfelt” thanks to the “devoted body of men” who were “assisting in the blessed work of awakening a more vital interest in our Mother Church, her teachings and her offices”³⁷ but seven years later his verdict was less enthusiastic. Commenting on the year’s effort in mission work, he wrote:

All this amount of spiritual work is, I trust, helping to raise the general standard and tenour of spiritual life in our country parishes, but I am forced to say that it is very, very, slowly. Visitation succeeds Visitation, and the results elicited in the close enquiries that I then make do not remove from me the fear that the Mission visit is often received with warmth and enthusiasm, but that the new work promised, and perhaps partially undertaken under the stimulus of the visit, is not steadily maintained, but gradually passes back again into the spiritual inertia of the past. Without doubt, much good has been done to individuals by these Mission visits, but the effect on the records of the parish is hardly discernible.

He concluded by expressing the hope that the Holy Ghost would inspire some new approach to mission so that it might “become more persistent and enduring,”³⁸ It is possibly with that solemn judgement in mind that Canon Ridsdale in 1911 tried to

³⁵ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1870, p. 13; 1876, pp. 8,9. This was wholly consistent with the belief expressed in his first Charge to the Diocese in 1864 that “the number of regular, or to speak more inclusively, of periodical participants [in Holy Communion] is I believe, a very fair index of the spiritual state of any parish.” Ellicott, *Church Work and Church Prospects*, *op. cit.* p. 19

³⁶ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1891, p. 5

³⁷ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1894, p. 5

dampen expectations by admitting that “those who look only for tangible results are probably disappointed in reading our annual account.”³⁹

With Bishop Ellicott’s dictum concerning the true test of a mission in mind, an attempt has been made to analyse the results of some parochial missions held in the diocese from 1906 to 1916. Nearly 70 such missions were held across the diocese during that period and the only basis for selecting the 21 which have been analysed is that insufficient information was available to include the others. The results do not provide much basis for any large claims about the effects of a long mission on a parish. In most parishes there was no apparent significant change; only two, Nailsworth and Holy Apostles, Charlton Kings show any appreciable increases. All Saints' Uplands is a possible third but at the time of the mission it was a new church and its communicant figures cannot be distinguished from those of the parent church at Slad. Three parishes, Holy Trinity in Stroud, St John, Cinderford and Slymbridge show marked declines. St John’s was one of four parishes where there was an increase in the Communicants’ Roll, possibly as a result of mission enthusiasm, which was not matched by an increase in actual communicants.

The National Mission of 1916

The 1914-18 war disrupted the mission programme but in 1916 the diocese was involved in the country-wide ‘National Mission of Repentance and Hope’ to be held in the late Autumn simultaneously in every village and city of the land. This was “to call the men and women of England to earnest and honest repentance of our sins and shortcomings as a nation and to claim that in the Living Christ, in the loyal acceptance of

³⁸ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1901, p. 6

³⁹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1911, p. 67

Him as the Lord of all life, individual and social —lies one sure hope.”⁴⁰ An Advisory Council, under the chairmanship of the Canon Missioner was set up in Gloucester which was addressed in April, 1916 by Bishop Winnington-Ingram of London. The Council “found the Bishop’s magnetic personality most stimulating and inspiring” and determined “to carry through to the utmost of its power” the plan which the bishop told them had come “direct from the Holy Spirit.”⁴¹

In the summer of 1916, the Diocesan Advisory Council asked incumbents across the diocese to consult with their communicants and consider the question: “Why is the Church throughout England and in this diocese not that effective spiritual force and moral witness that it is meant to be?” That only about a quarter of the addressees responded does not suggest that the question exercised many minds.⁴² Some of the replies stressed the positive aspects of the Church’s influence on such important areas of life as education, public morality and manners, and charity and benevolence. Others were more fearful, concerned with the breaking up of established traditions and their perceived effect on religious observance. Some thought that the Church was ineffective because of the moral failings of the people, their desire for what was pleasant and amusing. But some raised a more philosophical question which revealed two views concerning the relationship between Church and society. In theory, they are not mutually exclusive, but in practice they are difficult to hold concurrently. “Is the Church to be measured by its extensiveness, in which case it fails — or intensiveness, the soundness of her members’ spiritual life?”

⁴⁰ Quoted in Lloyd, *The Church of England, 1900-1939*, *op. cit.*, p.226

⁴¹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1916, p. 68

⁴² *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1916, p. 169

(c) 'It is just possible that the Church's failure in some parts is her glory and that to accommodate herself to the Zeit Geist would be to exchange her standpoint of strength for a very shifting and variable place.'

(d) 'What would be recognised as being a sign that the Church was a greater moral influence? Would it be greater numbers or more bitter persecution and dislike.'⁴³

There is no indication that this conundrum was ever seriously pursued by the Council.

The respondents were more ready to address more practical issues and a catalogue of failings, familiar from at least mid-Victorian times, emerged. A lack of fellowship within the Church, exacerbated by the pew rent system "and the consequent sense of proprietorship in God's House"; the exclusion of the laity from Church government and their impotence in the appointment or dismissal of an incumbent who was to have cure of their souls; the perception that the Church's sympathies were with "the well-to-do" and not with the working class; the related question of clergy backgrounds and the feeling that they were "drawn too much from one social class." The clergy, especially in rural areas, were criticised for neglecting "the personal winning of souls by diligent pastoral visiting" particularly when the men were at home. But it was also countered, presumably by the clergy themselves, that they had not been trained in pastoral work because the authorities at the theological colleges themselves had "little practical experience of this difficult but vitally important work."⁴⁴

In the summer of 1916, the diocese sponsored a Church Army plan to send into the parishes, at the incumbent's invitation, 'Flying Squadrons', small groups of experienced men, who would, in preparation for the Mission, "encourage worshippers in any parish to win non-worshippers."⁴⁵ In the event, there was such a demand for their

⁴³ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1916, p. 169

⁴⁴ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1916, p. 171

⁴⁵ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1916, p. 86

services that their activities were limited to smaller parishes of under 1,500 in population that is, about 80 per cent of the diocese.⁴⁶ The team normally comprised five to seven members. There was always a Church Army captain, sometimes a Sister, plus clergy and laity (men and women) from other parts of the diocese. All of the team were thus strangers to the parishes visited, a factor which was held to be advantageous.

In late Victorian East London, churchmen were apparently surprised to discover that, on closer inspection, the inhabitants were not so irreligious and sunk in depravity as they had been led to believe. E.R. Norman has suggested that this was because middle-class churchmen lacked "adequate tests by which to identify the nature of working class religiosity" and had a "tendency to overemphasise the extent of the national refusal to go to church or chapel."⁴⁷ The findings of the Squadrons suggest that they too might have made similar discoveries. Instead of the apathy which was supposedly the characteristic of the countryman,⁴⁸ they found "strong religious feelings" which could be articulated in the presence of a sympathetic listener. They also found that many clergy had neglected visiting of the spiritual and not the social kind and they produced the damning conclusion that in some villages "the people hardly know their priest at all."⁴⁹ The people did not seem to share many of the religious priorities of their visitors. They were "very ignorant" about the liturgy and the sacraments⁵⁰ but they were open to teaching. The Squadrons' conclusions were consistent and indicated how much more scope there was for the Church to adopt the lessons learned during the Mission and the heavy responsibility

⁴⁶ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1916, p. 117. According to the 1911 Census, about 260 parishes came into that category.

⁴⁷ Norman, *Church and Society in England, 1770-1970*, *op. cit.*, p. 125

⁴⁸ Ellicott, *Spiritual Needs in Country Parishes*, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-83. Cf. Chapter 4 and J. Arthur Gibbs' opinion that countryman's attitude was stolidity, not apathy.

⁴⁹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1916, p. 135

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, p. 136

which lay upon incumbents, particularly in the countryside.⁵¹ But six years after the National Mission, Bishop Gibson's outburst,⁵² unflatteringly comparing his rural priests with vegetables and concluding that the latter were the more active, suggests that they were slow to respond to the need.

⁵¹ Lloyd, *The Church of England, 1900-1965*, *op. cit.* p. 231 seems to suggest that the energy engendered during the National Mission was dissipated by the creation of Councils and Committees to progress it.

⁵² *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1923, p. 156. Cf. Chapter 1.

Appendix to Chapter 6
Summary of Gloucester Diocesan Mission Activities 1895-1914

- 1895 490 "missions" including short and long missions ⁵³
 1896 588 "operations" including short and long missions, Lent and Advent addresses ⁵⁴
 1897 17 long, 37 short missions, 8 retreats/quiet days, 110 Lent courses, 31 Church history courses, 528 miscellaneous. Assisting sick clergy, temporarily filling vacant benefices ⁵⁵
 1898 13 long, 31 short missions, 14 retreats/quiet days, 112 Lent courses, 30 Church history courses, 608 miscellaneous ⁵⁶
 1899 11 long, 48 short missions, 14 retreats/quiet days, 112 Lent courses, 20 Church History courses. (The Mission closed its work in Bristol in March, 1900) ⁵⁷
 1900 4 long, 36 short missions, 12 retreats/quiet days, 90 Lent courses, 20 Church History courses ⁵⁸
 1901 9 long, 38 short missions, 13 retreats/quiet days, 90 Advent/Lent courses, 29 Church History courses, 630 miscellaneous ⁵⁹

There is a gap in the records at this point

- 1905 10 long, 18 short missions, 13 retreats/quiet days, 40 Advent/Lent courses, 21 lectures on Church History, Sunday Schools and Life of Christ, 4 Mission Van visits, 500 miscellaneous ⁶⁰
 1906 6 long, 17 short missions, 16 retreats/ quiet days, c. 40 Advent/Lent courses, 17 lectures on Church History, Sunday Schools and Life of Christ, 18 Mission Van visits, c. 550 miscellaneous ⁶¹
 1907 11 long, 21 short missions, 14 retreats/quiet days, c. 40 Advent/Lent courses, 23 lectures on Church History, Sunday Schools and Life of Christ, 22 Mission Van visits, c.500 miscellaneous ⁶²
 1908 5 long, 22 short missions, 12 retreats/quiet days, c. 35 Advent/Lent courses, 22 Church History courses, c. 16 Mission Van visits, c. 500 miscellaneous ⁶³
 1909 5 long, 5 short missions, 5 retreats/quiet days, 32 Advent/Lent courses, 6 Church History etc. lectures, 22 Mission Van visits, c.400 miscellaneous. ⁶⁴
 1910 7 long, 12 short missions, 111 special sermons, 14 men's services, 21 addresses to children, c. 42 courses of instruction, 350 Sunday sermons, 23 lectures and classes, 13 retreats/quiet days, 20 Mission Van visits ⁶⁵
 1911 6 long, 12 short missions, 141 special sermons, 13 addresses to communicants, 34 men's services, 36 addresses to children, 35 courses of instruction, 301 Sunday sermons, 6 lectures, 14 retreats/quiet days, 20 Mission van visits ⁶⁶
 1912 8 long, 13 short missions, 14 quiet days, 2 retreats, 140 special sermons ⁶⁷
 1913 4 long, 14 short missions, 13 quiet days, 3 retreats, 194 special sermons, 19 lectures ⁶⁸
 1914 3 long, 8 short missions, 3 retreats, 11 quiet days, 30 special sermons. (outbreak of war curtailed further activities ⁶⁹

⁵³ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1895, p. 6

⁵⁴ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1896, p.6

⁵⁵ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1897, p.7

⁵⁶ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1898, p.6

⁵⁷ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1899, p. 6

⁵⁸ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1900, p.6

⁵⁹ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1901, p. 6

⁶⁰ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1906, p. 76

⁶¹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1907, p.66

⁶² *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1908, pp. 86-87

⁶³ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1909, p. 46. The report was said to be incomplete.

⁶⁴ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1910, p. 58. The report was said to be incomplete.

⁶⁵ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1911, p. 67. The report was said to be incomplete.

⁶⁶ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1912, p. 80

⁶⁷ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1913, pp.171-172

⁶⁸ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1914 p. 73

⁶⁹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1916, p. 100

Chapter 7

**The Level of Church
Commitment by the Laity
of Gloucester Diocese in 1921**

Introduction

Within the scope of this study, the years 1920 to 1923 offer a special opportunity to measure the degree of lay commitment to the established Church. For under the terms of the Church of England Assembly (Powers) Act of 1919,¹ incumbents and churchwardens were required to establish in their parishes Parochial Church Councils (P.C.Cs) of lay people to assist and advise the incumbent. The Councils were to be elected by parishioners who registered on parochial Electoral Rolls. The aim of giving the laity a greater say in the matter had been under discussion for some years but the war had delayed its implementation. As already noted in Chapter 4, clerical opinion within the Gloucester diocese in the years preceding the Great War was divided on the wisdom of opening the councils of the Church to greater lay involvement but after the war, and the introduction of legislation, only a few opponents remained.

That the qualifying criterion for inclusion on the Electoral Roll was to be whether an individual was baptised and not necessarily a communicant member of the Church greatly troubled George Bayfield Roberts, the leader of the Anglo-Catholic clergy, who set out his objections at the Diocesan Conference of 1919. The proposed changes, he argued:

... contemplated making qualified electors of the Church of England persons who were not loyal Churchmen. They were disloyal, many of them — they did not deserve well of the Church which required them to communicate three times in the year. Could a person who did not do so be regarded as a loyal Churchman? no one could be a representative without the application of the Communion test.²

Although “two or three” members of the Conference supported Bayfield Roberts, those present heeded the Bishop’s observation that since the proposals had the

¹ Otherwise known as the Enabling Act.

² *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1920, p. 140

authority of the Church at national level, the Conference was “practically bound” to support them.³

Rationale and Methodology

Notwithstanding Bayfield Roberts’ objections above, it is proposed to utilise the Electoral Roll figures in this study to determine the degree of at least nominal lay commitment to the Church in the diocese. 1921 has been chosen as the sample year because it was the Census year closest to the establishment of P.C.Cs, close to Bishop Gibson’s last years in Gloucester and the first National Census after the Great War. It might thus be expected to reflect population changes resulting from that conflict against which the various categories of church involvement could be measured.

The conclusions of this study are subject to the limitations and adjustments discussed below. A fundamental problem is that the ecclesiastical and civil boundaries of Gloucestershire were not identical.⁴ The Census figures have been used, therefore, not to provide absolute conclusions but only as indicators of broad patterns. For example, in samples taken of the whole county and of various administrative sub-categories, they reveal a fairly consistent ratio of males to females as shown below:

³ *ibid.*, p. 141

⁴ According to Diocesan records, the population of the diocese in 1921 was 329,950, a figure which included 4,409 people from parishes in the neighbouring counties of Wiltshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Herefordshire which had been incorporated into Gloucester diocese.⁴ By that criterion, the Gloucestershire segment thus amounted to 325,541. By the Census definition, however, the ‘County of Gloucester’ was more than double that size and contained 757,651 persons. The discrepancy can partly be explained by the fact that the Census definition of the county included areas which, in ecclesiastical terms, were part of the diocese of Bristol, primarily the city and county of Bristol, the Rural District of Warmley and most of the Rural District of Chipping Sodbury. When the population figures for those areas are subtracted from the whole, the resulting figure is 348,221, closer to, but still larger than, that calculated by the diocese. An examination of the civil and ecclesiastical population figures for individual parishes also reveals variations. Because different criteria are applied, it is not possible to match civic and ecclesiastical parish boundaries in large centres such as Gloucester and Cheltenham. The chances of finding agreement are higher in rural areas, but even here the ecclesiastical practice of grouping some parishes under one incumbent can confuse the picture.

Table 7.1 Male/Female Ratios in Gloucestershire, 1921 Census

<i>Administrative Area</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
County of Gloucester	46.7	53.3
City and County of Bristol	46.1	53.9
Gloucester Administrative County	47.2	52.8
Urban Districts	44.4	55.6
Rural Districts	48.4	51.6
Gloucester City and County	47.3	52.7
<i>Average</i>	46.7	53.3

5

This suggests that any conclusions about the male/female balance of Church membership should take account of the demography of the area.

For the purpose of this study, the parochial returns for the number of Easter communicants have been adjusted. As, traditionally, all members of the Church of England are required to receive communion “at the least three times in the year, of which Easter [is] to be one”⁶ the number of Easter communicants ought to represent the maximum number of practising Anglicans in each parish. Reception of the Sacrament, however, is primarily an adult activity and in Gloucester diocese the normal minimum age for Confirmation, the precursor for receiving Holy Communion, was set at 13.⁷ The Census figures were therefore examined to see whether it was possible to determine whether a proportion of any given population could be assumed to be under the age of 13 and therefore not normally eligible for confirmation and communion. The consistency of the results was similar to those male/female ratios described above:

⁵ *Census of England and Wales. 1921, County of Gloucester.* H.M.S.O., London, 1923

⁶ Rubric following the ‘Order of the Holy Communion’ in *The Book of Common Prayer*

⁷ In 1912, Bishop Gibson told the annual meeting of Archdeacons and Rural Deans that he had decided to keep 13 as the minimum age for Confirmation but would be willing to confirm children of 12 “where the incumbent was satisfied of their spiritual condition.” *Meeting of Archdeacons and Rural Deans*, October 24, 1912.

Table 7.2
Percentage of population of aged 13 and under

<i>Administrative Area</i>	<i>Population under 13</i>	<i>% of total</i>
County of Gloucester	186,978	24.7
Gloucester Administrative County	81,004	24.6
Urban Districts	22,788	23.0
Rural Districts	58,216	25.3
Bristol City and County	93,050	24.7
Gloucester City and County	12,924	25.2
<i>Average</i>		<i>24.5</i>

As a working hypothesis, it has therefore been assumed that approximately 25 per cent of parish populations were under the age of 13 and not eligible to receive communion; consequently, the remaining 75 per cent or so were communicants, at least in theory. Consequently, population figures have been adjusted to reflect these assumptions, that is, the number of communicants in any parish has been measured not against diocesan figure but against 75 per cent of that total. Although it was unlikely that many parishes would exhibit an exact 75:25 split between potential communicants and non-communicants, the consistency of the Census samples quoted in Table 7.2 above increased confidence that it was reasonable to apply this formula and that the results would be a more realistic reflection of the situation than if the number of communicants were measured simply against the total parish population. Such an approach naturally presents a more favourable impression of the Church of England's impact on the local population.⁸

The Electoral Roll figures introduced a new factor into the audit of allegiance to the Church of England. The size of the response in Gloucester pleasantly surprised the authorities⁹ but there was some early uncertainty concerning the precise criteria for membership. Bishop Gibson's advice to his clergy in 1921 was:

⁸ To take a random example, at Nailsworth on Easter Day, 1921 the 362 communicants represented 12.6 per cent of the total population but the percentage rose to 16.7 when measured against 75 per cent of the population.

⁹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1920, p. 52

I would urge that while we do not desire that persons who, even if technically qualified, take no sort of interest in the affairs of the Church, should be pressed and urged to sign just in order to swell the numbers on the roll, yet an effort ought to be made to encourage all genuine Church-people, who are properly qualified, to enroll themselves, partly because the more the laity can be taught to take a living interest in the affairs of the Church the stronger the Church will be, and partly also because in future the number of lay representatives to which a Diocese will be entitled in the National Assembly is to be calculated, not (as at present) according to the population, but according to the number of persons in the diocese entered on the electoral roll, and the same rule will probably be followed in regard to the number of lay representatives to which each parish will be entitled on our own Diocesan Conference, and, (by consequence) on the Rural-decanal Conferences.¹⁰

If Bishop Gibson's advice had been observed, there therefore ought to be a fairly close numerical relationship between the numbers on the Electoral Rolls and those making their Easter communions. However, since the minimum age for inclusion on the Roll was 18 (and 21 for P.C.C. membership), a comparison of Electoral Roll with population figures would necessarily reflect only adult commitment to the parish churches. Therefore, in order to provide a more comprehensive picture of involvement at both adult and juvenile levels, Electoral Roll and Sunday School totals in each parish have been combined and then expressed as a percentage of the total population. Even so, another age group, the adolescents, are necessarily omitted from the reckoning. That this group formed a proportion of congregations is evident from references in parish magazines to their presence in church, chiefly in the form of complaints about their noisy behaviour.¹¹ However, the size of this age group is not known. At Tewkesbury in 1902 it was claimed that the 40 young people who left the church before one evening sermon constituted a twentieth of the congregation,¹² but

¹⁰ Gibson, *Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese*, 1921, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9

¹¹ *All Saints' Cheltenham, Parish Meetings, op.cit.*, April 1, 1902; *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine* November, 1901; February, 1903, January, 1904, *Painswick and Great Witcombe Parish Magazine*, 1910, p. 92

¹² *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, November, 1902. That report sheds some incidental light on the association between communicants and "general" congregations in at least one parish. If, as it suggests, the total congregation that evening was about 800, there is an obvious contrast between that number

it cannot be presumed that this formula can be applied throughout the diocese. Apart from the inevitable omission of adolescents, any assumption that Sunday School scholars were committed to the Church to the same degree as their elders is almost certainly unwarranted. Informed contemporary opinion was that the majority were not. Addressing the Diocesan Sunday School Festival in June 1913, Miss Maud Winnington-Ingram, Organiser of the Diocesan Sunday School Training Department, told her audience bluntly that “regular scholars did not become regular churchgoers.”

¹³ Subject to all the forgoing reservations, the following sample, using the official Diocesan population figure for 1921, indicates that, on average, the number of “Churchmen” in the diocese was just below a quarter of the total population.

Table 7.3. Church Membership” in Relation to Population ¹⁴

<i>Year</i>	<i>Electoral Roll</i>	<i>Sunday School Scholars</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage of Population (329,950)</i>
1920	52,432	23,758	76,190	23.1
1921	56,156	24,012	80,168	24.3
1922	56,571	23,488	80,059	24.3
1923	58,109	23,756	81,865	24.6

The methodology outlined above is more likely to reflect the actual local situation in country parishes rather than in towns where the availability of more than one Anglican church meant that churchgoers were not constrained by parish boundaries. For example, All Saints' Cheltenham in 1893 acknowledged “the occasional attendants who come to church in such large numbers from other parts of the town,” while complaining at the same time that they “very inadequately assisted”

and the 50 who made their communions at the Abbey earlier in the day and with the 316 communicants who came to the altar that Christmas.

¹³ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1913, p. 125. Miss Winnington-Ingram was the Bishop of London's niece.

¹⁴ *Diocesan Statistics*, 1920-1923

the offertories.¹⁵ In the rural, especially the more isolated, parts of the diocese, movement across parochial boundaries for worship seems to have been far less common. Conservative habits and limitations of transport were powerful influences in the country. In 1910 opponents of the proposal to amalgamate small benefices even contended that country folk would rather go to a nonconformist chapel than travel out of their own village to worship in a neighbouring Anglican church.¹⁶

1921 has been chosen for a detailed study for the reasons mentioned above but the statistics for that year in the key areas of Electoral Rolls, Sunday School membership and Easter communicants are not untypical of the period 1920 to 1923, the immediate post-War years, as the figures for the whole diocese indicate in the following illustration:¹⁷

**Table 7.4 Church Membership Figures, Gloucester Diocese
1920-1923¹⁸**

<i>Category</i>	<i>1920</i>	<i>1921</i>	<i>1922</i>	<i>1923</i>
Electoral Roll	52,432	56,161	56,571	58,109
Easter Communicants	38,057	38,933	39,323	40,262
Sunday School	23,758	24,012	23,488	23,756

19

Discussion

Any assessment of the degree of lay commitment to the church of the diocese must seriously take into account the assumptions and expectations of the Church hierarchy, if only because they coloured the latter's assessments of the effectiveness of the parish priests. In 1881, Bishop Ellicott set his parochial clergy targets for

¹⁵ *All Saints', Cheltenham Parish Meetings, op.cit.*, April 3, 1893

¹⁶ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar* 1911, p. 244

¹⁷ The statistical returns for 1919 are not in the diocesan Archives, possibly because at that point the system changed from a volume based on a "double year", *i.e.* from Easter to Easter. (*e.g.* 1917/18) to a single calendar year.

¹⁸ *Diocesan Statistics, 1920-1923.*

¹⁹ The annual increases in the Electoral Roll and communicant figures across the diocese are more apparent than real. In parochial terms, the increases are relatively small, representing on average only about three or four per parish and the 1922 and 1923 Easter communicant figures can also be considered inflated in the sense that in those years incumbents were required to make returns of the number of communicants during Easter week, and not just on Easter Day.

baptism and confirmation,²⁰ extrapolated from both the birth rate and his assumption “that the Church population” was “75 per cent of the whole.” The following year he qualified that estimate, conceding that three quarters was “probably above the true state of the case in the bulk of our country parishes”²¹ but he did not offer a revised figure and left the implication that 75 per cent was still a credible figure for the urban areas. Some 30 years later, Bishop Gibson came to a more cautious conclusion, which took into account the nonconformist element of the population. While acknowledging that there were “in every parish a certain proportion, in some a large proportion, who reject the ministrations of the Church,” he was nevertheless quite optimistic, concluding that “in a Diocese like this” he felt “pretty sure that we ought to be able to claim considerably more than half the population as Churchmen.”²²

Regrettably, neither bishop explained by what process he had arrived at his estimate or what definition of Church membership he had used. There is insufficient information fully to test the validity of Bishop Ellicott’s premise²³ but a very limited evaluation is possible. In 1881, unofficial censuses were held in a number of English towns and cities to count the number of people who attended a Christian place of worship on a particular Sunday.²⁴ The surveys included Gloucester and Bristol,

²⁰ The bishop reasoned thus: “If we assume that the Church population is 75 percent of the whole and also take the fact which was recently supplied to me by the Registrar General, viz., that the proportion of the population aged 15, and under 18, is about 6 per cent of those living at all ages, we ought to find that above 4 per cent of the population was confirmed in each triennium. [The evidence demonstrates that] “it is hardly quite 3 per cent. ... As it appears by accurate statistics that the annual birth rate is about 35 per 1,000 of the population, the number of those baptised every triennium ought to be, on the assumption that the Church population is three-quarters of the whole, fully 7.5 per cent for the whole population of any given place.” Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1881, pp.5-6

²¹ Ellicott, *Diocesan Progress*, 1882, p.6. Since the diocese was predominantly composed of country parishes, the bishop’s assumption of 75 per cent Church membership seems an exaggerated estimate.

²² Gibson, *The Diocese and the Parish*, op. cit., p. 43

²³ The Diocesan Archives hold comprehensive *Diocesan Statistics* from 1903 only, but it seems likely that even if they had survived before that date, they would have been fragmentary. In 1887, Bishop Ellicott complained that “in many parishes no records are kept,” that “little more than half the parishes keep even a roll of Communicants” and that a record of the confirmed who became communicants “is in many cases so utterly vague that it obviously cannot be relied on.” Ellicott, *Spiritual Needs in Country Parishes*, op.cit, p. 15

²⁴ Chadwick, *The Victorian Church, Part II.*, op. cit., p.226.

which was then within the combined diocese. The results in both cities on that day showed that about half of the population attended churches, chapels or mission halls but that the nonconformists outnumbered the Anglicans. In Gloucester the total attendances were 18,395 out of a population of 36,310 and in Bristol 109,452 of a population of 206,000.²⁵ Both cities produced almost identical results concerning the denominational split between worshippers. At Gloucester it was 43 per cent Anglican and 57 per cent Nonconformist.²⁶ At Bristol the proportions were 58:42 in favour of the Nonconformists.²⁷ As an absolute indication of the state of Church allegiance in those two cities the survey had its limitations.²⁸ The Gloucester analysts at least made no sweeping claims for their findings, concluding that "the numbers, interesting as they may be, must be taken as a guide rather than as conclusive as to the actual number of persons who attended divine service in Gloucester last Sunday."²⁹ For all of the reasons mentioned, the findings of the 1881 survey must be used with caution. Nevertheless, they call seriously into question the cogency of Bishop Ellicott's

²⁵ *ibid.* In the table published on p. 226, it is claimed that the figures have been adjusted to allow for individuals who attended services twice during the day. The revised percentage for Bristol is 40 per cent but no revision seems to have been made for Gloucester.

²⁶ *Gloucester Journal*, November 19, 1881. In Gloucester, Nonconformists (57 per cent) were in the clear majority, 10,090 entering chapels and mission halls, (a figure which can be increased to 10,530 if 440 Roman Catholics are included under this heading) while 7,865 (some 43 per cent) attended Church of England services.

²⁷ Nicholls J. and Taylor J.: *Bristol, Past and Present*, Vol. II, Bristol: J.W. Arrowsmith; and London: Griffith and Farran, 1881, pp. 307, 308. Of the total of 109,452, 63,934 attended Nonconformist buildings and 45,518 went to the Established churches. 3 per cent of the Nonconformist figure were Roman Catholics and 1 per cent Jews, although Sunday was of course not the normal day of worship for that community.

²⁸ The Sunday selected for the sample may have been wholly untypical. At Gloucester, early morning or afternoon worshippers were not counted and, despite the attempt made in some areas to make allowances for those who attended services more than once on the day, Chadwick, *The Victorian Church, Part II, op. cit.*, p. 226. (The figure for Gloucester in the table listed on this page has not been so converted, whereas Bristol's total clearly has), there was no infallible formula which could be employed. Furthermore, in some Gloucester churches children were included in the morning congregation while in others they had separate services. The survey included the former but not the latter group. In the same city, evening attendances were about half as large again as those in the morning, and an explanation was offered that the poorer classes tended to go to church only in the evenings and the upper classes only in the mornings. *Gloucester Journal*, 19 November 1881. Although it is likely that similar social conventions applied there as in Gloucester, the disparity at Bristol was not so marked, 48,596 attending in the morning and 60,856 in the evening.

²⁹ *Gloucester Journal*, 19 November, 1881

assumption that 75 per cent of the urban population of the diocese could be considered as Churchmen, particularly as his estimate was published after the religious survey and yet appears to have disregarded it.³⁰ A similar census carried out in some of the villages bordering Cheltenham in 1882 showed that 44 per cent of the population worshipped on the 3rd February. Here, however, that result placed the Church of England in a more favourable light compared to nonconformity since 87 per cent of them were church rather than chapelgoers.³¹

It is possible to test Bishop Gibson's claim of 50 per cent against more reliable evidence and it is immediately apparent that he could not have been drawing on the Easter communicant figures. The official annual returns during the two decades of his episcopate show consistently that the proportion of the total population who received communion at Easter in the diocese's churches varied between 10 and 12 per cent.³² Where just over 12 per cent was achieved in 1922 and 1923, this was because of a change in the basis for calculation, incumbents being required to include the numbers who communicated during Easter week and not just on the festival day itself. Under the previous regulations, the totals remained under 12 per cent:

³⁰ His *Diocesan Progress* for 1881 was published in January, 1882

³¹ Chadwick, *The Victorian Church, Part II, op. cit.* p. 162

³² The measurement here is against the total population because it is assumed that bishop would have used that formula.

**Table 7.5 Percentage of Easter Communicants to Population of Diocese
1903-1923**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Population of Diocese (1901,1911,1921 Census)</i>	<i>Easter Communicants</i>	<i>Percentage of Communicants to Total Population</i>
1903/04	320,924	35,621	11.1
1904/05		35,899	11.2
1905/06		---	---
1906/07		34,627	10.8
1907/08		35,125	10.9
1908/09		36,749	11.5
1909/10		37,621	11.7
1910/11		37,976	11.8
1911/12	328,779	39,095	11.9
1912/13		37,630	11.4
1913/14		39,412	12.0
1914/15		38,053	11.6
1915/16		36,603	11.1
1916/17		34,763	10.6
1917/18		34,204	10.4
1920		38,057	11.6
1921	329,950	38,933	11.8
1922		37,060	11.2
1922 *		39,323	12.0
1923		37,878	11.5
1923 *		40,262	12.2

33

* These entries reflect the number of communicants in Easter week, not just Easter Day.

There is evidence that some incumbents were content to accept a lower target than that set for them by their bishops. The Vicar of Tewkesbury in 1904 described the number of Sunday communicants, then averaging between 50 and 60, as “quite satisfactory.”³⁴ In 1901, the Vicar of Painswick considered that 239 communicants on Easter Day was “very satisfactory” because it represented “one-fifth of the whole population of Painswick.”³⁵ Similarly, his neighbour at Great Witcombe was satisfied that 16 of his population of 126 made their communions on Christmas Day, 1909

³³ *Diocesan Statistics, 1903 to 1923.*

³⁴ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine, March, 1904*

³⁵ *Painswick, Edge, Sheepscombe and Pitchcombe Church Magazine, 1902, p.36.* It is not clear what population figures he was using. Painswick’s population at the 1891 Census was 1,630 and 1,636 a decade later.

although he admitted that “a larger figure would have been more pleasing.”³⁶ 34 communicants came on Easter Day, including “all the newly confirmed”³⁷ but he was disappointed to find that on Ascension Day only three came to the early morning celebration and that there was “hardly a soul from the village itself” at the 7 p.m. Evensong.³⁸

Details

Tables 7.6 and 7.7 below summarise an analysis of church attendance figures in every parish of the diocese in 1921, as revealed in Electoral Roll, Easter communicant and Sunday School totals.³⁹ The columns are divided into eleven percentage bands and the entries indicate how many parishes in the area fell within the appropriate column headings. Two types of information are presented for comparison. Table 7.6 shows the percentage of Easter communicants in relation to that population of the parish who had reached **Confirmation age**. Table 7.7 shows the combined total of Electoral Roll members and Sunday School scholars as a percentage of the **Census population**.

The totals in Table 7.6 reveal that the number of Easter communicants was less than half of the eligible population in 96 per cent of the parishes of the diocese. In 42 of 318 parishes (13 per cent), fewer than 10 per cent of the population were communicants.

³⁶ *Painswick Valley and Great Witcombe Church Magazine*, 1909, p. 18

³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 50

³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 62

³⁹ The entries have been classified, not by deanery but according to what was apparently a diocesan system of categorising parishes, as revealed in a manuscript note addressed to the bishop and found loose in one of the volumes of *Diocesan Statistics*, G.D.R. A4/9

**Table 7.6: Summary of Church Commitment in Parishes
in Relation to Population, 1921
Easter Communicants**

Area	Parishes	0-9%	10-19%	20-29%	30-39%	40-49%	50-59%	60-69%	70-79%	80-89%	90-99%	Over 100%
Gloucester	20	7	7	5		1						
Cheltenham	16	3	4	5	3			1				
Stroud	14	3	7	3			1					
Forest Mining	11	11										
County Towns	19	4	10	5			1					
Gloucester Rural	23	1	10	9	2		1					
Bisley Rural	7		4	2	1							
Cheltenham Rural	12	1	5	4	1							1
Dursley Rural	10		7	1	1	1						
Tetbury Rural	10		3	1	3	2					1	
N. Forest Rural	24*	1	9	7	4	1	1					
S. Forest Rural	10*	2	3	3		1						
Hawkesbury Rural	19	2	9	5	3							
Stonehouse Rural	9	1	3	4	1							
Tewkesbury Rural	16	1	3	7	2	2	1					
Cirencester Rural	21		7	7	5	1		1				
Campden Rural	16	1	6	6	3							
Fairford Rural	13		5	8								
Northleach Rural	14	1	7	3	1	1	1					
Stow Rural +	22	1	4	9	4	4						
Winchcombe Rural	12	2	2	4	2	1	1					
Totals	318	42	115	98	36	15	6	2			1	1

*- One parish in each area did not disclose the number of Easter communicants

+ - Broadwell and Adlestrop figures have been assessed separately

Church influence appears greater when Electoral Roll plus Sunday School totals are combined in relation to parish populations. (Table 7.7) These results show peaks in the region of 20 to 50 per cent with over 50 per cent of the population having some involvement with their church in 67 parishes (21 per cent).

**Table 7.7: Summary of Church Commitment in Parishes
in Relation to Population, 1921
Electoral Roll and Sunday School Totals**

Area	Parishes	0- 9%	10- 19%	20- 29%	30- 39%	40- 49%	50- 59%	60- 69%	70- 79%	80- 89%	90- 99%	Over 100%
Gloucester	20	4	5	4	3	2	1		1			
Cheltenham	16		6	7	2	1						
Stroud	14		6	4	2	1					1	
Forest Mining	11	4	7									
County Towns	19		1	5	7	5	1					
Gloucester Rural	23		2	2	6	5	3	3	2			
Bisley Rural	7			2	2	1	1	1				
Cheltenham Rural	12	1	3	4	2	1						1
Dursley Rural	10		1	2	3	2	1	1				
Tetbury Rural	10			2	2	1	1	1		1	1	
N. Forest Rural	24		3	9	5	4	1	1		1		
S. Forest Rural	10		1	5	2	1			1			
Hawkesbury Rural	19		2	2	7	4	1	2	1			
Stonehouse Rural	9		1	4	2	1	1					
Tewkesbury Rural	16		1	4		5	3	2	1			
Cirencester Rural	21		1	5	5	4	4	2				
Campden Rural	16		1	2	6	1	4	2				
Fairford Rural	13		1	2	4	6						
Northleach Rural	14		1	3	3	4	1	1	1			
Stow Rural+	22		2	5	2	3	4	5	1			
Winchcombe Rural	12				2	4		4	2			
Totals	318	10	49	75	65	51	27	25	10	2	2	1

+ Broadwell and Adlestrop figures have been assessed separately

It therefore seems that either Bishop Gibson's assumption of a Church membership of over 50 per cent was aspirational rather than actual or that he was adopting some other criterion than the number of Easter communicants. Like George Bayfield Roberts, other incumbents would have been well aware that not all members of their regular congregations were communicants. At Painswick in 1899, it was calculated that if the parish contained 300 communicants, the "general" congregation

must number 500,⁴⁰ *i.e.*, the communicants were 60 per cent of the whole congregation. That formula cannot be applied with confidence to every parish in the diocese but there is some evidence to suggest that it may not have been wholly untypical. Assuming that the Electoral Rolls represented the regular adult worshippers in a parish, the figures from 1920 onwards suggest that, on average, about 70 per cent were Easter communicants.

**Table 7.8 Comparison of Electoral Roll
and Easter Communicant Numbers
1920-1923**

	1920	1921	1922	1923
Easter Communicants	38,057	38,933	39,323	40,262
Electoral Roll Numbers	52,432	56,161	56,571	58,109
% Communicants to Electoral Roll numbers	72.6	69.3	69.5	69.3

41

In 1914 Ernest Smith, the Vicar of Tewkesbury publicly expressed his dissatisfaction with the practice of using Easter communicant figures as a measure of Church allegiance because, he wrote, "as every parish priest knows, a great many persons make their communion on Easter Day who are never seen at God's Board on any other day of the year, and have no intention of fulfilling any other of the responsibilities of churchmanship"⁴² Later that year, he compared the number of communicants at the Dedication Festival with the "crowded and enthusiastic" evening congregations and concluded that "even after 35 years of teaching the parishioners of Tewkesbury" had not "yet grasped the fundamental difference between the Holy Eucharist and other services."⁴³ In fact, the returns for Tewkesbury Abbey from 1920

⁴⁰ *Painswick Parish Magazine*, May 1899. The communicants' figure seems credible. In 1903, there were 330 communicants in the parish. *Diocesan Statistics*, 1903/04

⁴¹ *Diocesan Statistics*, 1920 to 1923 inclusive

⁴² *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, April 1914. There were 581 communicants at the Abbey that Easter Day.

⁴³ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, October, 1914. The Vicar therefore dated the start of such teaching as from 1879, during the incumbency of Hemming Robeson (1877 to 1892).

to 1923 show a fairly close correspondence between the Easter communicant and Electoral Roll figures. However, the evidence from that parish at least suggests both that many of the regular congregation were communicants at Easter only and that a consistently large proportion of those who enrolled as communicants failed to make their communions even on that day.

Table 7.9 Comparison of Electoral Roll and Easter Communicant Totals at Tewkesbury Abbey 1920-1923⁴⁴

<i>Year</i>	<i>Electoral Roll</i>	<i>Easter Communicants</i>	<i>Communicants' Roll</i>	<i>Not Communicating</i>
1920	451	475	550	75
1921	444	459	500	41
1922	469	420	500	80
1923	604	475	600	125

Easter communicant figures were a measure of the width but not the depth of the laity's commitment to the Church but, despite clergy reservations about their value, it was difficult to find wholly satisfactory alternatives until the introduction of Electoral Rolls. The availability of Electoral Roll data from 1920 onwards, however, underlines the fact that, whatever the expectations and demands of their clergy, not all churchgoers felt a need or duty to be communicants. In every deanery except Cheltenham in 1921 the same pattern prevailed whereby those who volunteered for inclusion on the Rolls outnumbered Easter communicants and this trend is more evident when it is remembered that the Easter communicant figures were not the norm but an exceptional maximum.

⁴⁴ *Diocesan Statistics, 1920-1923*

**Table: 7.10 Electoral Roll and Easter Communicants
Deanery Totals Compared, 1921**

<i>Deanery</i>	<i>Electoral Roll</i>	<i>Easter Communicants</i>	<i>E.R./E.C. Difference</i>
Cheltenham	8,689	9,260	- 571
Gloucester	9,400	6,345	+ 3055
Stonehouse	3,882	2,596	+ 1286
Forest South	3,353	2,549	+ 804
Cirencester	2,653	2,459	+ 194
Bisley	3,026	2,236	+ 790
Forest North	2,957	2,129	+ 828
Dursley	3,675	1,879	+ 1796
Tewkesbury	2,865	1,738	+ 1127
Stow	2,996	1,654	+ 1342
Hawkesbury	3,227	1,442	+ 1785
Campden	2,689	1,260	+ 1429
Fairford	1,895	988	+ 907
Tetbury	1,713	931	+ 782
Winchcombe	1,629	772	+ 857
Northleach	1,507	695	+ 812
<i>Totals</i>	<i>56,156</i>	<i>36,474</i>	<i>19,862</i>

45

George Bayfield Roberts' may well have interpreted the above totals as corroboration of his objection, quoted earlier, that "disloyal" Churchmen, that is, non-communicants, were being offered authority in Church government. His own parish of Elmstone Hardwicke, provided a graphic illustration in 1921 of the situation he apparently deplored. 18 of the 22 communicants on the Communicant Roll made their communions at Easter, but they were only a quarter of the 71 (37 men and 34 women) who enrolled as electors.⁴⁶ Bayfield Roberts left the parish the following year and it was then amalgamated with the neighbouring village of Swindon but whether the two events were connected and his departure was occasioned by despair at this development is not known.

In a number of other parishes, the imbalance between voters and communicants was even more dramatically demonstrated. For example, at Berkeley there were 933 names on the Electoral Roll compared to 325 communicants. At

Tetbury, the respective figures were 677 and 233; at St. James' Gloucester 950 and 469. On the other hand, at Cirencester 1164 communicants greatly outnumbered the 664 voters. The trend continued at least until 1923 when the figures were 1147 and 651 respectively.

The two churches in Charlton Kings produced a curious result in that their Electoral Roll and communicant returns were virtually mirror images of each other. The ancient parish church of St. Mary had 341 electors and 693 communicants; the more modern church of Holy Apostles had 693 electors and 346 communicants. The most likely explanation for this phenomenon is that individuals registered for election in the parish in which they resided but crossed parish boundaries to make their communion, possibly out of traditional loyalties.

One obvious conclusion to emerge from the Electoral Roll figures is that women outnumbered men as electors, particularly in Cheltenham Deanery where the percentage was approximately 69 to 31. In no deanery did the male proportion reach 50 per cent. These ratios were more heavily biased towards females than might be expected to be caused by demographic factors alone which, as has already been noted, (Table 7.1) were approximately 54:46 in favour of females. However, the situation was reversed when those same voters elected P.C.C. members and Gloucester and Cheltenham, the two deaneries with substantial urban populations produced both the highest totals and the highest proportions of male P.C.C. members. Since women were the largest section of the P.C.C. electorate it seems unlikely that the election results demonstrated any significant animus against them. It seems more probable that

⁴⁵ *Diocesan Statistics*, 1921. Cheltenham's deviation from the general trend must be regarded as only temporary. By 1923, the Electoral Roll total (9,466) exceeded that of Easter Day communicants (9,298) although if Easter week communicants were added to the latter figure it mounted to 10,025.

⁴⁶ *Diocesan Statistics*, 1921

they represented a continuation of the conventional attitude that debate and legislation, even at this relatively humble level, was more properly men's business.

The number of P.C.C.s where women outnumbered men is a relatively small proportion of the whole — 44 out of 317 parishes — only two of which (St Aldate's, Gloucester and Holy Trinity, Tewkesbury) could be termed urban. Some of the parish returns illustrate Bishop Gibson's concern that the rules might be being misunderstood. These specified that while the electors must be 18 or older, 21 was the minimum age for members of P.C.C.s. As he informed the clergy in 1921, it had been noted from Churchwarden returns that "in several cases" "the Parochial Church Council consists of 'all communicants on the roll,' or 'the communicants,' or 'all the electors', or 'all the regular communicants on the electoral roll,' or, in one case, 'the entire village.'" ⁴⁷

Because the P.C.C. system was still in its infancy by 1923, no attempt has been made here to analyse how successful it was as a system of church government. Neither is it clear whether the apathy which was soon manifested at Tewkesbury Abbey was typical of the diocese as a whole. Ernest Smith, the Vicar of Tewkesbury, had been strongly in favour of the movement towards greater lay participation in church government. In 1920, with 450 registered electors in the parish, 120 of whom were present at the first Parochial Church meeting under the new Act, he had voiced his hope that the P.C.C. would be his "H.Q. staff" and the expression of the Church's conscience. ⁴⁸ But two years later, he described the attendance at the Annual Meeting "disgracefully small." Of 444 names on the Electoral Roll, "410 parochial electors had absented themselves without any apology" from the 1922 Annual Meeting. He was thus moved to complain: "It almost seems as if, now that we have secured self-

⁴⁷ Gibson, *Charge to the Clergy of Gloucester*, 1921, *op. cit.*, p. 9

government for the Church, parishioners are not even sufficiently interested in it to come to the one meeting in the year at which they exercise that right in their own parish.”⁴⁹ Some clearer conclusions emerge from a study of the level of Easter communicants but the interpretation of these figures is subject to reservation. A comparison with the numbers on Communicant Rolls and those who actually made their communions in Easter 1921 shows that (Table 7.10) that the former exceeded the latter by nearly 7,000.⁵⁰

There were some apparently impressive individual attendances which need to be placed within the context of the size of the population, subject to the proviso that worshippers in town churches could and did cross parish boundaries. The following lists parishes which had 400 or more communicants:

Table 7.11: Parishes with 400 or more communicants, 1921

<i>Parish</i>	<i>Population, 1921</i>	<i>Communicants</i>	<i>%</i>
St. Mary with St Matthew, Cheltenham	4,133	1,230	29.8
St. John the Baptist, Cirencester	5,567	1,164	20.9
All Saints', Cheltenham	2,822	1,000	35.4
Christ Church, Cheltenham	3,513	901	25.6
St. Mary, Charlton Kings	2,746	693	25.2
St. Stephen, Cheltenham	1,030	662	64.3
All Saints', Gloucester	4,974	543	10.9
St. Catharine, Gloucester	1,691	478	28.3
St. James, Gloucester	5,711	469	8.2
Tewkesbury Abbey	2,304	459	20.0
St. Phillip & St. James, Leckhampton	1,906	457	24.0
St. James, Cheltenham	2,229	443	19.9

⁴⁸ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, May 1920.

⁴⁹ *ibid.* May, 1922

⁵⁰ At Fairford in 1913 the Communicants' Union met monthly and one of the conditions of membership was "to communicate once a month at least unless hindered by sickness or some other urgent cause." *Fairford Parish Magazine*, October, 1913. It is not known whether this was standard practice in all the parishes but the Fairford returns show that in the five year period from 1908/09 to 1912/13, the numbers on the Communicants Roll consistently exceeded the number making their Easter communions by some 30 to 40. *Diocesan Statistics*. The case was considered for using Communicant Roll figures as the measure of church commitment but rejected because a number of parishes did not appear to have such rolls and their use would therefore distort the general picture.

but when measured against the parish population, they are less imposing. For example, the two churches of Cirencester which, unlike those of Gloucester and Cheltenham, had no neighbouring (and therefore competing) parishes of comparable size, attracted only about one-fifth of the town's population.

Secondly, the Easter communicant figures should be viewed as the undoubted peak and not the typical level of Eucharistic worship in a parish's year. For example, at Tewkesbury Abbey where, it might fairly be said, there was an consistent emphasis on the importance of Eucharistic worship, only just over half of Easter communicants returned to the altar at Whitsun. The number of communicants at major festivals in the parish in 1921 was: Easter 459; Ascension Day 159; Whitsun 276; Dedication Festival 162; Christmas 367 and the average number of Sunday communicants varied between 65 and 80. This was not an isolated phenomenon. The number of communicants at the Abbey during the major festivals from 1878 to 1922 shows a fairly consistent pattern with Easter, Christmas, Whitsun and Ascension apparently signifying the descending order of priority for the parish communicants. There were a few notable exceptions to the general rule. Up Hatherley parish in Cheltenham deanery was credited by the Census with a population of 123. If 33 Sunday School children⁵¹ are deducted from that figure, the adult population must have been at most 90. Yet it had 120 communicants on the Communicants' Roll, (of whom 115 made their communions at Easter 1921) and 98 on the Electoral Roll.

⁵¹ *Diocesan Statistics, 1921*

It therefore seems highly probable that in this case, either the Diocese had made a serious miscalculation about the size of the parish or that worshippers were coming to the church, which had a seating capacity of 150, from beyond parochial boundaries. The latter seems quite a feasible explanation because, although the Diocese placed the parish in the "rural" category, it is only a few miles from Cheltenham. No such ready explanation can be offered for the high level of communicants at Westonbirt in Tetbury deanery. Out of a population of 154 (116 being of Confirmation age) 127 were on the Electoral Roll and 106 made their communions at Easter. The village is within reasonable distance of Tetbury town and it could be conjectured that some of the 92 parishioners on Tetbury's communicants' roll who failed to make their communions at their parish church preferred to go to Weston Birt in 1921, were it not for the fact that for both Up Hatherley and Weston Birt, these were not isolated results, but fairly typical for the period. In two other parishes, the number of Easter communicants during the period 1920 to 1923 was consistently above average. At St. Stephen's, Cheltenham (population 1373, 1030 after adjustment) the number of communicants varied from 570 to 656 and at Edgeworth in Cirencester Deanery (population 114, 86 after adjustment) from 55 to 63. As with Up Hatherley, the attendance at St Stephen's can be explained by its proximity to other churches, two in Cheltenham and one in Leckhampton. The congregation at Edgeworth, a small Cotswold parish, however, is unlikely to have been inflated by many visitors. More truly rural than Up Hatherley which stood just outside the Cheltenham boundary, its 1921 population, according to the Census, was 114. There were 12 Sunday School pupils that year and 14 in 1920, so the adult population was almost certainly under 100 (the '75 per cent formula' calculation is

86). But it returned the communicant figures shown above and in 1922 produced its first Electoral Roll of 85, 45 men and 40 women.

At the other end of the scale, it seemed evident that the Church of England had failed to capture the populations of the more industrial or more densely populated parishes of the diocese. In none of the 11 parishes of the Forest of Dean designated by the Diocese as 'Forest Mining Area' did 10 per cent of the population make their communion. A survey of Easter communicants in those parishes from 1920 to 1923 is shown below:

**Table 7.12 Easter Communicants in the Forest Mining Area
1920-1923⁵²**

<i>Parish</i>	<i>1921 Pop *</i>	<i>1920</i>	<i>1921</i>	<i>1922</i>	<i>1923</i>
Coleford	3,761	312	301	354	365
Cinderford St Stephen's	3,662	190	190	170	192
Lydney	3,508	319	333	275	275
Cinderford, Holy Trinity	3,134	80	36	38	73
Cinderford, St John's	2,624	138	169	165	174
Parkend St Paul's	2,420	102	98	98	137
Bream	2,042	116	121	121	69
Lydbrook	1,866	85	78	78	75
Viney Hill, All Saints'	1,409	76	68	73	85
Christchurch	1,197	103	96	106	106
Ruardean	761	31	25	25	36

Population figures are 75 per cent of the Census count.

These results ought not to have surprised the diocesan leaders since it had long been accepted in the diocese that Forest was an area fairly impervious to Anglican influence, a situation attributed by many to neglect by earlier generations of Church leaders.⁵³

⁵² *Diocesan Statistics, 1920-1923*

⁵³ *Cf. Chapter 1*

Seven of Gloucester's 14 inner city parishes and three Cheltenham parishes in the poorer parts of the town also failed to attract ten per cent of the eligible population to the altar and in three other Gloucester and another Cheltenham parish where an additional church had been built in a large parish, the number of communicants was only just above ten per cent level. Viewed in isolation, the numbers often suggest a thriving parish, but when set against the size of the population, they look less significant. In Cheltenham and Gloucester those parishes where the ten per cent standard was not achieved were:

Table 7.13 Gloucester and Cheltenham Parishes with Under 10 per cent Communicants⁵⁴

<i>Parish</i>	<i>1921 Pop.*</i>	<i>1920</i>	<i>1921</i>	<i>1922</i>	<i>1923</i>
St Paul with Tuffley, Gloucester	7,981	556	554	544	507
St. James, Gloucester	5,711	486	469	483	502
St. Paul, Cheltenham	4,803	348	342	411	374
St. Peter, Cheltenham	2,974	189	199	179	200
St. Luke, Gloucester	2,930	200	210	132	206
St. Mark, Cheltenham	2,527	263	219	262	264
St John the Baptist, Gloucester	1,506	85	78	90	87
Christ Church, Gloucester	1,481	127	127	163	156
St. Mary de Lode, Gloucester	3,281	198	195	158	169
St. Mark, Gloucester	3,049	158	212	201	228

• * 75 per cent of Census total

Those just exceeding the ten per cent level were:

Table 7.14 Gloucester and Cheltenham Parishes with Just Over 10 per cent of Population as Communicants⁵⁵

<i>Parish</i>	<i>1921 Pop*</i>	<i>1920</i>	<i>1921</i>	<i>1922</i>	<i>1923</i>
All Saints' Gloucester	4,974	499	543	579	621
St. Luke the Less, Gloucester	3,084	311	307	322	314
St. Nicholas, Gloucester	1,571	167	167	136	128
St. Luke with Emmanuel, Cheltenham	5,004	658	545	555	548

* 75 per cent of Census total

⁵⁴ *Diocesan Statistics, 1920-1923*

⁵⁵ *ibid.*

Conclusion

The above survey has assessed the strength of the Church of England in the diocese in one particular Census year and in general found both that its influence on the surrounding population was weak and that its bishops' estimate of the degree of that influence was far too sanguine. In the case of the mining districts of the Forest of Dean, the figures have confirmed what was evident to most observers of the Church scene. But in other cases, there is some evidence to suggest that statistics alone are an inadequate method of determining Church strength. They show, for example, that the Easter 1921 communicants at St. Paul's Gloucester (including the Tuffley conventional district) represented 9.3 per cent of the "communicant" population. Yet viewed from Tewkesbury, St. Paul's was an example of Anglican success, not failure, because of the nature of the parish. In 1919, announcing that one of the preachers during the Abbey's Dedication Festival would be the Rev, Herbert Hadow, priest in charge of St. Paul's, the Vicar of Tewkesbury continued: "His parish is a very 'live' one, and that is saying a great deal, for cathedral cities are apt to be very disheartening for parochial work."⁵⁶ This suggests that judgments of church work, based on statistics alone should be treated with caution.

⁵⁶ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, October 1919

Chapter 8
The Diocese and the
First World War

The Clergy and the War

At the conclusion of the first chapter it was suggested that although the clergy were touched by such external developments as depressions in trade and agriculture, they were protected from the full effects by the nature of their calling, unlike those parishioners who were directly involved in daily labour. No such barrier separated priest and people in the Great War of 1914-1918, arguably the severest test of the nation's physical, moral and spiritual strength in the early twentieth century.¹ Both Bishop Gibson and Henry Spence-Jones, the Dean of Gloucester, had sons holding regular commissions in the Royal Marines and Army respectively and at least 81 diocesan clergy² families had sons or daughters who volunteered or were conscripted to serve with the Forces during the war.

By the end of the war, two clergy fathers, Arthur Gabell, formerly rector of Swindon Village and Samuel Robertson, vicar of St Catharine's Gloucester each had five serving sons. Neither were the clergy immune from the tragedies of war. 14 clergy families lost at least one son and Charles Murray-Browne of Hucclecote and Percy Hattersley-Smith, formerly a teacher at Cheltenham College, each had two sons killed in action. As the war progressed, many of the younger parish clergy were moved from their parochial duties to serve either at the front or at home-based munitions factories. In July 1918, Bishop Gibson expressed his satisfaction with the response of the diocesan clergy to the call to service.³ Although the number of volunteers had been small, compared with those from dioceses with large towns, "hardly any of the clergy under 50" remained in some of Gloucester's rural deaneries

¹ Alan Wilkinson agrees that, country-wide, the war brought the clergy into a closer relationship with the people. Wilkinson, A., *The Church of England and the First World War*, London, S.C.M. Press, 1978, p. 66

² Collated from the 1914-1918 volumes of the *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*. For the purpose of this chapter, the definition of "diocesan clergy" includes the retired and those working in education.

³ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1918, p. 99

and many priests were single-handedly looking after two parishes. Out of 350 incumbents and licensed curates, over a quarter were giving direct support to the war effort. 43 were chaplains to the Army or the Navy, 18 were working at Church Army (C.A.) or Young Men's Christian Association (Y.M.C.A.) huts, ⁴ nine were working with the Royal Army Medical Corps (R.A.M.C.) and 23 were chaplains at Voluntary Aid Detachment (V.A.D.) hospitals. ⁵ In view of a shortage of Army chaplains, the Bishop also nominated ten more men from the diocese to the War Office. ⁶ That list did not include the name of Ernest Smith, the Vicar of Tewkesbury who professed himself eager to serve. But the Chaplain-General had set an age limit of 42. Mr Smith was 48 and so informed his parish that he would obey his "Commanding Officer" (*i.e.*, the bishop) and "remain at his post." ⁷ Mr Smith had earlier been "indignant at the insult offered to the National Church" in changes to the Military Service Act "exempting her ministers from military service" and especially critical of the role played by the Irish Roman Catholic bishops in securing those changes:

Nothing is sadder in all this bitter war than the part played by the authorities of the Roman Church, from the Pope downwards, but the present action of the Roman clergy in Ireland completes the moral bankruptcy of the church which they represent. We always knew that to be a Romanist was to be 'un-English'; we now know that it may easily come to mean 'anti-English'. ⁸

The bishop's account did not include those clergy assigned to work with munitions workers, but there is some evidence that such deployments may not always

⁴ The Salvation Army, Church Army and the Y.M.C.A. set up these temporary buildings not far from the firing line so that soldiers could get rest, refreshment, entertainment or spiritual counsel. The service was greatly valued by the troops. See W.D.S. and J.D.N. (editors) *Wycliffe and the War: A School Record*, Gloucester, John Bellows, 1923, *passim*. *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, May, 1915.

⁵ Emergency hospitals set up in schools and other suitable large buildings to receive sick and wounded men from the battlefield. There were eight major V.A.D. hospitals in Cheltenham alone. Devereux G. and Sacker, G.: *Leaving All That Was Dear: Cheltenham and the Great War*, Cheltenham, Promenade Publications, 1997, pp. xxiii, xxiv

⁶ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1918, p. 18

⁷ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, June 1918. He had a tendency to adopt military terminology at the time.

have been thoroughly thought through. In May 1917 the Revd. Albert Addenbrooke, Vicar of Chalford, near Stroud, was appointed chaplain to the munitions workers at the Gloucester Filling Factory and to Christ Church, Gloucester which had been designated "The Munitions Workers' Church." Mr Addenbrooke made arrangements for the care of his parish during his absence.⁹ Yet within a year, it was announced that he would be returning to his parish because there was "not enough work to occupy him" and that his chaplain's duties would be assumed by the Revd. William Williams, the Vicar of Christ Church.¹⁰

Neither did the Bishop refer to the role adopted by many clergy as unofficial recruiting officers for the Forces.¹¹ Encouragement to enlist often took the form of shaming those who were reluctant to respond. The Rector of Bourton on the Hill, making an appeal to mothers in his parish to release their sons, warned that in the near future "every young man left at home will feel ashamed to be seen going about" and "those connected with them will be ashamed of them too." But the mothers who had "given their lads to England" would be able to rejoice in "the distinction which will be theirs to the end of their lives."¹² His neighbour at Bourton on the Water considered that the volunteers were to be envied, rather than pitied, because they had responded to their country's call in the hour of need:

On the other hand, we believe that any who might have offered themselves and have not done so will, when the war is happily over, never cease to regret that they can claim no share in the great and manly task of warding off a ruthless enemy from the dear land and homes of England.¹³

⁸ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, May, 1918

⁹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1917, p. 70

¹⁰ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1918, p. 67

¹¹ Cf. Wilkinson, *The Church of England and the First World War*, *op. cit.* pp.32-42 for a description of the role exercised by bishops and clergy throughout the country in recruiting.

¹² *Stow Deanery Magazine*, April, 1915

¹³ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, October, 1914

Similarly, the young men of Bledington, who were responding only slowly to the appeal for recruits, were told by their rector that those who were “able to respond and fail to do so will be sorry for it some day.”¹⁴ The Vicar of Tewkesbury took a similar line, claiming that members of the Abbey who had enlisted were to be envied for “their privilege in taking an active part in this high enterprise” and expressing astonishment that any “of eligible age and good health could have done otherwise, if they were to be true to their manhood and to their King.”¹⁵ The following month, he developed this line of appeal with an implied threat that those who stayed at home would be ostracized by the fighting men. He predicted that the soldiers who had found religious conviction during the war would:

naturally return to [Church of England] services, but they will turn away again in disgust if they find that able-bodied slackers have been quietly accepted by her as a matter of course and are now to be found not only in her congregations, but singing in her choirs, teaching in her Sunday Schools and serving at her Altars.¹⁶

It was an approach also later adopted by the Rector of Bourton on the Hill. Noting that some young unmarried men in the village had still to volunteer, he asked them to think of their companions who had taken up arms:

How will they feel when they have to face in years to come those noble fellows, who went out and did their part, if they hold back now? In some cases, it is the parents who still prevent them from joining. Surely such have never realised how their sons will be regarded in after-life if they fail in their duty now.¹⁷

¹⁴ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, October, 1914

¹⁵ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, May, 1915

¹⁶ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, June 1915

¹⁷ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, June, 1915

The Church Lads' Brigade

One body of young Churchmen apparently needed little cajoling to enlist. The Church Lads' Brigade (C.L.B.) proved a natural nursery for the Army. According to the rector of Bourton on the Water in 1915, 13 lads from his parish were among 50,000 former C.L.B. boys serving with the Army where the "drill and discipline" which they had learned with the Brigade were proving "invaluable."¹⁸ One, possibly two, battalions were said to be formed entirely of former C.L.B. members¹⁹ and other young C.L.B. lads were guarding public utilities at home.²⁰ When the Gloucester C.L.B. paraded on Whit Monday, 1915 they wore khaki uniforms and those assembled were told by Colonel Sir Arthur Anstice,²¹ that they were "the soldiers of the future" and he hoped that, when called upon, they would "lose no opportunity of serving their country."²² According to one post-War report, 25 former C.L.B. men won the Victoria Cross during the War.²³

The transformation of the C.L.B. into a virtual Army Cadet Force was not without irony since in the pre-War years, the Gloucestershire clergy spent effort in trying to downplay the militaristic image of the organisation in order to allay the suspicions of mothers about its combative tendencies. The Bourton on the Water company commander in 1907 attributed the relatively small size of his squad to the fact that

¹⁸ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, January, 1915

¹⁹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1915, p. 11

²⁰ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, June, 1915

²¹ Chairman of the Gloucestershire Territorial Association

²² *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1915, p. 105

²³ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, September, 1920

The mothers of Bourton appeared to be convinced that the Church Lads' Brigade is merely a recruiting agency for the Army in disguise and in these remote rural districts the boy who enlists in the Army is popularly regarded as a lost soul. If this delusion could be dispelled, the Bourton company should double its numbers in a very short time. ²⁴

When the members engaged in "old bayonet", sword and firing exercises ²⁵ and the virtues of teaching lads to shoot were extolled, ²⁶ the attitude of the mothers is understandable. But for its apologists, the distinguishing mark of the C.L.B. was its spiritual dimension. It was, said the Vicar of Tewkesbury in 1920, "true that military drill, shooting, scouting, signalling," and "ambulance work" were "taught as a means of instilling discipline into the lads", but the organisation was "equally concerned with moral and character training — of officers and lads receiving communion together at camp — and of sport and healthy pastimes." ²⁷ However, association with the organisation did not prove to be an open door to the Army for the Revd. Thomas Williams, the curate of Painswick, who complained in 1916 that the War Office were apparently not rushing to accept his offer to become a chaplain despite his "experience and attainments", having "held a high position for some years" with the Brigade. ²⁸

The War's Effects in the Diocese

Church activities in the diocese were obviously affected by the war. As early as September, 1914 a number of conferences were cancelled because the organisers could not give them sufficient attention ²⁹ and the Church Army van was taken out of commission for its duration. ³⁰ As the war continued, the rationing of fuel and food imposed further restrictions. Travel difficulties meant the curtailment of a number of

²⁴ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, March, 1907

²⁵ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, July 1903

²⁶ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, February, 1902

²⁷ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, September, 1920

²⁸ *Painswick Church Magazine*, August, 1916.

events normally held on a diocesan-wide basis, such as the Diocesan Conference³¹ and the Day of Intercession for Foreign Missions which was confined to the Tewkesbury area in 1917.³² At Bourton on the Water, it was decided in 1916 that a course of instruction should be suspended “as most people have so little leisure from work of one kind or another for our country and her soldiers.”³³ Annual “Treats” for Sunday School children were also cancelled because of food rationing³⁴ and special regulations were introduced at the national level to permit the manufacture for religious purposes of a specified grade of flour.³⁵ All these were fairly inevitable consequences of the wartime situation and derived from factors outside the control of the ordinary priest or layman.

Of more concern to Bishop Gibson were his doubts whether priests and people alike were responding to the spiritual implications of the situation. Special services of intercession at the Cathedral in June 1915 brought a “remarkable response.” Two services were held, one in the afternoon and one in the evening, with the nave of the building filled on each occasion “with entirely different congregations.” “In the afternoon, every part of the diocese was represented; in the evening, mostly the people of Gloucester and neighbourhood.”³⁶ Despite this, the bishop was not satisfied. In August, 1915 his information was that in the parishes intercession services were being “fairly attended” but that places existed where there seemed “but little response.”³⁷ At a meeting with his Archdeacons and Rural Deans on September 30, 1915

²⁹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1914, p. 136

³⁰ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1919, p. 137

³¹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1917, p. 104

³² *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1917, p. 106

³³ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, January, 1916

³⁴ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1917, pp.71-72

³⁵ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1917, p. 86

³⁶ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1915, p. 99

³⁷ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1915, p. 111

He confessed to a feeling of doubt as to whether the clergy were uniformly using at their highest and fullest the deep spiritual opportunities offered by the circumstances of the time for bringing their people back to God and was anxious now to take counsel with the Archdeacons and Rural Deans as to the best steps to be taken to help the clergy to meet all the tremendous demands thus made upon them. ³⁸

The outcome of those consultations was a decision to “write and circularise to all clergy of the diocese a personal, confidential letter of advice, suggestion and exhortation” in which the recipients were urged to arrange special services “at such times as may be really most convenient for the people.” ³⁹

The evidence from parochial sources indicates that after an initial burst of enthusiasm at the start of the war, interest in the spiritual response soon waned but revived in some areas towards the end of the conflict. In September, 1914 Stow reported a “whole-hearted” response to the Church’s call for prayer and intercession and at Bourton on the Water, “the summons to prayer, the call to duty and the appeal for generous giving” were reportedly all “being nobly responded to.” Bledington reported “crowded congregations” and Bourton on the Hill announced that “many have availed themselves of the opportunity thus given of making continual intercession to Almighty God”. ⁴⁰ But on January 3rd 1915, a day of ‘National Intercession’, the Vicar of Bourton on the Water found that his congregation consisted of those who were “usually seen at church” and that the general public had ignored the call. ⁴¹ On the other hand, Oddington had “a few more Easter communicants” in 1915 than in the previous year. ⁴² But in April, 1916, the Vicar of Naunton admitted

³⁸ *Meeting of Archdeacons and Rural Deans*, GDR A8/1, September 30, 1915

³⁹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1915, p.111

⁴⁰ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, September 1914

⁴¹ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, February, 1915

⁴² *Stow Deanery Magazine*, May, 1915

that the number of communions made at his church in the first quarter of the year had been “little more than half” of those made in the same period the previous year.⁴³

The Vicar of Tewkesbury had noted a decline in enthusiasm at an earlier stage. In November, 1914, he reported that many parishioners who had formerly habitually attended the morning services as a family were “almost as regularly, conspicuous by their absence” although he conceded that it was possible that such absences were due not to the war, but to changes in service times.⁴⁴ But by 1915 he had discerned a definite abatement. The wives and mothers of men on active service were no longer seen in church, the average attendance at the Sunday Eucharist had dropped to a half of the pre-war figure and daily services and both Morning Prayer and Eucharist during the week were sparsely attended. In his opinion, there ought to have been “at least as many non-combatants” at services of intercession “as we have soldiers at the front and in training, *i.e.* about 400.”⁴⁵ If a drop of 73 in the number of communicants that Easter could be explained by the absence of men on active service, it also showed that those who were “lax in times of peace” had not compensated for those absentees by returning to the altar.⁴⁶ The retrograde trend continued throughout the year. Only a few C.E.M.S. members were to be seen at intercession services and at the early morning Eucharists. When the Tewkesbury Rural Deanery held its half-yearly Conference, the lay members were “conspicuous by their absence”⁴⁷ and when the children of the parish were asked to forego their annual summer treat so that the money could be diverted to one of the funds for helping soldiers, the wounded or

⁴³ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, April 1916

⁴⁴ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, November, 1914

⁴⁵ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, February, 1915

⁴⁶ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, May, 1915. The Easter communicant figures for the Abbey in the war years were: 1914 – 581; 1915 – 508; 1916 – 485; 1917 – 446; 1918 – 466.

⁴⁷ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, July, 1915

refugees, to the Vicar's disgust they "deliberately" voted against the proposal.⁴⁸ By the time of the Christmas treat, the Vicar came up with an ingenious solution to the problem, stating that it would be held only if adult parishioners would guarantee to fund it.⁴⁹ As "not a single subscription for that purpose" was received, the Vicar was satisfied that public opinion in the town was opposed to treats and that the town's children would be incorporated in the "universal self-denial so necessary and wholesome" for the times.⁵⁰

Table 8.1 below compares on a deanery basis the Easter communicant figures for 1914, the last pre-war Easter, with those for 1918, the last wartime Easter, and with those for 1920, the first post-war Easter for which figures are available, and notes the changes.⁵¹ The figures indicate that, on average, parishes lost 16 communicants throughout the war years but that after the war the totals recovered to just under the pre-war figures. As the data do not identify the age or gender of the communicants, any definitive conclusions must be tentative but the inference which may be drawn from these totals is that the onset of war, enlistment and conscription made only a minor difference to parish life. In other words, in general, the young men of the diocese were not communicants either before or after the war.

Analysis of individual parishes indicates that there were a number of variations to the broad picture. At Bourton on the Hill, 22 young male villagers had enlisted by May, 1915.⁵² This may well explain a fall in the number of Easter communicants from 116 in 1915 to 90 the following year.⁵³ But at Lower Slaughter,

⁴⁸ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, August, 1915

⁴⁹ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, December, 1915

⁵⁰ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, January, 1916

⁵¹ *Diocesan Statistics*. No figures for 1919 are held in the Diocesan Archives

⁵² *Stow Deanery Magazine*, May 1915

⁵³ *Diocesan Statistics*, 1914/1915, 1915/1916

all 28 of the fit unmarried men of military age⁵⁴ “had joined the colours” by July, 1915 yet the Easter communicants that year actually increased (68 from 61) over the 1914 total and held at 60 in 1916.⁵⁵ More markedly, it has been estimated that by Christmas 1914, 111 men from the Batsford and Moreton in Marsh parishes were serving with the Army or Navy.⁵⁶ Despite this, both the numbers on the Communicants’ Roll and the number of Easter communicants increased for most of the war years.⁵⁷

At Tewkesbury, the Easter communicants for four local churches⁵⁸ totalled 745 in 1914 and 628 in 1918, a drop of 117 and, at an average of 29.5 per church, nearly twice the average deanery figure. However, the shortfall of 117 has to be viewed from the perspective that, according to the Vicar of Tewkesbury’s own estimate in February 1918, at least 800 townsmen had gone into the services since 1914 and between two to three hundred others had left to carry out other war work. His own comparisons showed that there were 581 communicants at the Abbey at Easter 1914 and 446 in 1917. However, in that time there had been an increase in Sunday communions (5,184 from 5,022) which he considered to be a more accurate “test of a parish’s spiritual growth” than the numbers who were present at the major festivals.⁵⁹ A similar verdict was delivered at All Saints’ Cheltenham in 1916 with the disclosure that the number of communions had increased from 16,847 in 1913/14 to

⁵⁴ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, July 1915

⁵⁵ *Diocesan Statistics*, 1913/14, 1914/15, 1915/16

⁵⁶ Fowler, Ken and Stapleton, Guy, *Moreton in Marsh and Batsford Roll of Honour*, Knebworth, Able Press, , 2000, p. 14

⁵⁷ The Roll/communicant figures for the parish were: 1914- 190/140; 1915 – 204/173; 1916 – 200/183; 1917 – 200/167; 1918 – 200/105. *Diocesan Statistics* 1913/14 to 1917/18 inclusive.

⁵⁸ Tewkesbury Abbey, Holy Trinity, Ashchurch and Walton Cardiff are within a few miles radius of the town centre.

⁵⁹ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, February, 1918

21,500 in 1915/16.⁶⁰ Exceptionally, in this parish the number of Easter communicants also increased.⁶¹

The whole question of how far the war, and the consequent movement of large numbers of men from their homes, affected church attendance needs to be related to the question of how many men from the diocese went to war. No definitive figure appears to exist. The emphasis in a few local studies which have recently been published is on those killed in the war rather than those who served.⁶² A calculation of the number of men liable for military conscription in the diocese indicates a figure around 64,000.⁶³

Table 8.1 Easter Communicants 1914, 1918, 1920
Diocese of Gloucester

<i>Deanery</i>	<i>Parishes</i>	<i>1914</i>	<i>1918</i>	<i>Change 1914- 1918</i>	<i>Avge.</i>	<i>1920</i>	<i>Change 1914- 1920</i>	<i>Avge.</i>
Bisley	18	2,600	2,101	-499	-27.7	2,239	-361	-20.1
Campden	15	1,087	867	-220	-14.7	1,195	+108	+7.2
Cheltenham	29	8,524	8,072	-452	-15.6	9,050	+526	+18.1
Cirencester	23	2,347	2,176	-171	-7.4	2,594	+247	+10.7
Dursley	14	1,944	1,686	-258	-18.4	1,861	-83	-5.9
Fairford	14	1,314	934	-380	-27.1	1,062	-252	-18.0
Forest S.	21	2,627	2,058	-569	-27.1	2,536	-91	-4.3
Forest N.	27	2,292	1,684	-608	-22.5	1,952	-340	-12.6
Gloucester	44	6,075	5,826	-249	-5.2	6,039	-36	-0.8
Hawkesbury	20	1,577	1,379	-198	-9.9	1,460	-117	-5.8
Northleach	17	686	601	-85	-5.0	663	-23	-1.3
Stonehouse	15	2,506	2,073	-433	-28.9	2,416	-90	-6.0
Stow	26	1,843	1,588	-255	-9.8	1,711	-132	-5.1
Tetbury	11	1,123	767	-356	-32.4	872	-251	-22.8
Tewkesbury	18	1,894	1,615	-279	-15.5	1,651	-243	-13.5
Winchcombe	14	973	777	-196	-14.0	756	-217	-15.5
Diocese	326	39,412	34,204	-5,208	-16.0	38,057	-1,355	-4.1

⁶⁰ *All Saints' Cheltenham Parish Meeting, op. cit.* April 26, 1916

⁶¹ 995 in 1914; 1004 in 1915; 1040 in 1916; 945 in 1917; 1018 in 1918. *All Saints', Cheltenham Register of Services*, GDR P78/2. The parish's returns to the diocese were usually greater than these figures.

⁶² Devereux and Sacker, *Leaving All That Was Dear, op. cit.*; Fowler and Stapleton, *Moreton in Marsh and Batsford. Roll of Honour, op. cit.*

⁶³ 64,115. The total was calculated by estimating from the 1911 Census data how many men from the diocese would have been eligible for conscription during the war years. It is likely to be an over-estimate because it cannot take into account deaths, movement into and out of the area, those rejected for service because of physical or mental disabilities, those in reserved occupations and conscientious objectors. On the other hand, it does not allow for the women who left their homes to carry out war work.

As might be expected, a closer inspection of the figures reveals a number of variations from the average. In the three Tables below the data is presented for three sample areas, the city of Gloucester, the town of Cheltenham and the mining area of the Forest of Dean.⁶⁴ Three Gloucester and seven Cheltenham parishes actually experienced increases in the number of Easter communicants during the war whereas in the Forest all parishes had a reduction although one, Lydney, reported an increase after the war.

**Table 8.2 Easter Communicants 1914, 1918, 1920
Gloucester Area⁶⁵**

<i>Parish</i>	<i>1914</i>	<i>1918</i>	<i>Change</i>	<i>1920</i>	<i>Change</i>
All Saints'	601	492	-109	499	-102
Christ Church	91	112	+21	127	+36
St Aldate	68	58	-10	52	-16
St Catharine	322	456	+134	395	+73
St James	363	440	+77	486	+123
St John the Baptist	91	83	-8	85	-6
St Luke	185	188	+3	200	+15
St Luke the Less	287	264	-23	311	+19
St Mark	297	231	-66	158	-139
St Mary de Crypt	178	123	-55	174	-4
St Mary de Lode	175	180	+5	198	+23
St Michael	150	125	-25	167	+17
St Nicholas	180	175	-5	168	-12
St Paul	325	316	-9	372	+47
Barnwood	209	144	-65	153	-56
Churchdown	182	148	-34	179	-3
Hempstead	121	106	-15	106	-15
Matson	80	65	-15	70	-10
Twigworth	113	94	-19	99	-14
Total	4,018	3,800	--218	3,999	-19

⁶⁴ *Diocesan Statistics* for the years mentioned.

⁶⁵ *Diocesan Statistics* for the years mentioned.

Table 8.3 Easter Communicants 1914, 1918, 1920
Cheltenham Area⁶⁶

C.K.= Charlton Kings; Leck'ton = Leckhampton

<i>Parish</i>	<i>1914</i>	<i>1918</i>	<i>Change</i>	<i>1920</i>	<i>Change</i>
Parish Church	1,143	991	-152	1,230	+87
Holy Trinity	317	345	+28	374	+57
St James	323	257	-66	418	+95
Christ Church	650	565	-85	666	+16
All Saints'	1,017	1,100	+83	1,200	+183
St John	439	331	-108	388	-51
St Luke	318	345	+27	363	+45
St Mark	292	268	-24	263	-29
St Paul	442	361	-81	348	-94
St Peter	195	201	+6	189	-6
St Stephen	471	583	+112	570	+99
St Mary, C K.	687	652	-35	576	-111
Holy Apostles, C K.	293	341	+48	346	+53
St Peter, Leckhampton	351	361	+10	304	-47
Ss. Phillip/James, Leck'ton	445	425	-20	443	-2
Prestbury	350	212	-138	350	0
Total	7,733	7,338	-395	8,028	+295

67

Table 8.4 Easter Communicants 1914, 1918, 1920
Forest of Dean Mining Area

<i>Parish</i>	<i>1914</i>	<i>1918</i>	<i>Change</i>	<i>1920</i>	<i>Change</i>
Bream	124	78	-46	116	-8
Christchurch	110	80	-30	103	-7
Cinderford: St John	179	136	-43	138	-41
Cinderford: Holy Trinity	94	80	-14	80	-14
Cinderford: St Stephen	199	150	-49	190	-9
Coleford	341	267	-74	312	-29
Lydbrook	100	78	-22	85	-15
Lydney	280	270	-10	319	+39
Parkend	134	92	-42	102	-32
Ruardean	32	18	-14	31	-1
Viney Hill	75	56	-19	76	+1
Total	1,668	1,305	-363	1,552	-116

⁶⁶ *Diocesan Statistics* for the years mentioned.

⁶⁷ Devereux and Sacker, *Leaving All that Was Dear*, *op. cit.*, page xxx, suggest that 6,000 to 7,000 men from Cheltenham served in the war.

The Reasons Why

Many clergy felt the obligation to offer explanations for the outbreak of war. To the Revd. Henry Armstrong of Harescombe, it was “a punishment for sin” but could have a favourable outcome: “if then with all our hearts we truly seek God, He will be found of us and give us the victory.”⁶⁸ At Oddington, Thomas Hodson called on his parishioners to ask God “to forgive all the sins and shortcomings in us as a people that have led us to this war”⁶⁹ and later criticised “the strong undercurrent of self-commendation at the righteousness of the causes for which we were plunged into this war” when what was needed was “a closer examination of the causes which made such a war on such a scale possible.”⁷⁰ The Revd. William Whalley of the Mariners’ Church, Gloucester, on the other hand, took an apocalyptic approach, seeing in the unfolding international events the fulfillment of prophecies in the Biblical books of Daniel and Revelation.⁷¹ But the more predominant mood of senior clergy of the diocese was that Britain had been called to fight a just war. In September, 1914 Bishop Gibson expressed the view that

we may indeed feel thankful that, since war has been forced on us, we have been able to enter upon it with a clear conscience, and can honestly say that, so far as we are concerned, it is a righteous war, undertaken with no thought of aggression or aggrandisement, but in defence of pledges solemnly given, and for the protection of the weak against the claim that might is right.⁷²

His son, a captain in the Royal Marines, went even further in a letter to his father published in the Diocesan Magazine. To the younger Gibson, the war in those early days was “one of the best things that has ever happened to England” because the country had taken up arms “with clean hands” and was “beginning to feel the good of

⁶⁸ *Painswick Valley and Great Witcombe Church Magazine*, 1915, pp. 5, 20

⁶⁹ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, September, 1914

⁷⁰ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, February, 1915

⁷¹ Whalley, W.H., *Some Results of the Present War and Is the Day of Vengeance of our God at Hand?*, Gloucester, F.J. Brooke, (no date, 1914?)

it.”⁷³ The rector of Broadwell echoed his bishop’s view; the nation had “the comfort of an easy conscience; war was thrust upon us; we had no alternative but to fight so long as we desire to champion liberty and fair play.”⁷⁴ Charles Ridsdale the Canon Missioner robustly refuted any notion that the ‘repentance’ part of the National Mission’s full title⁷⁵ was related to the decision to take up arms. He told a C.E.M.S. gathering in 1916 that if the nation had not gone to war, “she would have added yet another to her sins to be repented of — the sin of cowardice.”⁷⁶ The Vicar of Lower Guiting told his people that the Allies could “plead the observance of Divine laws and the laws of humanity which the enemy nowhere” could.⁷⁷ At Tewkesbury, Ernest Smith believed that “we are on the side of justice and liberty and therefore on the side of God.”⁷⁸ He made the same point more succinctly the following year, stating that God was not on our side; we were on His,⁷⁹ having delivered the verdict earlier that year that the Tewkesbury recruits were fighting “on behalf of the most righteous cause which ever summoned men to arms.”⁸⁰

The Church and the Fighting Men

It therefore followed that the Allied forces were, quite literally, Christian soldiers and, as such, worthy of admiration. The Vicar of Tewkesbury, having visited a training camp in the Chelmsford area in 1914, found the troops there in a serious mood with “no ribaldry or violence” and judged the letters home from the front to be those of “Christian gentlemen, of whom England — ay, and Christ Himself — need

⁷² *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1914, p. 135

⁷³ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1914, p. 148

⁷⁴ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, September, 1914

⁷⁵ The ‘National Mission of Repentance and Hope’

⁷⁶ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1916, p.139

⁷⁷ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, January, 1916

⁷⁸ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, September 1914.

⁷⁹ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, September 1915

⁸⁰ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, April, 1915, See also Wilkinson, *The Church of England and the First World War*, *op. cit.*, pp. 215-218

not be ashamed.⁸¹ In 1915, after another camp visit, he reported that the soldiers' life was a "great life and a supremely happy one" and "not a man among them would exchange it for the old days of conventional comfort and hum-drum drudgery." The men were happy because they were free to fulfil "the true functions of manhood" and were "free from the pricks of conscience" haunting those at home who had not enlisted.⁸² One of the aims of the National Mission, Bishop Gibson told the Diocesan Conference of 1916, was to bring the country to a new sense of brotherhood and it was the ordinary soldier at the front who was already exhibiting that virtue:

His life is founded on unselfishness, consideration for others and sacrifice. His main thought is of his pals and those at home whom he loves; he will keep his temper when tired out and overstrained; he will assume the most jovial and amusing temperament when he is really feeling fed up and he will suffer a lot without a word.⁸³

As seen by the bishop, the British serviceman was displaying not only the best human qualities but was also reaching spiritual heights. Preaching at Gloucester Cathedral in June 1915 he maintained that "the universal experience" was that "the men in the trenches at least have learnt the need of prayer, and, thank God, they have found the power of it."⁸⁴ On separate occasions, both the Bishop and the Dean of Gloucester compared the troops at the front to the martyrs of the early Church. In January, 1916 the dean told a Cathedral congregation that "the present war had made a glorious addition to the noble army of martyrs." He said that the "Allied nations had turned to God in prayer and their brave sailors and soldiers had given their all, and had not loved their lives unto death."⁸⁵ The bishop not only echoed that theme when addressing a Tewkesbury congregation in August, 1918 but extended the accolade of martyrs and confessors to "the great army of the wounded, the suffering and the

⁸¹ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, October, 1914

⁸² *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, September, 1915

⁸³ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1917, pp. 250-251

⁸⁴ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1915, p. 98

prisoners of war, together with the departed.”⁸⁶ More prosaically, perhaps, the Vicar of Tewkesbury maintained in 1919 that the men who had done the fighting “not only” had “the right but alone have the power to mould and shape the better England for which we long so fervently. They must be our future members of Parliament, our future borough councillors.”⁸⁷ While the war was at its height, he had foreseen that the men who came through the war would have been “purged and purified, so as by fire” and would return with “hearts open to all that Jesus Christ longs to give them”.⁸⁸

The image of the religious and virtuous soldier had been fostered by reports from the front reaching the Church authorities. “There are no atheists or unbelievers at the front now. Tell the Territorials at home that they must know God before they come out” was a message from a soldier in the trenches which the Rector of Stow on the Wold relayed to Stow deanery early in the war⁸⁹ and the “Painswick boys of ‘C’ Company, training for combat, wrote home that on Sunday evenings they sang hymns until they dropped off to sleep.”⁹⁰ The news from Gloucester clergy serving as military chaplains was equally redolent of spiritual success. The Revd. William Selby reported in the spring of 1915 that he had baptised 12 men and that 123 men and 20 officers had been confirmed. On Maundy Thursday “all the officers of the 5th Glosters communicated.” The following year, serving at a training camp in Chelmsford, he recounted that 133 officers and men from one Army division had been confirmed and that in another division 100 men were prepared and 15 baptised.⁹¹ The Revd. George Helm reported that at Easter 1915 he had conducted four celebrations of Holy

⁸⁵ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1916, p. 27

⁸⁶ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, September, 1918

⁸⁷ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, September, 1919

⁸⁸ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, July 1915

⁸⁹ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, November, 1914

⁹⁰ *Painswick Valley and Great Witcombe Church Magazine*, 1914, p.77

⁹¹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1916, p. 100

Communion and had ministered to 500 communicants from the Brigade.⁹² The Revd. George Piper, attached to a Casualty Clearing Station, held Holy Communion daily at 7 a.m. and at 8 a.m. on Sundays and conducted Church Parades every Sunday. He found that the men wanted God's blessing and that "the hand laid on their head in blessing or the uplifting of the crucifix" was "better than many words."⁹³ Similarly, he marvelled at the crucifixes left "unscathed" on the battlefields of France: "did they not speak of the power of the Crucified?"⁹⁴ From the Dardanelles in 1915 the Revd. Edward Hull asserted that the chaplain was always a popular visitor to units, welcomed by officers and men alike. Recounted scenes from his experience, he told of celebrating the Eucharist in the midst of an artillery battle, using an altar of earth, while officers and men knelt around it. He had then moved on to a beach where 300 men were resting, to conduct another service. "Half of the battery stood to the guns while their comrades worshipped." Finally, he had held another service at a "concealed battery" before returning to base "very tired, very chastened and thankful."⁹⁵

At Tewkesbury the Revd. Ernest Smith condensed these accounts for his parishioners, depicting the men in the war zone imbued with a new and vital religious spirit:

They have seen out there at the front how religion can adapt itself to the souls of plain men, and meet their needs and aspirations quite naturally and without effort; many of them have been tended in bitter suffering by people of whose daily life religion is the warp and woof, so that there is no distinction between secular and spiritual; they have seen priests sharing their hardships and dangers as a matter of course and in the ranks of their allies they have seen hundreds, aye thousands of priests serving as privates; they have received the Blessed Sacrament of their Saviour's love

⁹² *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1915, p. 75

⁹³ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1915, p. 84

⁹⁴ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1916, p. 110. Many of those serving in France observed this phenomenon although not all were impressed by its religious significance. Wilkinson, *The Church of England and the First World War*, *op. cit.* p.149

⁹⁵ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1915, p.133

within sight and sound of the guns and with the shells bursting all round them.⁹⁶

Compared with these images from the battlefield, the diocesan clergy found the scene at home dispiriting. In a sermon at the Cathedral in June, 1915, Bishop Gibson told the congregation that the Bishop of London's chaplain, having visited France, had found the whole country "purified" by the experience of war "and a new nation" was "being born with a heart of gold." But those at home were showing "a lack of determination and persistence in the output of our spiritual force."⁹⁷ So, too, the rector of Moreton in the Marsh reminded those who were neglecting the weekly service of intercession that "in the last resort, it is the Spiritual force at the heart of the nation that provides the necessary steam to carry it to victory."⁹⁸ At Tewkesbury, the Revd. Ernest Smith was characteristically forthright. He believed that the real meaning of the war had not "gripped" the country and that peace in the current circumstances would be "a moral catastrophe." "We must," he wrote, "remain in the fire until we learn to cry, 'We have sinned.'" ⁹⁹ This was to become his constant theme. In 1915, he believed that "we are not yet winning yet because we do not deserve to win; we are not yet within sight of victory because we are not yet fit for victory." and "we must suffer yet much more before we repent and are made clean."¹⁰⁰ He was maintaining this approach in 1918 as the war suddenly drew to its close, quoting with approval the Archbishop of York's reply to a questioner who asked why the Allies were not winning: "Because we are not yet fit to win the war."¹⁰¹ Mr Smith added his own postscript:

⁹⁶ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, July, 1915

⁹⁷ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1915, pp. 97- 98

⁹⁸ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, July, 1915

⁹⁹ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine* April 1915

¹⁰⁰ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, September, 1915

¹⁰¹ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, September, 1918

... I am convinced ... that not until the nation as a whole is lifted in faith to a higher plane of sacrificial service and places itself in the hand of God as a willing instrument for the carrying out of His great plan and purpose for the world, will this war cease. ¹⁰²

Just weeks after the above conviction appeared in print, the Armistice was declared. The Vicar saw this as “the direct intervention of God,” “as sudden and dramatic a judgement as was wrought upon Sennacherib when he came down ‘like the wolf on the fold.’ He proclaimed “It is the Lord’s doing and it is marvellous in our eyes.” ¹⁰³ but he did not explore the question why God had chosen to intervene on behalf of a people who, as Mr Smith was still asserting in 1919, were still lukewarm in their religious practice. ¹⁰⁴

The Fighting Men and the Church

The retrospective assessment of the war, as seen in the diocese, presented a picture so at variance with that conveyed during the war itself that the most feasible explanation is that religious practices differed in the theatres of war as much as they did in diocesan parishes. For this later assessment, as shown in the recollections of chaplains from the diocese and of Old Boys of Wycliffe College ¹⁰⁵ conveys a much more negative impression of the impact on the men in the field of not just the Church of England but religion in general. The contents of the Wycliffe publication are particularly valuable because the contributors served as both officers and in the ranks, they are articulate and frank and, as the editors pointed out, all “would be called good Christians, are accustomed to attend church at home and have been brought up in a

¹⁰² *ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, December, 1918. “Like the wolf on the fold” is from Byron’s ‘Destruction of Sennacherib’. “It is the Lord’s doing (etc)” is from Psalm 118, verse 23

¹⁰⁴ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, June, 1919

¹⁰⁵ Wycliffe College is a boys’ boarding school near Stonehouse. In 1923, two anonymous editors, ‘W.A.S.’ and ‘J.D.N.’ compiled a ‘School Record’ of the wartime experiences of Old Wycliffians under the title *Wycliffe and the War*, *op. cit.*.

generally religious atmosphere so they approach the facts in no carping or hostile spirit.”¹⁰⁶

These Old Boys had mixed views on the effectiveness of chaplains. One officer was deeply critical of his chaplain, a “High Church padre, neither fish, flesh, fowl nor real good herring.” He was “the feeblest padre you can well imagine” who seemed “to consider that the administration of the holy Sacraments is his only vocation.” The chaplain had presided at what appears to have been a Eucharist but when he invited those who wished to receive the sacrament to remain, only two did so, “a number which about measures the appeal which this type of service has for the average Englishman.” Yet, almost paradoxically, this same officer had a great respect for the Roman Catholic padre who reportedly had made a number of converts, “for Roman Catholicism is understandable.”¹⁰⁷ Another officer wrote that his experience of the average padre had “almost inspired me with contempt.” Whilst acknowledging that there were some exceptions, he considered that “taking them as a whole they are not worth much. I have only once seen a padre in the trenches and it is painfully obvious at every service that they wish it was all over, while the piffle they talk is really the limit.”¹⁰⁸ Another contributor was also critical of “ultra-ritualistic services” and described a voluntary service in the Church Army hut where “the sermon consisted of a defence of the confessional, as practised by the preacher.”¹⁰⁹ A Captain T. Mervyn Sibly thought that the function of a chaplain was “to rouse religious enthusiasm as in Cromwell’s Army.” His recommendation was that the chaplains should be told “that unless they can preach rousing sermons and teach the men war hymns, they must pack off and make way for better men.” If such men would stir up

¹⁰⁶ *Wycliffe and the War*, *op. cit.*, p. 303

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.* p. 302

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.*, p. 301

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.*, p. 304

the battalions, “when we attacked the Germans, we would put the fear of God into their hearts and charge like the chosen instruments of the Most High.”¹¹⁰ But another Old Boy rose in defence of chaplains. In his experience, there were “a few padres who don’t overwork and generally have an easy time but the majority” he had met were “very hard-working, brave and conscientious men” and he had seen several “in the battle of the Somme and in the recent Cambrai show working with the wounded and in the front line itself.”¹¹¹ The Revd. Arthur Meek, a chaplain from Wycliffe College itself, had sympathy with critics of his fellow padres. He wrote that a padre could be helpful to the men “in a thousand and one ways” but “if he is a religious faddist the sooner a stray bullet sends him on to where his eyes will be opened, the better for himself and the Army too.”¹¹² In 1918, the *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine* contained advice from “a senior Chaplain” to prospective chaplains in which they were told that chaplains must be “deeply spiritual.” The men had “no use for the Chaplain who speaks only of concerts, games, *etc.*” He “need not shove religion down a stranger’s throat” and must be “prepared to give up many of his likes and dislikes.” It was made clear that “men are paraded for Divine service” and it was “not sporting to take advantage of them and to compel them to submit to ritual or to the want of it against their will. We have to give and take.”¹¹³

Church parades had few defenders. They were “really not worth going to” in the opinion of one officer.¹¹⁴ Another Old Boy held that “compulsory church parades” should be “done away with.”¹¹⁵ But a soldier serving with “an Irish

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 246

¹¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 306. The action at Cambrai was in 1917. Since that was a “recent” event to the author, it is presumably the first battle of the Somme in 1916 and not the second in 1918 to which he refers.

¹¹² *ibid.*, p. 307

¹¹³ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1918, p. 90

¹¹⁴ *Wycliffe and the War*, *op. cit.* p. 302

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 270

regiment” found that a “Roman Catholic parade means something and is not a conventional Sunday morning duty.”¹¹⁶

If the contributors agreed on one point, it was in approval for the Y.M.C.A. at whose huts the services were always “crowded and hearty.”¹¹⁷ One writer foresaw in the Y.M.C.A. a future international church, large enough to rival the Roman Catholic Church.¹¹⁸ Another went so far as to call it “a new religion.”¹¹⁹ It was left to another officer to point out that the Y.M.C.A. and other huts were actually staffed by the “maligned padres or other people professedly working in the name of Christ.”¹²⁰

It was this officer, Lieutenant Melville Hastings, commissioned after three years in the ranks and later killed in action, who in 1917 produced the only truly theological reflections in the collection. As shown above, those at home were being urged fervently to pray for those in battle. Lieutenant Hastings recalled being asked by a soldier what he thought of the fact that one soldier who was well known for his praying had been killed by a shot to the head. Hastings’ view was that “praying hadn’t anything to do with not being hit anyway” and that if the prayers of all wives, mothers and children who prayed that their loved ones might be spared were answered, no one would ever be brave because no one would ever be in any danger. True prayer should be, not that the loved ones should be unharmed, but that they might “be strengthened to bear pain and death like heroes.”¹²¹ In this respect, his views were quite close to those of Ernest Smith, the Vicar of Tewkesbury who in February 1916 preached to his congregation on ‘The Duty and the Difficulty of Prayer’. Mr Smith placed regular and fervent prayer at the top of his list of spiritual duties. “The nursing of soldiers and the

¹¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 284

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 302

¹¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 337

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 270

¹²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 307

¹²¹ *ibid.*, p. 323

making of bandages”, could not, in his opinion, “ever take the place of that personal intercourse with Jesus Christ which He Himself called the better part.”¹²² His sermon addressed the popular understanding of the purpose of prayer and, to the question whether prayer could shield a son or husband at the front from harm, he admitted that the honest answer was that we did not know “because no one can trace the border where man’s free-will ends and God’s ordering begins.” Jesus’ life and death had shown that “suffering and death were not necessarily evil”; they might be “in themselves glorious and good.”¹²³

The accepted wisdom in Gloucester diocese was that the fighting men had been educated by experience into understanding the power of prayer. Hastings put a different gloss onto that picture. “Most men,” he wrote, “when out of the trenches utter no syllable of prayer, but when in the trenches they also pray to be spared or, better still, to get a cushy one [a minor wound] to take them back to dear old Blighty.”

¹²⁴ In a separate contribution, another soldier endorsed that description:

Nearly everything you read in the papers is the product of liars. Men don’t talk over here about how delightful it is to die for one’s country. Instead they say, ‘I wish to God I could get a blighty (a wound just severe enough to take them back to England.)’¹²⁵

These two testimonies may be contrasted with Bishop Gibson’s eulogy to the British serviceman of 1916, quoted above, and the Vicar of Tewkesbury’s understanding, expressed in 1915, that our soldiers and sailors, facing death, were “praying as they

¹²² *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, April 1916

¹²³ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, March, 1916

¹²⁴ *Wycliffe and the War*, *op. cit.*, p. 332

¹²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 271. Wilkinson in *The Church of England and the First World War*, *op. cit.*, p. 159 quotes a Fabian, writing from the Front in 1916: “The yarns in some of the papers about the revival of religion at the Front among the English is all rot.” Bishop Winnington-Ingram of London said in 1914 that Christian parents ought to be able to say with more conviction than “the pagan poet” ‘Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori’ (Horace, book 3, No. 2, 1.13) *ibid.*, p. 169. Wilfred Owen in his poem ‘Dulce et decorum Est’ called this phrase “The Old Lie.”

have never prayed before” and that they were “finding the comfort of prayer amid hardship and danger and using it openly.”¹²⁶

The Wycliffe collection also dents the image of the British soldier, conveyed by Ernest Smith, as a paragon of moral purity, of whom Jesus would be proud. One Old Wycliffian noted a decline in the “moral currency” of recruits once they had joined their units, slipping by habit into obscenities, drunkenness and immorality.¹²⁷ Another thought that many young men were “going to the very deuce” because of the lower moral standards which they encountered and “the astonishing temptations abounding in France.”¹²⁸ Two Old Boys commented on the low moral standards of the young officers, one attributing them to the fact that “officers get both more money and more time for self-indulgence.”¹²⁹ Another soldier thus described the prevailing moral tone among the troops:

In the average barrack room or billet, a man may be clever and must be brave to be counted a man. He must be smart in appearance. know his regimental work [sic] and be liberal with his tobacco pouch and purse. Similarly, he should gamble and not be a bad loser, use profane language, tell smutty stories and laugh at those of others. To be a real good fellow he should drink deeply. I believe much the same obtains among the officers. No disgrace attaches to drunkenness or to venereal disease. This qualification, however, must be made. No man or boy who thinks differently is interfered with. He can read his Bible, if he so wish, in peace and quietness. But the fact remains that he is ignored, he isn't one of the boys.¹³⁰

When the clergy from Gloucester diocese who had served as chaplains or in the ranks assembled at the Bishop's Palace in 1919 to share their experiences and to discuss future work, their findings were much closer to those of the Old Wycliffians than to those of the home-based clergy. William Robins, the Vicar of Cirencester, spoke of the sense of loneliness experienced by chaplains under “the constant strain of

¹²⁶ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, June, 1915

¹²⁷ *Wycliffe and the War*, *op. cit.*, p. 270

¹²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 271

¹²⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 277, 281

continually defending the Christian position on morals practically single-handed” and deplored the fact that the Church “had never taught our men how to prepare for death.”¹³¹ The Revd. Frederick Sears, Vicar of Minchinhampton, who had served in Y.M.C.A. huts thought that

The religion of the men, speaking generally, was vague in ideas about God, and they had no conception as to the meaning of worship. The men had no desire for a religion which involves trouble or sacrifice; in his experience, very few came to their communions.¹³²

That comment about the men not wanting “a religion which involves trouble or sacrifice” was a blow to Ernest Smith’s expectations of the men who returned from the war. Mr Sears suggested that future candidates for the ministry should include suitable men from the ranks and that they should be given opportunity to understand the working man by, for example, spending a period working in a factory. It was a “stay at home” clergyman, the Vicar of All Saints' Gloucester, who pointed out that Church parades “were distasteful to the men and often a distinct discouragement to religion” because they required the soldiers to spend time preparing their kit for parade inspection on Sundays which were normally reserved for odd jobs.¹³³ The bishop’s conclusion to the Conference, less confident than his wartime pronouncements about the religious state of the servicemen, emphasised

the fact that we had quite clearly the religious instinct in the men as something to build on for the future, but they were tired at present and must be left quiet for a time. Also the clergy must realise the value of individual work in their parishes as well as the importance of their own personalities as a means of drawing men to God.”¹³⁴

The Conference showed that the clergy had a better understanding of the problem but only a limited concept of the solution. At its conclusion, a resolution was unanimously approved urging “the prime importance of definite Church teaching, in

¹³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 273

¹³¹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1919, pp. 105-106

¹³² *ibid.*, p.106

¹³³ *ibid.*, p. 107

schools, in classes and in Church to enable men to base their lives on the Church's system of faith and worship" but the resolution contained no awareness of any deficiencies in the components of that "system" or even an attempt to define what the system comprised. Better teaching was the panacea and the past failings of Sunday Schools were blamed for the present crisis. The bishop told a conference of Sunday School teachers later that year that "chaplains who had been at the front said that they had failed lamentably with men who had registered themselves in the Army as 'Church of England' — a failure they attributed partly to the want of teaching in the Sunday Schools of the past."¹³⁵

There is no evidence that an influx into the Church of war veterans, spiritually transformed by their combat experiences, as hoped for and even anticipated in many quarters, ever took place in Gloucester diocese. Instead the picture that emerges is that, although there were some exceptions, there was an appreciable decline after the war in just those activities where children and young adults might be expected to predominate. The table below, which compares three pre-war and three post war years, shows that while the number of infant baptisms and Easter communicants remained fairly steady, there were significant decreases in adult baptisms, confirmations, Sunday School teachers and pupils, district visitors and membership of Bible classes. These were obviously the areas on which the Church would have hoped to build its post-war regeneration. In the weakening of the Church's appeal to young adults, the diocese appeared to be following a national trend, expressed in 1920 by Maude Royden and the Revd. Percy Dearmer that the Church of England of the time

¹³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 107

¹³⁵ *ibid.*, p. 130. In fairness to his audience, the bishop ought to have made allowances for the fact that in the British Armed Forces of the twentieth century, a serviceman registered as a member of the Church of England in what may be termed an act of the least resistance. To claim membership of one of the minority religious groups would be to invite the attention of co-religionists; to declare oneself atheist or agnostic could be interpreted by the authorities as the badge of a trouble-maker. So, many of

was “appealing to that minority of English people who go to church on Sunday” and that it ought “to make an effort to appeal to a wider public, especially students and young people, who were estranged from the Churches, and who were at home neither in church nor with the Prayer Book.”¹³⁶

Table 8.5: Summary of Pre-War and Post-War Church Activities, Gloucester Diocese
Population, 1911 – 328,779 Population, 1921 – 329,950

	1912	1913	1914	1920	1921	1922
Baptisms (Infant)	5,379	5,039	5,509	5,845	5,179	5,110
Baptisms (Adult)	246	241	255	181	163	140
Confirmations	3,453	3,437	3,561	2,674	2,915	2,726
Easter Communicants	39,095	37,630	39,412	38,057	38,933	39,323
Sunday School Pupils	29,939	29,593	28,881	23,758	24,012	23,488
Sunday School Teachers	3,031	2,956	2,846	2,215	2,258	2,210
Bible Class members	7,341	7,244	6,612	3,801	3,807	4,108
District Visitors	1,206	1,217	1,230	1,190	1,184	1,130

137

Table 8.6 below, listing the comparable figures for the war years, suggests that the decline started then but was probably regarded at the time as a wartime aberration.

Table 8.6 Summary of Wartime Church Activities Gloucester Diocese

	1915	1916	1917	1918
Baptisms (Infant)	4,924	4,893	4,436	3,815
Baptisms (Adult)	239	196	169	208
Confirmations	3,121	2,907	2,603	3,092
Easter Communicants	38,053	36,603	34,763	34,204
Sunday School Pupils	28,184	26,827	24,878	24,304
Sunday School Teachers	2,825	2,655	2,407	2,310
Bible Class members	6,106	4,959	4,601	4,073
District Visitors	1,178	1,195	1,231	1,245

138

those nominal members of the Church of England encountered by the chaplains had probably had no contact at all with an Anglican Sunday School.

¹³⁶ Wilkinson, A., *The Church of England and the First World War, op. cit.*, p.287

¹³⁷ *Diocesan Statistics*, 1912-1914; 1920-1922. Statistics for 1919 are not in the Diocesan Archives.

¹³⁸ *Diocesan Statistics*, 1915-1918

Chapter 9
Conclusion

This has been a study of a predominantly rural diocese in central England in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, of its people and of the officers appointed by the Established Church for their spiritual welfare. In terms of the nature of the diocese and the period of study, it is believed to cover new ground, complementing work already published on the Victorian church in the areas of high density population and in some rural areas.¹

Two major factors permeated contemporary thinking in the period, a strong current of absolute conviction within the Church about the role which it was believed that God had assigned to both Church and Nation and the pervasive awareness of class differences. Linked to both was the fact of the existence of the British Empire. That Britain ruled so widespread an area that the sun never set on it was regarded as both a privilege and a responsibility, implying that under the providence of God, Church and country had been specially entrusted to further the spread of both the Gospel and the British form of civilisation in which certain classes were ordained to lead and others were destined to be led.

In the diocese of Gloucester, the belief found outward expression in Bishop Ellicott's confidence that the Afghan War could be used to further the evangelisation of India² and in Bishop Gibson's conviction that the Church of England had been uniquely created by God to counter the expansion of Islam.³ It also caught the imagination of the junior clergy. At Painswick in 1902, at the ending of the South African War, one of the curates told the congregation that "God had some great work for England, namely, to stand for justice, honour, law and civilisation" and to impart to the Boers "the true faith

¹ Cf. 'Introduction'

² *Cheltenham Examiner*, 6 August, 1872. and Chapter 2

of the Catholic Church instead of their Old Testament type of religion.”⁴ So, too, the Rector of Stow had concluded in 1900 that a British victory “was the only way to an early peace.” Because *Pax Britannica* was never cruel, he was “persuaded that our success would be for the general good, for the greater happiness of the greater number.”⁵ Such mental insularity caused a Gloucestershire clergyman to ignore the global dimensions of the outbreak of war in 1914 and consider only its national implications: “We felt that God’s hand was upon our nation. Was it in punishment or in hard discipline with a view to a some nobler work?”⁶

Britain’s dominant role in the world affairs was thought to depend not only on her power and wealth but on her Christian morality and the structure of British society was believed to be the bedrock which supported the whole edifice. It followed that any serious threat to that structure was *ipso facto* impious. When Bishop Ellicott had his altercation with the agricultural trade unionists in the 1870s,⁷ he believed the situation to have both secular and religious dimensions. The unionists were agitators who “had introduced into our parishes a bitterness between classes which may take years to wash away.”⁸ They thus constituted a threat to class harmony. But they also deserved censure for their profanity. The “discord and antagonism” which they had brought to parishes was opposed to the spirit of Christ, the peacemaker. Rhetorically, he asked, “Can we view with apathy such rough reversals of the very Gospel which we preach to our fellow men?”⁹

³ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1911, p. 138 and Chapter 2

⁴ *Painswick, Edge, Sheepscombe and Pitchcombe Church Magazine*, 1902, p.77

⁵ *Stow Parish Magazine*, February, 1900

⁶ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1916, p. 75

⁷ Cf. Chapter 2

⁸ Ellicott, *The Church and the Rural Poor*, *op. cit.* p. 8

⁹ *ibid*, p.9

Bishop Gibson also saw both social and religious perspectives in societal trends. He was one of the bishops who approved a report from the Lambeth Conference of 1908 condemning the practice of contraception. That could be denounced because it was unnatural and therefore ungodly. But it also had a social aspect because birth control was most likely to be used by the wealthier classes while the lower orders continued to breed in the natural way.¹⁰ Bishop Gibson had noted that the birth-rate in Gloucestershire was lower than the national average and therefore sought the support of his parochial clergy in combatting this “evil” because:

There is the danger of deterioration, whenever the race is recruited from the inferior, and not the superior stocks. There is the world-wide danger that the great English-speaking peoples, diminished in number and weakened in moral force, should commit the crowning infamy of race-suicide and so fail to fulfil that high destiny to which, in the providence of God, they have been manifestly called.¹¹

Bishop Ellicott could not comprehend why the Church was being “denounced as the sympathisers with the rich and oppressors of the poor.” From his viewpoint, “England’s country clergy” had “ever been the true friends of England’s country poor” and if the day ever came “when that popular voice may be raised against us and our Church, a mightier voice will be heard, and will prevail — ‘Harm her not, for she has loved Christ’s poor.’ ”¹² He had obviously never encountered the Adlestrop villager depicted by Rose Cholmondeley, who spent his days reading about the iniquities of landlords and clergy,¹³ a coupling of professions which indicates that some working men placed both in the same category of opponents.

¹⁰ Norman, *Church and Society in England, 1770–1970*, *op. cit.*, p. 270

¹¹ Gibson, *The Work of the Diocese*, *op. cit.*, p.5. He was quoting from the Lambeth Conference Report.

¹² Ellicott, *The Church and the Rural Poor*, *op. cit.*, p. 15

¹³ Cholmondeley, *Adlestrop, Its Cottages and Their Inmates*, *op. cit.*, p.31

Some 20 years later, John Sheringham one of Bishop Ellicott's senior clergymen, agreed that the "historic noblest mission of the Church" was to the poor. But he also maintained that such a mission could be most effectively exercised if the clergy were "in close, friendly communion with the cultured and wealthy classes."¹⁴ By influencing the latter, they could indirectly influence the workers. In any case, most clergy were in their natural milieu among the upper classes because they were linked to them by educational background and family ties.

Bishop Ellicott required of his clergy that they should be devout and learned men and also that they should command the respect of their parishioners.¹⁵ But he could not have been unaware that in many cases, the appointment of an incumbent was a somewhat haphazard affair and many an incumbent held his living because he had an influential patron or private means or, conversely, was unable to stay in a parish because he could not afford to do so.¹⁶ Even if his superiors knew that he was in danger of stagnation by being left too long in post, especially in isolated, country parishes.¹⁷ In practice they could often do little about it because of the obstacles presented by patronage and the parson's freehold. Canon John Bowers, the Diocesan Missioner thought that "the system" was "considerably to blame" for a loss of morale among rural clergy and "one thing" he was "persuaded" that "we ought to do" was "to move our Clergy say every ten or twelve years, unless, of course, the Bishop sees some good reason to the contrary."¹⁸

Even within the House of God it was difficult to escape society's class structure that was not always a simple division between gentry and working class but had a

¹⁴ Sheringham, *The Church and Social Life*, *op. cit.*, p. 4

¹⁵ Ellicott, *Church Work and Church Prospects*, *op. cit.* p. 36

¹⁶ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, November, 1899 and Chapter 3

number of gradations in between. Joseph Arch in the 1830s saw the strict social order reflected in the procession to receive Holy Communion in his village church. First went the squire, then the farmers, the tradesmen, the shopkeepers, the craftsmen and finally the agricultural labourers.¹⁹ The villagers' deference to the squire at Wyck Rissington in the 1850s has been described in the Case Studies of Chapter 4, as has the Rector of Cheltenham's attempts in the 1870s to cast off the poorer part of his parish so that he could concentrate on the wealthier remainder. The position does not seem to have greatly changed by the 1890s when the Vicar of Northleach remarked that in the Cotswolds it was "rare to see farmers and labourers joining together in public worship" and if country parsons "got a labourer to church they put him in an aisle or behind a pillar where he could not see the altar or hear the sermon."²⁰

The last comment was an oblique reference to the system of pew rents by which wealthier members of congregations could ensure that they obtained the better seats in a church. This convention still prevailed in the diocese up to the end of the Great War when the number of "appropriated" and "free" seats in the churches of the diocese was last recorded. At that point, the respective figures were 16,463 rented and 86,672 free seats for the parish churches and 1,374 rented and 14,141 free sittings for other church buildings, including mission halls.²¹

The diocese had ample accommodation for those who wished to attend services, although it was not always best located to meet population needs. By 1923, 58,109 churchgoers had placed themselves on their parish's electoral rolls and 108,237 seats

¹⁷ Ellicott, *Church Work and Church Prospects*, *op. cit.*, p. 13-14; *Spiritual Needs in Country Parishes*, *op. cit.*, *passim*

¹⁸ Bowers, *Diocesan Mission Colleges*, *op. cit.*, p. 12

¹⁹ O'Leary, (editor), *The Autobiography of Joseph Arch*, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-26

awaited them.²² Gloucester was also better placed than many dioceses in the number of clergy at its disposal,²³ although they were not always distributed for maximum effectiveness and Bishop Gibson categorised a significant proportion of them as ineffectual.²⁴

The failings of the Church, hindering its vocation, which were enumerated during the National Mission of 1916²⁵ constituted a litany which could have been composed at any time during the previous half-century. Bishop Gibson brought a reforming energy to the diocese and resolved that it should be placed on a more efficient, business-like footing. Investigations had revealed that many rural clergy had very little to do and parochial missions tended to have no lasting effects, probably because parishioners had then to return to the care of their normal parish priest. His strategy was to amalgamate small parishes, releasing priests for deployment in the large population centres where they were most needed.²⁶ The standard wisdom in Victorian times had been in favour of large clergy families since they were a welcome addition to the desirable stock of the nation and were believed to have a wholesome moral influence in their parents' parishes.²⁷ Some examples of Gloucestershire clergymen with large families are included in Chapter 3. However, in the post-war years came the realisation that maintaining, feeding and educating families could be a drain on the income of many clergy, was in itself a source of many of their financial problems and could divert a man from his primary purpose. Some clergy began to advocate priestly celibacy, a concept to which Bishop

²⁰ *Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar*, 1895 p. 185

²¹ *Diocesan Statistics*, 1917/18

²² *Diocesan Statistics*, 1923

²³ *Stow Deanery Magazine*, March, 1905

²⁴ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1923, p. 156

²⁵ Cf. Chapter 6

²⁶ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1910, pp. 246-248

Gibson was not opposed, although his preference seemed to be for married men who had postponed their marriages until they had become incumbents.²⁸

Bishop Ellicott had sought men of education and culture for the priesthood. The Great War had taught many clergy that it was precisely because they were educated and cultured that they simply did not understand the working classes. Hence the suggestion by a former chaplain in 1919 that ordinands should have work experience with working class men before their ordination and that future ordinands should be recruited from “the ranks”.²⁹ For this was an age when many would argue that one of the good results to have emerged from the war was the shattering of the old ossified class structure which had divided the country.³⁰

It was also the age when the working man was invited to make his voice heard in the councils of the Church and when, in Gloucester at least, he would be paid for any loss of earnings in so doing.³¹ A frequently repeated argument of the time was that working men could not be expected to show allegiance and financially to support an organisation whose actions they were unable to influence. So the Enabling Act of 1919 provided the structure through which the working layman and woman could express their opinions. Unfortunately, however, the expected corollary failed to materialise. The laity did not rush to fill the Church’s coffers and in 1920 the Diocesan Conference was told that the previous year the Board of Finance had received a total income of £11,000. This “represented less than three farthings per head of the 54,000 men and women on the

²⁷ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1910, p.245

²⁸ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1923, pp. 155-156

²⁹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1919, p. 107

³⁰ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine* September, 1917.

³¹ *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1920, pp.137,141

Electoral Roll.” In that same year “the diocese of Gloucester gave more money to poorer livings than any other diocese in England.”³²

The situation depicted is one indication that the diocese had failed to attract the wholehearted commitment of the laity. Another comes from the more conventional measure of Easter communicant figures. The results of teaching by both bishops and by those clergy with Tractarian convictions can be seen in the fact that by 1916, Churchmen “of varying degrees of thought” in the diocese were reported to believe that the Eucharist should have a central place in Christian worship.³³ But they did not appear to have carried their people with them. Table 7.5 in Chapter 7 shows that in the two decades from 1903 to 1923 the number of Easter communicants each year was consistently less than 12 per cent of the population. Ernest Smith, the Vicar of Tewkesbury, was among those who believed that Easter communicant totals gave a false impression of the degree of lay commitment to the Church, because he had seen in his own church how inflated these figures were when compared with normal Sunday worship. In 1922, he went so far as to comment that a decline in the number of communicants that Easter was “a matter of congratulations rather than lament” because it represented a fall in those who were “content to receive the Blessed Sacrament on one day only in the year.”³⁴ A report from the battlefield in 1916 that soldiers regarded Holy Communion as “the service for officers,” prompted him to reprint in the parish magazine an article which illustrated “the Anglican chill” which hung over the Gloucester and other dioceses, that lack of fellowship within the Church, “associated with evil traditions, with pews and private sittings and preferences for the rich; with the touch of class, with coldness and with other

³² *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar*, 1922, p. 155

³³ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1916, p. 172

unbrotherly tendencies.”³⁵ These factors may well have had an influence on the drift away from the Church by young people, noted in the post-war years.³⁶

By 1923, the diocesan authorities had come to recognise that the historic parochial system of the Church with every parish having its own priest was less of a foundation for the spread of the Gospel than a barrier against it. Particularly in the rural areas where people could not or would not move around freely, it was insufficiently flexible to meet the needs of a populace which had mentally placed the Church of England in the camp of the wealthy and governing classes. The people’s reaction was not so much antagonism as indifference. Tewkesbury Abbey was one of the better attended churches in the diocese but even there the Vicar had observed that “when the weather is bad, people say they can’t come to church and when it is fine, they prefer a walk in the country! and where does God come in?”³⁷ The process of reform in the diocese began just before Bishop Gibson’s retirement and its success, or otherwise, is outside the scope of this study but early indications were that it had made only a limited headway by the end of the decade.³⁸

The laity, both men and women had been offered a greater say in the governance of the Church; by 1923 it was not clear how effective this move had been. Finally came the question: how could the sympathies of the great mass of the populace who stayed away from church be engaged? The post-war Conference of Chaplains had produced the conventional answer, “definite Church teaching, in schools, in classes and in church to

³⁴ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, April, 1922

³⁵ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, January, 1917

³⁶ Cf. Chapter 8

³⁷ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, June, 1918

³⁸ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1929, p.4

enable men to base their lives on the Church's system of faith and Worship." ³⁹ From Tewkesbury, Ernest Smith cast a jaundiced eye over some of the suggestions that had emanated from the Diocesan Conference. They included a proposal for the frequent exchange of preachers and the introduction of intervals during services so that worshippers could leave if they wished to do so. The chief fault, he thought, with all those remedies was that "they all tended to make religion too cheap." In his opinion, "the real reason for non-attendance at Church is lack of faith in God and you can't manufacture Faith by machinery." To some ears, his conclusion may well have sounded like a counsel of despair but it was essentially a corrective, a challenge to the generally unquestioned assumption that it must always be wholly the Church's fault if people rejected her ministry. Although his words might imply that religion was just another aesthetic experience, Ernest Smith touched on a point which had generally been disregarded:

Religion, like every other supremely noble thing, will always be the possession of a minority. It is not because it is Religion that the majority regard it with indifference but because it is nobler and more beautiful than eating and drinking and playing games and making money. The masterpieces of Raphael and Michelangelo, of Beethoven and Shakespeare, belong to the whole world, but it is the few and not the many who appreciate and enjoy them, simply because these masterpieces are far above the level on which the 'many' are content to live. ⁴⁰

³⁹ *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*, 1919, p.107

⁴⁰ *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, July, 1923

BIBLIOGRAPHY
G.D.R. – Gloucester Diocesan Records

Primary Sources

Unpublished

Summary of Church Work and Finance in the Diocese of Gloucester, normally referred to as *Diocesan Statistics*, 1903-23 inclusive, G.D.R. A4/1-16; 31-32

Meetings of the Archdeacons and Rural Deans, G.D.R. A8/1

Report of the Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Association, 1865, G.D.R. A16/5/9

Correspondence of Edward Cozens, Vicar of Holy Trinity, Tewkesbury, G.D.R. P329/2

All Saints' Cheltenham Parish Meetings, 1877-1924 G.D.R. P78/2, VE 2/1

All Saints' Cheltenham Register of Services, G.D.R. P78/2

Published

Gloucester Diocesan Magazine, 1906-1929 inclusive. Published monthly, Gloucester, Minchin and Gibbs,

Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Kalendar, 1860-1925, inclusive, published annually; *Gloucester Diocesan Kalendar* from 1897 onwards. Later entitled *Diocesan Almanack*, Gloucester, Minchin and Gibbs

Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine, G.D.R. P329 IN 4/2/1

Parish Magazine of Painswick Valley and Great Witcombe (various titles but all centred on Painswick)

Stow Parish Magazine; (later) *Stow Deanery Magazine*, G.D.R. P317 IN 4/2

Fairford Parish Magazine, G.D.R. P141 IN 4/13

Newent District Magazine GDR P225/3/1

The Times, London

The Cheltenham Examiner, Cheltenham

The Gloucester Journal, Gloucester

Census of England and Wales, 1901, County of Gloucester, London, H.M.S.O., 1902

Census of England and Wales, 1911, County of Gloucester, London, H.M.S.O., 1914

Census of England and Wales, 1921, County of Gloucester, London, H.M.S.O., 1923

Official Report of the Church Congress Meeting at Birmingham, 1893. London, Bemrose and Sons, 1893

Kelly's Directory of Gloucestershire, London, Kelly's Directory, Ltd., (Annual publication)

Bowers, J.P.A., *Diocesan Mission Colleges*, Gloucester, Osborne, (no date), [1889?]

Brett, P. *The Agricultural Labourers Question*, Gloucester, Nest, 1873

Buckle, G.E., (editor), *The Letters of Queen Victoria, 1862-1878*, (2 vols.), London, John Murray, 1926

Cholmondeley, R.E., *Adlestrop, Its Cottages and Their Inmates, 1876-1877*, edited by Lionel Bemers Cholmondeley, Privately published, 1935

de la Bere, J. (formerly Edwards), *The Prosecution, A Statement Relating Thereto Set Forth in a Letter Most respectfully Addressed to his Grace the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury*, London, Palmer, 1881.

Ellicott, C.J., *Diocesan Progress*, annual publication, 1868-1903, Gloucester, Nest, (from 1868); Austin and Son, (from 1887); Osborne, (from 1890)

- Ellicott, C.J., 'Scripture and its Interpretation' in Thomson, W. (editor) *Aids to Faith*, London, John Murray, 1861
- Ellicott, C.J., *Church Work and Church Prospects*, London, Longman, 1864
- Ellicott, C.J., *Ritualism*, (A Sermon), London: Longman: Bristol: Page, 1866
- Ellicott, C.J., *Progress and Trials*, London, Longman, 1867
- Ellicott, C.J., *Church Work and Church Questions*, London, Longman, 1873
- Ellicott, C.J., *The Church and the Rural Poor*, London, Longman, 1873 [?]
- Ellicott, C.J., *Reunion with Nonconformity*, London, Longman, 1873
- Ellicott, C.J., *The Church and Free Thought*, London, Longman, 1873
- Ellicott, C.J. *The Church and the Temperance Question*, London, Longman, 1873
- Ellicott, C.J., *Approaching Dangers*, London, Longman, 1874
- Ellicott, C.J., *Future Prospects*, London, Longman, 1874
- Ellicott, C.J., *Public Worship Regulation Bill*, London, Longman, 1874
- Ellicott, C.J., *What is the True Distinction Between England and Rome?*, London, Cassell, Potter and Galpin, 1876
- Ellicott, C.J., *Modern Unbelief, Its Principles and Characteristics*, London, S.P.C.K., 1877
- Ellicott, C.J., *Some Present Dangers of the Church of England*, London, Cassell, Peter and Galpin, 1878
- Ellicott, C.J., *Are We to Modify Fundamental Doctrine?* London: Simpkin, Marshall and Co.; Bristol: Arrowsmith, 1885
- Ellicott, C.J., *Spiritual Needs in Country Parishes* London, S.P.C.K., 1888
- Ellicott, C.J., *Salutary Doctrine*, London, S.P.C.K., 1890
- Ellicott, C.J., *Christus Comprobator*, London, S.P.C.K., 1891
- Ellicott, C.J., *Foundations of Sacred Study*, London, S.P.C.K., 1893
- Ellicott, C.J., *Our Reformed Church and its Present Troubles*, London, S.P.C.K., 1899
- Ellicott, C.J., *Doubt and its Remedy*, London, S.P.C.K., 1903
- Ellicott, C.J., *Sermons at Gloucester*, London, James Nisbet 1905
- Gibbs, J. A., *A Cotswold Village*, Gloucester, Alan Sutton(1898), 1988 edition
- Gibson, E.C.S., *Standards and Practice*, Gloucester, Minchin and Gibbs, 1907
- Gibson, E.C.S., *The Diocese and the Parish*, Gloucester, Minchin and Gibbs, 1910
- Gibson, E.C.S., *The Work of the Diocese*, Gloucester, Minchin and Gibbs, 1913
- Gibson, E.C.S., *The Declaration of Assent*, London, S.P.C.K., 1918
- Gibson, E.C.S., [untitled] *A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Gloucester*, October 1921, Gloucester, Osborne, 1921
- Hollins, J., *Pastoral Recollections, or Gleanings from a Diary of Upwards of Six Years Work Among the Seamen and Watermen at the Port of Gloucester*, London, Hatchards: Hamilton, Adams and Co., 1857
- Lloyd Baker, T.B., 'Labourers' Combinations and the Clergy', A letter to *The Guardian*, August 28, 1872
- O'Leary, J.G., (editor) *The Autobiography of Joseph Arch*, London, MacGibbon and Kee, 1966
- Randall, R.W., *Difficulties in Church Work: A Respectful Remonstrance Addressed to the Lord Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol*. Oxford and London, 1874
- Sheringham, J.W., *The Church and Social Life*, Gloucester, Davies and Son, 1889

Sheringham, J.W., *Church Finance, Personal Property, Sustenation of the Clergy. A Charge to the Clergy and Laity of His Archdeaconry, Easter 1892*, Gloucester, Davies and Son, 1892

Thomson W.(editor), *Aids to Faith*, London, John Murray, 1861

Verey, D. (editor), *The Diary of a Cotswold Parson*, Reverend F.E. Witts, 1783-1854, Dursley, Alan Sutton, 1978

Verey, D. (editor), *The Diary of a Victorian Squire*, Gloucester, Alan Sutton, 1983

Walker, E., 'A Sermon Preached in the Temporary Church, Cheltenham on Sunday, May 25, 1862 in Aid of the Fund for Relieving the Distress of the Manufacturing Districts', Cheltenham Chronicle, Cheltenham, 1862

Whalley. W.H., *Some Results of the Present War*, Gloucester, Brooke, 1914

Secondary Sources

Unpublished

Knight, B., *Bishop Ellicott, A Victorian Bishop in a Changing World*, M.A. dissertation for Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education and Trinity College, Bristol, 1995

Published

Gloucestershire Notes and Queries, Vol. iv., London, Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton and Kent, 1890

Gloucestershire Family History Magazine, Gloucester, Gloucestershire Family History Society

Southern History, Vol. 5, Gloucester, Alan Sutton, 1983

Victoria History of Gloucestershire, Vol. ii. (ed. William Page), London, Constable, 1907

Victoria County History of Gloucestershire, Vol. iv., (ed. N.M. Herbert), Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1988

Victoria History of Gloucestershire, Vol. v. (ed. N.M. Herbert), Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996

Victoria History of Gloucestershire, Vol. vi. (ed. C.R. Elrington), Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1965

Victoria History of Gloucestershire, Vol. vii. (ed. N.M. Herbert), Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1981

Victoria History of Gloucestershire, Vol. viii. (ed. C.R. Elrington), Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1968

Victoria History of Gloucestershire, Vol. ix. (ed. C.R. Elrington & N.M. Herbert), Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1972

Victoria History of Gloucestershire, Vol. xi. (ed. N.M. Herbert), Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1976

(Anon.) *Treasures of Britain*, Drive Publications, London, 1972

(Anon.) *Gloucestershire County Guide*, The British Publishing Co., Ltd., Gloucester (no date)

(Anon.) *Diocese of Gloucester Directory*, 2001-2002, Diocesan Board of Finance, Gloucester, 2002

(Anon.), *The Westcote Convent, 1927-1969*, Bledington, Bledington Press, 1999

Addison, J., Steele R. and others, *The Spectator*, London, Dent and Sons, 1907

- Allan, G.A., *Church Work in the Forest of Dean*, Minchin and Gibbs Gloucester, 1907
- Alleyne, F.M., *All Saints'*, Clifton, Bristol, W. Crofton Hemmon, 1892 [?]
- Balleine G.R., *A History of the Evangelical Party in the Church of England*, London, Church Book Room Press, 1951
- Barnett, S.A., *Canon Barnett, His Life, Work and Friends*, London, John Murray, 1921
- Bartlett, W., *Nineteenth Century Stow*, Stow, Clift and Ryland, 1911
- Bell, G.K.A., *Randall Davidson, Archbishop of Canterbury*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1938
- Bennett, J., *The History of Tewkesbury (1830)* (Reprint) Gloucester, Alan Sutton, 1976
- Benson, A.C., *The Life of Edward White Benson*, London, Macmillan, 1899
- Betty, J. *Historic Churches and Church Life in Bristol*, Bristol, Bristol and Gloucester Archaeological Society, 2001
- Bowen, D., *The Idea of the Victorian Church, A Study of the Church of England, 1833-1889*, Montreal, McGill University Press, 1968
- Briscoe, J.F. and Mackay, H.F.B.. *A Tractarian At Work, A Memoir of Dean Randall*, London, Mowbray, 1933
- Briggs, A., *Victorian Cities*, Harmondsworth, Pelican Books, 1968
- Chadwick, O., *The Victorian Church Part II*, London, Adam and Charles Black, 1970
- Cobb, P.G., *The Oxford Movement in Nineteenth Century Bristol*, Bristol, Bristol Branch of the Historical Association, 1988
- Colloms, B., *Victorian Country Parsons*, London, Constable, 1977
- Cox, J. *The English Churches in a Secular Society, Lambeth, 1870-1930*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1982
- Cross, F.L. and Livingstone, E.A. *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997
- Crowther, M.A., *Church Embattled: Religious Controversy in Mid-Victorian England*, Newton Abbot, David and Charles, 1970
- Davie, P., *Raising Up a Faithful People*, Leominster, Gracewing, 1997
- Devereux, J. and Sacker, G., *Leaving All that Was Dear, Cheltenham and the Great War* Cheltenham, Promenade Publications, 1997
- Edwards, D.L., *Leaders of the Church of England*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1971
- Elwes, E.L., *The History of Wells Theological College*, London, S.P.C.K., 1923
- Ensor, R., *England, 1870-1914*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1936
- Fletcher, S., *Charlton Kings*, Stroud, Sutton Publishing Ltd 1999
- Fowler, K. and Stapleton, G., *Moreton in Marsh and Batsford, Roll of Honour*, Knebworth Able Publishing, 2000
- Gilbert, A.D., *Religion and Society in Industrial England*, London, Longman 1976
- Haig, A., *The Victorian Clergy*, Croom Helm, Beckenham, 1984
- Hart, T. and Carpenter, E., *The Nineteenth Century Country Parson*, Shrewsbury, Wilding and Son, 1954
- Hammond, J.L. and B., *Lord Shaftesbury*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1939
- Hayter, G., *Famous Fanatics*, Funk and Wagnalls, London, 1911
- Heeney, B., *The Women's Movement in the Church of England*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1988
- Hinton, M., *The Anglican Parochial Clergy, A Celebration*, London, S.C.M. Press, 1994

- Hough, R., *Winston and Clementine, The Triumph of the Churchills*, London, Bantam Books, 1990
- Hyett, F.A., *Glimpses of the History of Painswick with a Bibliography of its Literature*, Gloucester, John Bellows, 1928
- Inglis, K.S., *Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963
- Jackson, F.E., *A Portrait of Prestbury*, Shipton on Stour, Drinkwater, 1987
- Jones, A., *Tewkesbury* Chichester, Phillimore, 1987
- Jones, A., *A Thousand Years of the English Parish Moreton in Marsh*, Windrush Press, 2000
- Kitson Clark, G., *Churchmen and the Condition of England, 1832-1885*, London, Methuen, 1973
- Knight, F., *The Nineteenth Century Church and English Society*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995
- Lewis, J., *The Cotswolds, Life and Traditions*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1966
- Lloyd, R., *The Church of England, 1900-1965*, London, S.C.M. Press, 1966
- Loane, M., *John Charles Ryle, 1816-1900*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1983
- Marsh, P.T., *The Victorian Church in Decline*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul 1969
- McLeod, H., *Religion and the Working Class in Nineteenth Century Britain*, London and Basingstoke, Macmillan 1984
- McLeod, H., *Religion and Irreligion in Victorian England, How Secular Was the Working Class?*, Bangor, Headstart History, 1993
- Meller, H.E., *Leisure and the Changing City*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976
- More, P.E. and Cross, F.L. (compilers), *Anglicanism*, London, S.P.C.K., 1957
- Morris, R.J. and Rodger R. (editors), *The Victorian City, A Reader in British Urban History, 1820-1914*, London, Longmans, 1993
- Morris, W., *Swindon (1885)*, London, Tabard Press, 1970
- Nicholls, H.G., *The Forest of Dean, An Historical and Descriptive Account*, 1858, reprinted in *Nicholls's Forest of Dean*, Dawlish, David and Charles, 1966
- Nicholls, J.F. and Taylor, J., *Bristol Past and Present, Vol. II — Ecclesiastical History*, Bristol: J.W. Arrowsmith; London: Griffith and Farran, 1881
- Nockles, P.B., *The Oxford Movement in Context*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994
- Norman, E.R., *Church and Society in England, 1770-1970*, Oxford, Clarendon Press 1976
- Norman, G., *The Provincial Grand Lodge of Gloucestershire*, Privately published for subscribers, Cheltenham, 1911
- Obelkevich, J., *Religion and Rural Society, South Lindsey, 1825-1875*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1976
- Paget M., (editor), *A History of Charlton Kings*, Gloucester, Gloucestershire County Library, 1988
- Phelps, H., *The Forest of Dean, A Personal View*, Gloucester, Alan Sutton, , 1982
- Powell, G., *The Book of Campden*, Buckingham, Barracuda Books, 1982
- Power, E., *Medieval People*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1939
- Prochaska, F.K., *Women and Philanthropy in 19th Century England*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1980

- Robbins, K., *History, Religion and Identity in Modern Britain*, London, The Hambledon Press, 1993
- Rose, N., *Churchill, An Unruly Life*, London, Simon and Schuster, 1994
- Scotland, N.A.D., *Agricultural Trade Unionism in Gloucestershire, 1872-1950*, Cheltenham, Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education, 1991
- Scotland, N.A.D., *Good and Proper Men, Lord Palmerston and the Bench of Bishops*, Cambridge, James Clarke and Co., 2000
- Silto, J., *A Swindon History*, Swindon, privately published, 1981
- Smith, Brian S. and Ralph, Elizabeth, *A History of Bristol and Gloucestershire*, Chichester, Phillimore, 1986
- Thomson, William (editor), *Aids to Faith*, London, John Murray, 1861
- Trevelyan, G.M., *Illustrated English Social History*, Vol. iv., London, Longmans, 1960
- Verey, D., *Cotswold Churches*, London, Batsford, 1976
- Verey, D. (editor), *Gloucestershire Churches*, Gloucester, Alan Sutton, 1981
- Verey, D. and Brooks, A., *The Buildings of England, Gloucestershire I, The Cotswolds*, London, Penguin Books, 1999 edition
- 'W.A.S.' and 'J.D.N.' (editors), *Wycliffe and the War*, Gloucester, John Bellows, 1923
- Whiteman R. and Talbot, R., *The Cotswolds*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson (no date, 1987?)
- Wickham, E.R., *Church and People in an Industrial City*, London, Lutterworth Press, 1957
- Wilkinson, A., *The Church of England and the First World War*, London, S.C.M. Press, 1996
- Young, G.M., *Victorian England: Portrait of An Age*, London, Oxford University Press, 1936